



**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

### **Hardin County Extension News Release**

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## **Plan to Keep Nutrients in the Field**

*Hardin County* – While Lake Erie did not have a “major” drinking water crisis this year; harmful algae blooms (HAB) and nutrient runoff were an issue due to excess summer rains. Government officials were more prepared and most of the HAB blooms occurred further out in the lake. The 2015 HAB rated a 10.5 (1=Good, 10=Bad) compared to 2014. To reduce future HAB problems, farmers are encouraged to develop nutrient management plans.

The Nutrient Management Plan Writers are a team working to assist farmers in developing Nutrient Management Plans (NMP) in the Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB) of Ohio. Plans provide both fertility recommendations and an environmental site risk for fields that help identify resource concerns impacting nutrient and sediment loss. So farmers wanting to apply for EQUIP cost share funds will need to have a plan before they will be funded.

The plans provide general guidelines on 4R Nutrient Stewardship practices for your farm resulting in the “Right” rate, source, timing and placement of nutrients to maximize efficiency in fertilizer use. These plans also meet criteria needed for “affirmative defense” once coupled with other criteria defined in Ohio law. They are provided without cost to the participants. Ohio contributors to the project include the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation, Ohio Soybean Council, Ohio Small Grains Marketing Program, Ohio Corn Marketing Program, and Ohio State University

Extension. The program is funded from a grant through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

To summarize current Ohio law, a Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) can take several forms, including those originating from the OSU Nutrient Management Workbook, the Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) meeting all of the requirements of NRCS, or a plan equivalent to those and approved by the Director of the Ohio Department of Agriculture or his designee and contains at a minimum, information on current soil tests, 4Rs for all nutrients utilized, fields covered by the plan, crops grown, and yield information.

While each individual will base their decision on whether to do a NMP on one or more factors specific to their farm, some reasons farmers might want to consider doing a CNMP include potential to reduce fertilizer costs, potential to increase yields, maximize nutrient use efficiency and minimize nutrients leaving the field, potentially qualify for NRCS/FSA reimbursement for EQUIP program practices, serve as a basis of “affirmative defense” as stated in Ohio law against private civil lawsuits. These plans are provided at no financial cost to individuals but will require an investment of your personal time.

This summary is intended to provide “food for thought”. The information about your operation necessary to create a NMP that meets NRCS requirements is detailed and you will want to investigate the process before making a decision. Producers will need to have soil tests within the last two years and provide information about field rotations, implements, management practices, water sources and more. OSU Extension recommends you contact a member of our team to begin the process if you are a grain farmer. Our team will travel to interested individuals who farm in the Western Lake Erie Basin, which for the most part includes farms north of State Route 309 in Hardin County.

The following trained individuals are available and will assist in developing crop nutrient management plans:

-Tony Campbell, OSU Extension Paulding County, 503 Fairground Drive, Paulding, OH 45879  
Telephone: 419-399-8225 email: campbell.94@osu.edu

-Linda Lauber, OSU Extension Fulton County, 8770 State Route 108, Wauseon, OH 43567  
Telephone: 419-337-9210, email: lauber.40@osu.edu

-Ken Mauer, OSU Extension Wood County, 639 South Dunbridge Road, Bowling Green, OH 43402  
Telephone: 419-354-9050 email: mauer.13@osu.edu

-Jessie Schulze, OSU Extension Defiance County, 6879 Evansport Road, Suite B, Defiance, OH 43512  
Telephone: 419-782-4771 email: schulze.72@osu.edu

For more information on crop nutrient management plans, contact Greg LaBarge, Program Supervisor & Field Specialist, Agronomic Systems, at labarge.1@osu.edu or Mark Badertscher, OSU Extension – Hardin County at 419-674-2297.

Locally, the Hardin Soil & Water Conservation District has existing staff members (Megan Burgess and Howard Lyle) to help landowners with their nutrient management and livestock manure nutrient plans. With field maps and soil test data, the district's goal is to follow the Tri-State recommendations to complete the plan. The focus is on phosphorus but nitrogen and potash nutrients are also analyzed. The district also encourages farmers and retailers to follow the 4R's: Right Source, Right Rate, Right Time, and Right Place. SWCD Staff can be contacted at 419-673-0456 extension 3, or at their office located at 12751 State Route 309 in Kenton.

*\*This article was adopted from OSU Extension brochure "Nutrient Management Plan Development Program" by Jim Hoorman, OSU Extension – Putnam County and revised by Mark Badertscher, OSU Extension – Hardin County.*