

## Getting Ready For the Course

**I**t is very important that you communicate with various agencies well in advance of the course so that you have all of the necessary materials on day one of the course. It can take as long as six months to collect all of the information listed below. Make sure that you allow yourself plenty of time before the course to gather the materials needed to complete your Nutrient Management Plan (NMP).

You will need to have the following pieces of information for Session I:

### Current Soil Test Results

Soil test results must be no more than three years old. Samples must have been analyzed at the UVM Agricultural and Environmental Testing Lab or at another lab that uses the modified Morgan extractant. It is best to have soil test results from all farm fields at the time of the class, but at a minimum, 50% of fields should have current soil tests.

### Current Manure Analyses

A manure sample needs to be taken from each manure storage facility every year. Therefore, if you have two manure storage facilities, each one should be sampled at least once per year. This is a requirement because the nutrient content of manure varies widely between different storage facilities, farms, and even between different seasons.

### Manure Production Information

This is a calculation of how many gallons or tons of manure, bedding waste, and waste water are produced on your farm each year. This number should be calculated by a Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) employee or a land treatment planner using the Vermont manure screening tool. The amount of waste produced should be calculated separately for each manure storage facility.

### Maps

Six different types of maps are required to complete a NMP. These maps are usually created by a land treatment planner or NRCS soil conservationist. A NMP must have each of the following types of maps for all land included in the plan.

#### WHAT IS A LAND TREATMENT PLANNER?

**A** land treatment planner is someone who helps develop maps, crop rotations, and other important pieces of a nutrient management plan. In Vermont, they work for the local conservation districts. Get to know your local land treatment planner!

**Proximity.** This map shows the location of the farm in relation to landmarks such as roads and towns.

**Conservation Plan.** This map gives acreage and Farm Service Agency (FSA) tract and field numbers for each field, and erodibility and wetland determinations (if they are available).

**Nitrate Leaching.** This map shows the level of risk for nitrates to leach through the soil to groundwater.

**Topographic.** This map shows landscape features and slope.

**Environmental Concerns.** This map shows the location of wetlands, streams, wells, and other sensitive areas.

**Soil.** This map shows the location of different types of soil on the farm.

## **RUSLE2 Calculations**

RUSLE2 is a computer program that is used to predict soil loss or erosion from your farm fields. The amount of potential soil loss from each field is based on a variety of soil and management factors. Erosion rates are calculated over the course of the cropping cycle that is used by the farmer. The erosion rate for each field must be at or below the tolerable soil loss level for that particular soil type.

These calculations will be completed in collaboration with a NRCS employee or a land treatment planner.

## **Soil Fact Sheets**

Each type of soil present on the farm should have a corresponding fact sheet that lists characteristics of that soil. These factsheets can be obtained from NRCS or a land treatment planner.