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Implementing a nutrient management (NM) plan is one of the best practices farmers can use to protect their soil and water resources and farm profitability. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) annually tracks NM plans on farms through NM plan checklists submitted from farmers, agronomists, and agency staff. A NM plan follows the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service’s (NRCS) WI 2015-590 NM Standard. A NM plan is prepared by a qualified planner. The planner is the farm’s owner, operator, or a certified crop advisor.

**2019 NM by the Numbers**

- 8,399 NM plans reported by Wisconsin farmers
- 3.4 million acres under a plan
- 36.9% of Wisconsin’s 9 million acres of cropland covered by a plan
- 6,245 farmers hired 322 agronomists to assist with plan development (*up 2% from 2018*)
- 74% of all plans are produced by agronomists (*up 2% from 2018*)
- 2,154 farmers wrote their own plans on 620,238 acres (*up 8% from 2018*)
- 26% of all plans are produced by farmers

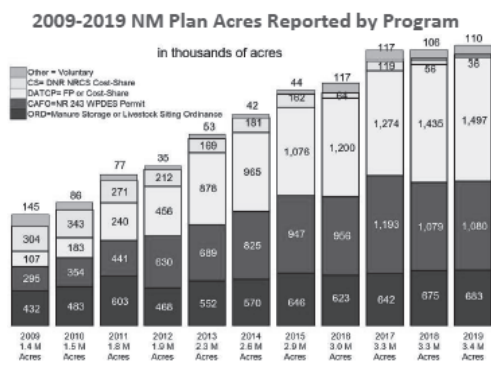
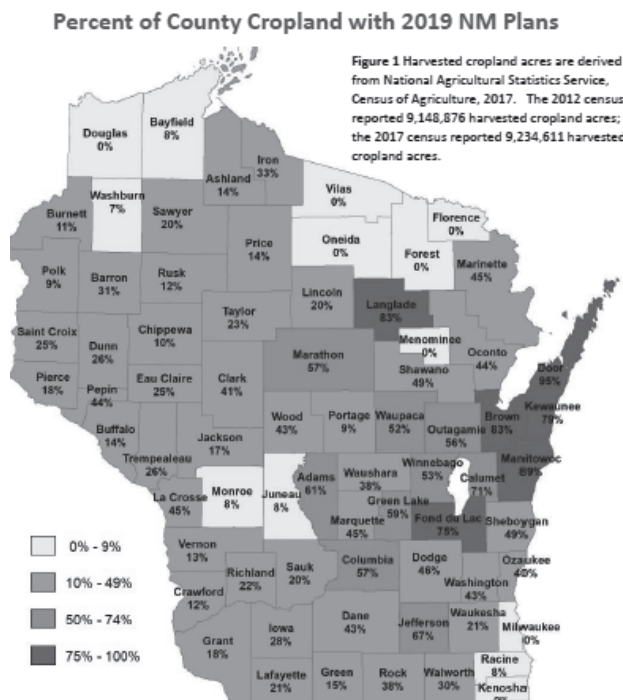


Figure 2 NM plan acres derived from NM plan checklists reported to WDATCP. The Farmland Preservation (FP) program is the major reason for developing and maintaining a NM plan.

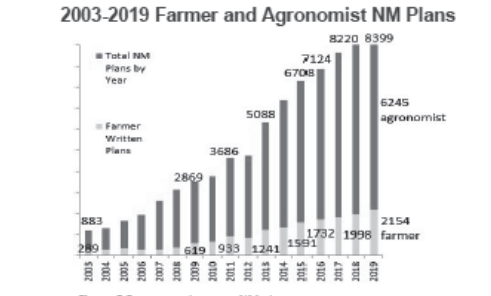


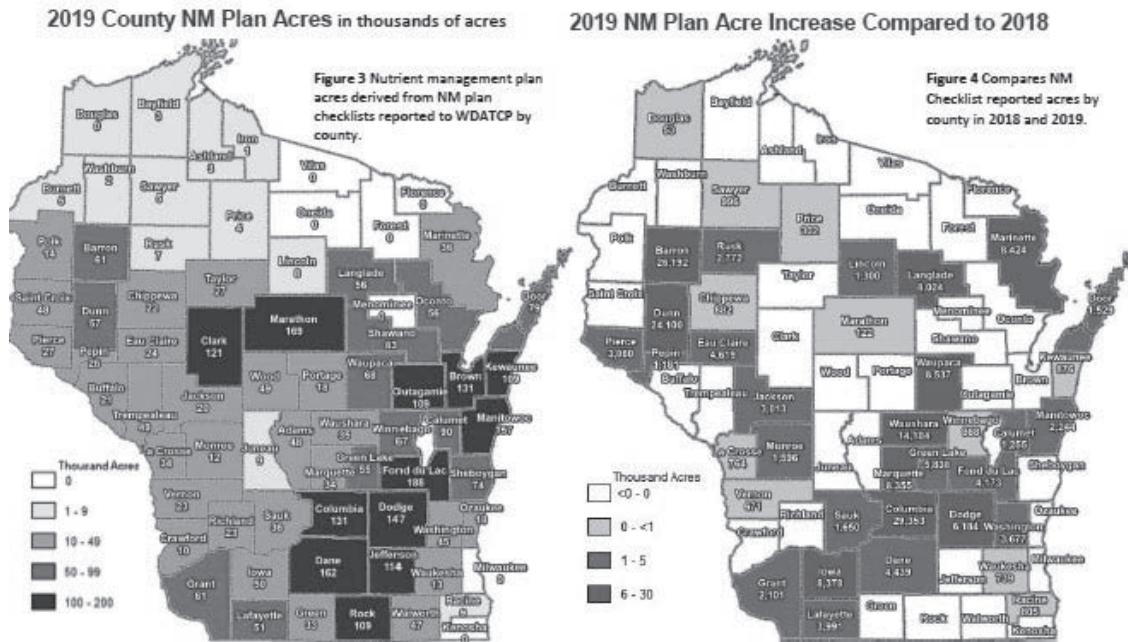
Figure 5 Farmers write more NM plans every year.

County conservation staff and programs are a major driver for NM plan implementation. They offer education, provide cost-sharing, provide technical support, assist with conservation compliance, and issue permits under ordinances. Other DNR and NRCS staff and programs also have roles in implementation, Figures 1 and 2. See Figure 3 for NM plan acres, Figure 4 for acres increased from 2018 by county, and Figure 5 for who wrote plans.

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**Who needs a NM plan? All farms:** Some farms voluntarily plan, others are required to have a plan when applying nutrients to any pasture or field if:

- Offered cost-share for NM or manure storage
- Participating in the FP program
- Regulated under a county ordinance for manure storage or livestock siting
- Regulated under a Wi DNR Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (WPDES) permit
- Found causing a significant discharge



## Planning and Resources

A NM plan is a planning tool that is annually reviewed and updated to reflect actual crop management practices. As of February 1, 2018, chapter ATCP 50 Wis. Admin. Code requires that farmers follow the 590 standard adopted by NRCS in 2015. To help farmers and planners follow the 2015-590 NM Standard, SnapPlus software is continually being improved by the SnapPlus team led by Dr. Laura Ward Good of the University of Wisconsin's Soil Science Department. The rest of the team consists of Joe Wolter, Jim Beaudoin, Rick Wayne, Sarah Sebrosky, and Mimi Broeske of the UW Nutrient and Pest Management Program. Without these people coordinating with the agencies and incorporating the soil databases, models, map layers, and educational materials, Wisconsin farmers would not be implementing NM at the current level.

## Planning and Resources

### SnapPlus Software and Training Opportunities

- Farmers or their agronomist can use SnapPlus computer software to develop a farm database that uses the farm's soil tests, field maps, crops, and tillage systems to plan applications for manure and fertilizer. Download the free software at: <https://snapplus.wisc.edu/>
- Contact your county land and water conservation department or DATCP NM staff. Learn about Nutrient Management and Farmer Education grants, which can reimburse farmers

for soil testing when part of a class to write a plan. Information at:  
[https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs\\_Services/NutrientManagement.aspx](https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/NutrientManagement.aspx).

### NM plans begin with soil tests from DATCP's Certified Soil Testing Labs

<p>A &amp; L Great Lakes Labs (Fort Wayne IN)          AgSource Labs (Bonduel WI)          Dairyland Labs (Stratford WI)          Minnesota Valley Testing Labs (New Ulm MN)          Midwest Labs Inc. (Omaha NE)          Rock River Lab (Watertown WI)          UW Soil &amp; Forage Analysis Lab (SFAL Marshfield WI)</p>	<p>UW - SFAL and DATCP operate a robust quality assurance program to ensure the certification process facilitates confidence in commercial laboratories' ability to effectively deliver precise and accurate results.</p>
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### Performance Standard Implementation

WI NM laws have been set up to provide education, outreach, and compliance. WI is implementing more NM every year and showing our system can work. ATCP 50 Wis. Admin. Code explains how NM is to be implemented using the 2015-590 standard.

A team of DATCP, DNR, NRCS, UW NPM and UW SnapPlus staff reviewed 78 plans covering 33,090 acres while testing the next SnapPlus2 ver.19. Fifteen of these plans were farmer written, and 63 written by Certified Crop Advisers (CCAs) for the farmer. All of these plans were prepared with SnapPlus software. The team's plan reviews looked at 26 components of the NM plan noted on the 2015-590 Nutrient Management Checklist. Reviews showed 20 of these components to be correctly planned on all fields in 90% or more of the plans reviewed. We found the 6 components, noted in Figure 6 needed the most improvement. The three brightly colored items relate to new 2015-590 standard requirements for manure applications.

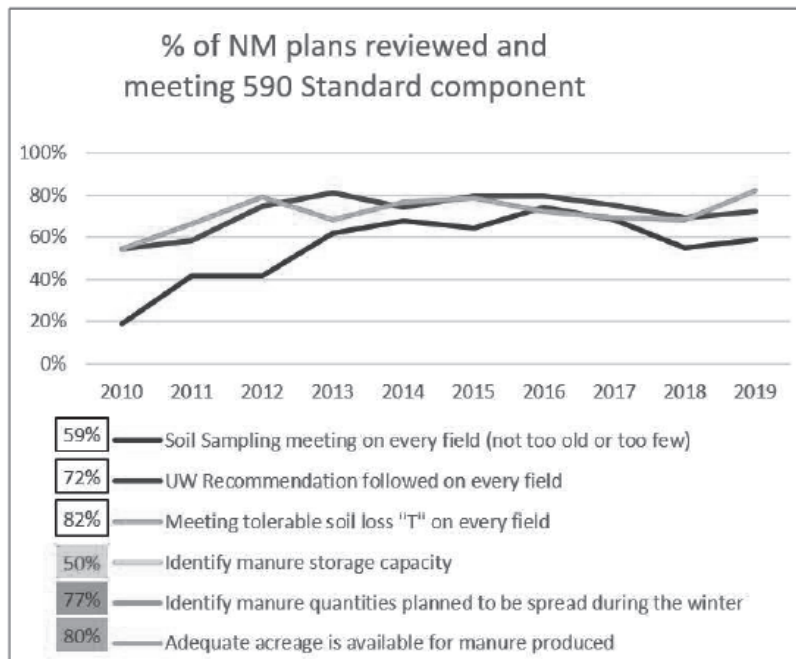


Figure 6 NM plans show improvement over last year in meeting soil testing, University of WI nutrient recommendations, and meeting tolerable soil loss. Requirements for identifying winter manure volume stored, winter manure applied, and adequate acreage for manure produced started being required for all NM plans in 2019 with the promulgation of ATCP 50 Wis. Admin. Code in 2018.