

Dept. of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection: Reminds farmers to check runoff risk prior to spreading manure

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MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) is reminding farmers and manure applicators to check the Runoff Risk Advisory Forecast before spreading manure on fields. This tool helps determine the potential for manure runoff from a field depending on weather conditions and soil temperature. Users can access this tool at <https://runoffriskadvisory.wi.gov>.

The Runoff Risk Advisory Forecast includes maps showing short-term runoff risk for manure application. The maps account for soil saturation, temperature, and precipitation on a scale of 1.5 square-mile grids. The risk maps are updated four times daily with the latest information from the National Weather Service.

“Nutrient management planning is essential to applying manure responsibly and protecting water quality,” said Andrea Topper, DATCP nutrient management outreach specialist. “The Runoff Risk Advisory Forecast supports that effort by helping farmers evaluate current field conditions and short-term weather before spreading.”

For more information about nutrient management planning, visit https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/NutrientManagement.aspx.

Alternatives to High-Risk Manure Spreading

Farmers should contact their crop consultant or [county land conservation office](#) for

help identifying alternatives to high-risk spreading. Larger farms with a Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit can also contact the [Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources \(DNR\)](#). These professionals can help identify fields where the risk is lower and alternative practices, such as stacking manure in a safe location.

Manure Spill Requirements

DATCP reminds manure haulers and drivers to put safety first when traveling on roadways in order to avoid spilling manure, prevent injuries, and protect the health of people and the environment.

“Recent data shows that late winter and early spring runoff incidents dropped by more than 30% from 2020 to 2024, compared to those that occurred from 2015 to 2019,” said Kevin Erb, University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension conservation professional training program manager. “This decline in runoff is due in part to farmers and professional applicators utilizing tools like the Runoff Risk Advisory Forecast and changing their practices.”

All agriculture and livestock operations must report spills or runoff that have the potential to impact surface or groundwater to the DNR’s 24-hour emergency spills hotline at (800) 943-0003. More information about planning and prevention is available at <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/agbusiness/manurespills.html>.