

The Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy - Key Points for IFCA Members



**Illinois Fertilizer &
Chemical Association**
Supply • Service • Stewardship

1. The Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy (INLRS) will be released for a 60 day public comment in November 2014. It is an approximately 150 page document. USEPA is requiring states to develop these strategies to address the nutrients that USEPA attributes to the cause of the Gulf of Mexico Hypoxia zone.
2. Once released for public comment, the document can be assessed at <http://www.epa.state.il.us/water/nutrient/index.html>
3. The document was developed by the Illinois EPA and the Illinois Department of Agriculture, with input from a Policy Working Group made up of persons representing wastewater treatment plants, agriculture, environmental groups and universities. This workgroup met for 18 months to develop the document; the science assessment behind the nutrient loss reduction targets was developed by a team from the University of Illinois. IFCA is a member of the policy workgroup.
4. The strategy provides a framework to reduce nutrient losses to improve Illinois water quality and the quality of the water leaving the state and entering the Gulf of Mexico. The key elements of the strategy are:
 - a. It covers both point and non-point source contributions.
 - b. For agriculture, the focus is on reducing nutrient losses, not reducing nutrient use.
 - c. Agriculture (non-point) is challenged with reducing nitrogen losses by 200 million pounds by 2025 and phosphorus losses by 18 million pounds by 2025. Maps illustrate the areas that are contributing to nutrient losses according to the science assessment.
 - d. Point sources also have reduction targets. Nitrogen is more of an issue for agriculture; phosphorus more of an issue for wastewater treatment plans.
 - e. Illinois is building upon current programs to better assess what is effective in reducing nutrient losses and correlating those programs to water quality monitoring results.
 - f. For agriculture, voluntary implementation of practices to reduce nutrient losses is the focus, and agriculture must begin to account for these practices to show increased adoption of these efforts within our industry. Wastewater treatment plans and industrial sources will have to reduce losses through mandates of the NPDES permits to discharge.
5. The 4Rs of Nutrient Stewardship (Right Source, Right Rate, Right Time, Right Place) is a framework that ag retailers and certified crop advisers can embrace to promote improved nutrient utilization in order to reduce nutrient losses. The 4R program is recognized in the ILNRS.
6. IFCA is working with other agricultural groups on the Illinois Council of Best Management Practices to help coordinate education on nutrient BMPs that can reduce nutrient losses.
7. There are many activities outlined in the ILNRS that suggest methods to reduce nutrient losses in the agricultural sector. Some of these may not be profitable for farmers. Only activities in which published, peer reviewed papers are available can be included in the ILNRS. New research is being funded in Illinois by NREC to measure what 4R practices for nitrogen and phosphorus application can result in a measured reduction in nutrient losses. The strategy will be updated to include new findings over time.

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