

Direct Payment to Virginia Certified Nutrient Management Planners for Writing Nutrient Management Plans

The purpose of the Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) Nutrient Management Direct Pay Program (program) is to engage private Virginia certified nutrient management planners in plan writing activity to meet the Commonwealth's Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) III objectives. It is critical to increase the amount of planned nutrient management acres in the majority of counties within the Chesapeake Bay (Bay) watershed to achieve Virginia's agricultural nutrient reduction goal established by the current WIP III.

The Nutrient Management Direct Pay Program is also available to planners writing acres out of the Bay.

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PROGRAM SPECIFICATIONS

All forms are sent to: vanmplr@dcv.virginia.gov.

- Plans should be written for a three (3) year period. This includes revised plans as well as new plan acres.
 - Exemptions maybe made for one (1) year plans. More information can be found on the page titled Guidelines for Exceptions for Writing 1-Year Plans.
- Plans shall be written to meet all requirements as set forth in the Nutrient Management Training and Certification Regulations, 4VAC50-85.
 - Failure to write plans according to these regulations may be addressed through disciplinary action as outlined in section, 4VAC50-85-110 *Compliance with regulations and disciplinary action*.
- During either year two (2) or three (3) of the plan, a verification form must be completed on all written plan acres.
 - To ensure proper tracking of each plan and the associated activity related to the plan, a Unique Identification Number (UIN) in the Acreage tab of the Activity Report Excel Spreadsheet is generated. This same number shall be entered on the Verification form.
- Plans which contain “Enhanced Practice” acres shall be reported annually, after implementation of these practices.
- All plan writing activity not associated with the Online Nutrient Management Plan Writing App shall be reported using the Annual Activity Report Excel spreadsheet.
 - If you are currently using the report, continue to use the same form from year-to-year, updating the prior year with current information.
 - If you have not used the Annual Activity Report Excel spreadsheet to report plan writing activity, contact Susan Jones, nmactivityreports@dcv.virginia.gov, to get this form.
- Manure transfer plans do NOT qualify for any payment in this program.
- Participating farmers must have some type of record keeping for nutrient applications and crop yields, to show implementation of the plan.
 - A record keeping system is needed for plan verification.
- To participate in Nutrient Management Direct Pay program, a planner must meet all Program Eligibility requirements and Program Specification requirements.
- No payments will be authorized without timely submission and approval of the related request forms.
- No payment will be made for plan writing, updating of plans, or verification of plans until those documents have been submitted and approved.



- The reporting period for the Direct Pay program is July 1 through June 30 of the following year.
 - A current Annual Activity Report Excel spreadsheet shall be sent to Susan Jones, nmactivityreports@dcr.virginia.gov, to meet reporting requirements for the Direct Pay program.
 - Planners participating in the Direct Pay Program need to submit their Annual Activity Report by July 31.



PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

- The planner must be currently certified in Virginia for nutrient management plan development
- The *planner* is **NOT** receiving plan writing compensation from any other funding source (county/state/federal/private) for participating clients signed/committed for this program
- The *farmer* is **NOT** currently receiving funding for **plan writing** from any other program (including, but not limited to, Virginia Cost Share NM-1A OR NRCS Conservation Activity Plan, codes 102 and 104)
 - The farmer may participate in cost-share funding with acres enrolled in Nutrient Management Direct Pay, **so long as that funding is not for plan writing compensation.**
- Farmland with an active nutrient management plan will not be eligible for participation in this program, **UNTIL** that plan has expired. At that time, those plan acres will be eligible as revised acres only.



PLAN REQUIREMENTS

Each nutrient management plan will be written to meet the requirements of the “Nutrient Management Training and Certification Regulations”, 4VAC50-85.

Where applicable, the following report information will be included in each plan:

- Plan narrative, 4VAC50-85-130.F.6-7.
- Field maps, 4VAC50-85-130.C.1.
 - Showing any environmentally sensitive areas
 - Showing any setback areas 4VAC50-85-130.C.1.d,e,f.
- Balance Sheets, 4VAC50-85-130.D Summary of nutrient management plan recommendations.
- Productivity Report showing:
 - Field identification
 - Acres
 - Predominate soil
 - Soil Productivity
 - Yield
 - Environmental Sensitivity for each field, 4VAC50-85-130.D,2-3:F.1,8; 4VAC50-85-140.A.e.(1).
- Soil Test Summary Report- all farm fields in the plan, 4VAC50-85-140.A.2.f.
- Manure Production
 - Showing Manure Analysis and Total Manure generated annually, 4VAC50-85-130.F.2.
- Spreading Summary Report-showing application rate and timing of manure produced annually, 4VAC50-85-130.F.3.
- Plans submitted as hard copies should be compiled in a clear front Report Cover or a 3-ringed presentation/view notebook.
- Plans submitted electronically should be one pdf. file containing all the plan information.



REPORTABLE ELEMENTS

The following are a list of items the planner will be responsible to report in their yearly activity report as a participant in this program:

1. **Plan Acres:** reported each year of three (3) year plan.
2. **Enhanced Acres:** reported each year if plan contains these Best Management Practices (BMPs)
3. **Verified Acres:** Each plan must be verified once during the three (3) year life of that plan.



PROGRAM DEFINITIONS:

Animal Operations – These operations meet the qualification to be a permitted AFO, or require calculation of manure produced on the farm. The plan must allocate manure to fields to manage storage and at least 50% of the plan acres receive manure application annually or all crop acres receive manure applications at least once during the life of the plan. Imported manure does NOT count to meeting the 50% goal.

Bay Counties – Virginia counties that drain into the Chesapeake Bay.

Crop Plans – These plans have NO on farm generated manure to manage. Crop plans may include crops, hay, and specialty crops as defined in the VA Nutrient Management Training and Certification regulations section 4VAC50-85-10. Imported organic nutrient sources which may be applied to crop fields do NOT qualify the operation as an “Animal Operation”.

Enhanced Acre Practices:

Advanced Nitrogen
Management Tools:

- Apply nitrogen fertilizer by variable or zone application rate
- Split sidedress applications (2 or more) of N on corn, cotton
- Inject N
- Band N at planting
- Incorporate broadcast N
- Small grain split spring topdress applications (2 or more)
- PSNT, CSNT, Fall soil nitrate-small grain at planting
- N at less than plan recommended rate, on any crop
- Manure test(s) one year old or less, applied acres based on this manure test

Advanced Phosphorus
Management Tools:

- Soil Tests are one year old or less
- Manure Test are one year old or less
- Farm has been evaluated considering Whole Farm Phosphorus Balance
- Phosphorus fertilizer by variable or zone application rate
- Follows recommendations of the Environmental Threshold
- Follows recommendations of the P-Index
- Split application (2 or more) of P
- Inject P
- Band P at planting
- Incorporate broadcast P
- Apply less P than the plan recommends



Nutrient Management Plans – include acreage of all fields farmed within a tract which must be included in the “Plan”, to include hay and pasture. Single fields, or only fields receiving a practice requiring a plan are NOT considered a “plan”. Tracts may be listed separate on the Activity Report, under the “Acreage” tab but must be labeled with the same Farm Name.

Nutrient Management Plan Categories:

New Plan – A nutrient management on acres that have never been planned OR that have NOT been under a nutrient management plan for more than 18 months.

Revised Plan – A nutrient management that has expired within 18 months of the expiration date, or a plan that is being renewed with a beginning date starting after the expiration date of the plan being renewed. *(Revised plans will have new Start Date and Expiration Date that covers a new period and doesn’t overlap the previous plan period.)*

Target Counties: Augusta, Shenandoah, and Rockingham. These counties have over 10,000 unplanned nutrient management acres in agriculture.

Unique Identifier:

For planners using NutMan 3.0, the unique identifier is generated on the “Acreage” tab of the Activity Report, in the column labeled “RefID”.

For planners using the Online NM Plan Writing App the number is generated for each plan and can be found in the top left of the screen in the planning software or at the top of the generated balance sheets. An example is NMP-15-25-0006.

Verification: Form number DCR 199-244 will be used to document verification of plan acres for reporting and request for payment. Each Verification contains the enhanced acre pages 8-9 which must be completed, even to indicate “none” as number of acres.

Weblink to: <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/form/DCR199-244.pdf>



Farmer Consent Form, Plan, and Invoice Submission Timelines

Farmer Consent Form Submission:

1. Forms must be submitted to vanmplnr@dc.virginia.gov within **10 days** of signature by the farmer.
 - a. You will receive an email that your submission has been accepted, and funds have been allocated to pay for the plan.
 - b. If the farmer signature is dated more than 10 days past submission it will be returned and requested to be resubmitted.

Plan Submission:

1. Completed plans are expected to be submitted within **45 days**.
 - a. If the plan will not be submitted within 45-days, contact vanmplnr@dc.virginia.gov. If contact is not made, funding can be withdrawn, and you will need to resubmit an updated Farmer Consent form to request funding.
 - i. Plans that are submitted to the Animal Waste Coordinator for review due to permitting that are also in the Direct Pay Program must be cc'd to vanmplnr@dc.virginia.gov as well.
2. Completed first year plans **cannot** have recommendations outside of **one (1) previous cropping season**.
 - a. Example: A plan submitted January 1, 2025 cannot have recommendations beyond October 1, 2024.
3. Completed plans for year 2 and year 3 contracts are expected to be **submitted within the same season as previous years**.
 - a. Example: if the year 1 plan was submitted in March year 2 and year 3 updates are expected approximately January- March of the subsequent years.
 - b. If you are unable to meet this timeframe, contact vanmplnr@dc.virginia.gov. If contact is not made, funding can be withdrawn, and you will need to resubmit an updated Farmer Consent form and an updated plan to request funding.

Invoice Submission:

1. Invoices must be submitted within **60 days** of receipt of plan approval.
 - a. Contracts will be cancelled after failing to receive an invoice in that timeframe.

All other guidelines for participation in the Direct Pay program remains valid. These documents can be found under the "Forms" tab of the Direct Pay Website.



Agriculture Nutrient Management Program

Direct Pay Guidelines:

Exceptions for Writing 1-Year Plans

The Direct Pay program generally requires that private planners submit plans written for a duration of 3-years. However, there are certain exceptions when 1-year plans can be submitted. These exceptions will be granted on a case-by-case basis, and prior approval is needed before a 1-year plan can be submitted.

Note that the Direct Pay contract lasts for a 3-year duration, regardless of whether the submitted plan is for 1 or for 3 years. Failure to submit a revised plan in years 2 or 3 of the contract will result in the Direct Pay contract being terminated.

A planner can request that a 1-year plan be submitted for Direct Pay under the following conditions:

1. The NM plan must be written in the Conservation Application Suite (CAS) Nutrient Management Module.
2. The planner expects that either soil tests and/or crop rotations will be updated annually throughout the 3-year lifespan of the Direct Pay contract. This expectation should be based on the producers' stated intentions.
3. Organic nutrient sources must not be utilized anywhere in the NM plan- the producer can only be utilizing commercial fertilizer.
4. The NM plan cannot make recommendations that Phosphorous and Potassium applications are balanced across multiple years. Note- if additional P and K are being applied to a small grain crop to balance the nutrient needs for the subsequent double-cropped soybean crop, the NM plan should be extended to 1.5 years to show the balance zeroing out in the next season.
5. "Previous Conditions" for crops must be included in each 1-year revised plan to show continuity in cropping history from the previous season, and to ensure that any Nitrogen residual credits from previous legume crops are allocated appropriately.

If all conditions are applicable, the private planner can contact DCR for approval to submit 1-year plans annually as part of their Direct Pay contract.

All other guidelines for participation in the Direct Pay program remains valid.

Contacts for the Direct Pay program can be found under the "Contacts" tab at DCR's Direct Pay website:

<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/soil-and-water/nmdirectpay>.

The Enhanced Nutrient Management Best Management Practices form can be found at:

<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/form/DCR199-244a.pdf>.