



WINTER NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PLANNING CHECKLIST

1. Check Manure Storage Capacity

Before winter arrives check for capacity. A full lagoon in winter leaves little room for excess water.

- Confirm lagoons and storage can hold manure, process water, and runoff before winter
- Inspect liners, berms, and agitation points for erosion
- Identify emergency or backup storage options

2. Be Strategic with Fall Applications

Timing and placement matter. Well-timed applications reduce runoff risk and protect nutrients.

- Do not apply on frozen or snow-covered ground
- Wastewater application typically ends November 15 (ISDA) depending on weather
- Incorporate manure or liquids when possible
- Follow setbacks and buffer requirements

3. Use Cover Crops to Capture Nutrients

Hold nutrients through winter. Cover crops keep nutrients where crops can use them.

- Rye and triticale establish quickly
- Reduce erosion and nutrient loss
- Improve soil stability
- Potential fall or spring grazing value

4. Review Your Nutrient Management Plan

Winter is planning season. Accurate records support compliance and long-term fertility.

- Test all land-applied manure annually
- Align applications with crop removal rates
- Soil test before applying manure
- Avoid phosphorus-limited fields (300 ppm cap)
- Update your Phosphorus Index annually

5. Prepare for Spring Thaw Runoff

It's one of the highest risk periods. Proactive steps prevent nutrient loss during snowmelt.

- Maintain grassed waterways and buffers
- Inspect drainage systems and tile outlets
- Reinforce berms around facilities and stockpiles

6. Start Nutrient Efficiency in the Barn

Field protection begins indoors. Efficient feeding reduces pressure on storage systems.

- Balance rations to avoid overfeeding phosphorus
- Keep lots and barns clean
- Manage bedding to control moisture
- Fix water leaks promptly

Plan Now. Protect Later.

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