Digging In
A Nutrient Management Course for Farmers

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The UNIVERSITY of VERMONT EXTENSION
This training manual has been developed by the University of Vermont Extension to facilitate the instruction of a nutrient management course for livestock farmers. During the course, farmers learn to develop and implement their own nutrient management plans, and gain an understanding of how their plans were put together, and the importance of nutrient management planning from both economic and environmental perspectives.

The course aims to provide a comfortable, small-group, learning opportunity for the farmers. Once the course is finished, class participants will have generated nutrient management plans following Vermont’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) 590 Nutrient Management Standard. A multi-agency educational team conducts the program. The course is taught over a five-week period with participants attending a three-hour session each week. The farmers will spend approximately fifteen hours in classroom instruction and activities to estimate annual animal manure quantities, document and plan crop rotations, identify fields with manure spreading restrictions, analyze soil test reports, and calculate on-farm nutrient credits for animal manure and legumes. Farmers will also spend an estimated twenty hours at home writing their nutrient management plans. This guide is designed to present some of the instruction that is given in the course. In addition, it gives instructions on how to use the UVM Extension Nutrient Management Computer Workbook. This is an Excel file that will work on computers with Microsoft Excel 1997–2003 or newer versions.
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