

## CHARGING FOR YOUR WORK

This goal of this presentation was to make people aware of the time and expenses involved in developing a permit nutrient management plan.

Developing nutrient management plans is not a new concept. Agronomists have been doing them with their clients for years. The agronomist would soil test the producer's fields and develop a fertility plan based upon the soil availability and the future crop needs. What is new is the way we are required to go about developing nutrient plans and the information that is needed.

Obtaining a permit for a Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) is a long and time consuming process that contains many plans and operations of which a nutrient management plan is one of them. What is a nutrient management plan? It is a plan that is designed to increase the efficiency of all the nutrient sources a crop uses while reducing production costs and environmental risk, ultimately increasing profit. This plan must comply with your state 590 standard which is a Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) document which defines the minimum requirements and provides technical guidance on the components of an acceptable nutrient management plan.

There a number of steps involved in developing a nutrient management plan.

**First step:** meet with the producer and gather all the field, livestock and waste handling information and take a site tour to familiarize yourself with the layout.

**Second step:** meet with your local Department of Environmental Quality or Natural Resources. Obtain all the appropriate paperwork from them. You need to find out exactly what they want in the plan. It is very important to develop a good relationship with these people; they can help or hurt you in the long run.

**Third step:** meet with the appropriate county agency. Here is where you should be able to obtain a wealth of information. They should provide you with soils maps, sensitive areas maps, conservation plans, water resources and biological resources information, and any other land or soils information you may need. This is also a good place to develop good relationships at.

**Fourth step:** this is where I will start the Environmental Analysis Questionnaire that is required in Wisconsin. This questionnaire helps the DNR evaluate the operation's impact on the ecological and cultural environment in the area.

**Fifth step:** soil sample all the producer's fields that have not been sampled in the last three years. Follow your state's recommendations on sampling and use a state-approved lab. Also, sample all manure sources.

**Sixth step:** assemble the plan. Use the format as provided by your DEQ or DNR and use any available computer software to speed things up. When you're done, review the plan with the client to check if he can actually implement what you have planned for him. This is the biggest complaint by producers; they can't follow the plan that was written for them.

**Seventh step:** hand deliver the plan to the DEQ or DNR. Review the plan with them to check if it full fills what they want.

**Eighth step:** annual and update. Every year each plan must be updated for the next crop year. This is also the time to gather last year's spreading records to compare to the plan and see how well you did planning.

Let's use a 1000-acre livestock farm as an example. I determined my out of pocket costs to be \$1150, which included soil sample lab fees and office supplies. My revenue was \$5600, which was soil sampling and plan development. Net profit was \$4450 and if we divide that by 100 hours we come up with \$44.50 per hour. You need to determine for yourself if that is just right or too low.

#### CONCLUSION:

There are many steps involved in developing a permit nutrient management plan. It is a huge information gathering process that takes quite a bit of time, of which you have to charge for some way or another. How you do this is up to each individual or company to determine. If you do not charge accordingly, it can become a big money loser very fast, but if you are serious about doing this, it can be a good revenue stream addition.