Nutrient Management Planning Tools for Agriculture

Compass Informatics, an Irish information and location technologies company, has announced its appointment as contractor to design and develop Nutrient Management Software Tools to serve the nutrient management planning needs of Irish farmers. Using web-based tools, digital mapping, and a nutrient management planning 'wizard' the technology team will develop tools which allow farmers to target increasingly limited nutrients to where they are needed on their farms.

Emphasis is being placed on ease of use as the system will be used by up to five hundred farm advisors, who will use the system to produce Nutrient Management Plans for farmers. In order to help farmers to make full use of their plan it will be presented in a user friendly manner and will contain meaningful information that will assist with nutrient use at farm level. This will have advantages for cost effective farming while also taking good environmental practice into account. The system will also be capable of enhancement over time to reflect changing needs and regulations and will be capable of handling the expected increased demand for Plans over coming years.

Soil analysis

Teagasc, the agriculture and food development authority in Ireland, currently provide nutrient advice based on individual soil test reports and the Soil Analysis Online (SAOL) System. Individual soil test reports are combined into whole-farm nutrient management plans (NMP) since the onset of the Nitrates Regulations which began to impact on NMP activities in 2007. Prior to this, and in the absence of mandatory nutrient regulations, most nutrient management plans prepared by Teagasc were associated with the REPS scheme, which was optional for farmers, and the nutrient management planning component of which was included as part of eREPS and other REPS planning software. The new tools will improve this situation through provision of a centralised web-based software system to deal with fertilizer planning (and subsequently derogation fertilizer plans) and to ensure quality control on the information being delivered to farmer clients.

The system used best practice IT tools and development approaches using Microsoft .Net technologies, and will integrate with selected other Teagasc systems for effective management of soil samples and other data required for the nutrient management planning process. Compass Informatics already provide nutrient management systems and land and water management systems to organisations including the Environmental Protection Agency, Severn Trent Water, Inland Fisheries Ireland, Bord na Móna, local authorities, and private landowners.

Following a public tendering procedure, Compass Informatics were appointed to design and develop the system. Work has now commenced with a delivery date to Teagasc in early 2015.

https://www.gim-international.com/content/news/nutrient-management-planning-tools-for-agriculture