

# IMPACT



Twin Falls County, 246 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue East, Twin Falls, Idaho 83301; 208-734-9590; Fax: 208-733-9645

## Nutrient Management Planner's Training Program

### *The Situation*

Growth of the livestock industry, concern over water quality and the rise in public awareness of the environment has increased the need to improve management of livestock waste. The Idaho State Legislature authorized the Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) to require nutrient management plans for all dairies. Dairies not completing a nutrient management plan lost their permits to ship milk. Later the legislature included nutrient management plans as a requirement for all beef operations that were classed as Confined Animal Feeding Operations.

In addition to the state requirements for Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans (CNMP), the USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service's (NRCS) Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) requires a CNMP in order for producers to receive funding to improve the environmental quality and sustainability of their farms. The EQIP requirement for a CNMP that is prepared by a Certified Nutrient Management Planner created a need to train NRCS personnel. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) permit requirement also mandates a CNMP for all large livestock operations.

There was no program in Idaho that identified the standard to become a certified nutrient management planner. There clearly was a need to provide a certification program and the necessary training to meet the demand for Certified Nutrient Management Planners.

In addition to a certification and training program for CNMP planners, it became apparent that there was a

need for a software program, which could be used by certified planners to develop plans. A group of individuals from the ISDA, the U.S. EPA, Idaho Division of Environmental Quality (IDEQ), the University of Idaho and USDA NRCS began to develop the OnePlan software program that could be used to develop plans.

### *Our Response*

The ISDA, University of Idaho Extension and USDA NRCS worked jointly to develop standards for becoming a Certified Nutrient Management Planner. The team also developed and presented the course of instruction that would lead to becoming a Certified Nutrient Management Planner.

Upon completion of the initial training, prospective planners were required to submit two nutrient management plans, which were to be reviewed and approved by ISDA personnel to complete their certification.

Over 300 individuals were provided the initial training to become Certified Nutrient Management Planners. Due to the complexity of completing the plans, many of those who participated determined that they did not have sufficient skills to become certified. Many of those trained also expressed frustration due to the lack of a clear format for plans and changes in plan requirements.

University of Idaho Extension faculty also served as members of the steering committee for the development OnePlan software, which has become the standard format for nutrient management plans for ISDA and NRCS in the state of Idaho. Extension faculty provided technical assistance in the development of the software, specifically in the

sections dealing with animal production, crop production and irrigation water management.

The Idaho OnePlan software incorporates the interactions involving livestock, soil, irrigation, crop production and water quality when developing a CNMP. The program provides the GIS precision mapping and the associated data needed to develop CNMPs based on the field specific soils data and limiting soil features such as water table and underlying soil characteristics.

Once the OnePlan software was completed, certified planners required training in order to use the software. The training was needed to insure that planners would create CNMPs that would meet both ISDA and NRCS requirements. University of Idaho Extension faculty assumed a leadership role in developing the curriculum to train those who were using of the OnePlan software. Upon completion of the training these planners became certified in the use of the OnePlan software.

Considering the relatively small number of certified nutrient management planners and the upcoming requirement for many beef producers to submit a CNMP to meet state and federal requirements, the steering committee determined a need to once again provide a CNMP planner training program. University of Idaho Extension faculty took leadership to develop a revised training curriculum that will be used to train additional nutrient management planners. Current plans include training sessions for new NRCS, ISDA, University of Idaho Extension personnel and individuals in private industry who are interested in becoming CNMP planners.

## ***Program Outcomes***

The two-day recertification training using the OnePlan software was provided to 82 individuals from NRCS, ISDA and University of Idaho Extension who had received prior training toward certification. All of the individuals who were trained successfully completed a sample plan, which was a part of the training. Those who had previously been certified as planners were recertified using the OnePlan software.

An additional two-day recertification training session was also held for private consultants who

had been certified as nutrient management planners. There were 11 private consultants in the session. At the conclusion of the training, all of those in attendance were successful in the completion of a sample plan using the OnePlan software and as a result were recertified.

A training session was held for potential new planners using the newly developed training curriculum. The session spanned four days. Attendees were given an in depth training in GIS mapping, soils, irrigation, livestock production, crop production and resource concerns. There were 12 individuals who attended this session. All 12 finished the training and successfully completed the required sample plan. Each of the attendees must now submit 2 actual plans for review to fulfill the requirements for certification.

Two additional sessions have been scheduled for June and July of 2004 to provide initial instruction for an additional 20+ individuals who are on the waiting list for training.

An additional benefit of the development of the training program has been the excellent working relationship that has resulted between the regulatory agencies and the University of Idaho Extension. These groups meet regularly to review the educational programs, which are needed to maintain a highly trained cadre of Certified Nutrient Management Planners.

## ***For More Information***

Bob Ohlensehlen, Extension Educator  
Twin Falls County  
246 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue East  
Twin Falls, ID 83301  
208-734-9590  
Fax: 208-733-9645  
Email: [boohlens@uidaho.edu](mailto:boohlens@uidaho.edu)

Steve Salisbury, Extension Educator  
Twin Falls County  
246 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue East  
Twin Falls, ID 83301  
208-734-9590  
Fax: 208-733-9645  
Email: [stevens@uidaho.edu](mailto:stevens@uidaho.edu)