



Washington  
State Department of  
Agriculture

# Nutrient Management Technical Services 2024 Annual Impact Report

In 2024, the Dairy Nutrient Management Program was renamed to **Nutrient Management Technical Services (NMTS)**. The program continues two decades of dairy compliance work and is expanding efforts to provide nutrient management technical guidance to farmers and manure managers. This change aligns with our goal of supporting farmers in meeting environmental standards and improving nutrient management practices, while ensuring water quality and farming viability.

## 2024 PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS

Our work in 2024 demonstrates the impact and importance of follow-up visits and technical assistance provided by the program to support compliance with water quality laws. Compliance rates increased, as did total number of inspections.

**268 inspections**

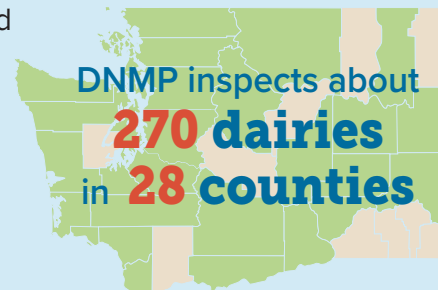
**Compared to 203 in 2023.**

**2024:** 149 routine inspections,  
56 follow-up inspections,  
49 technical assistance visits, and  
14 water quality investigations.

**190 facilities visited**

Through our dairy compliance program, staff inspect each dairy farm at least once every two years. **190 out of 270** dairies were visited in 2024, and **52** were visited multiple times.

**88%** of dairies found in compliance overall, compared to **81% in 2023**



### Yakima Nitrate Project

NMTS continued its partnership with state and local agencies using new legislative funding to reduce nitrate pollution from agriculture in the Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Management Area. The program's nutrient management specialists increased dairy inspections and provided voluntary assistance to other farmers who are working to improve nitrogen management and irrigation practices. NMTS and WSDA's Natural Resource Agricultural Science Program supported Washington State University's development of a new nitrogen and fertilizer application tool for growers. NMTS partnered with South Yakima Conservation District to provide free and confidential technical service programs and incentives for nutrient management. Finally, NMTS joined other leaders at community outreach events to raise awareness of groundwater nitrate concerns.



## Nutrient Management Field Day

In August 2024, NMTS hosted 50 dairy and livestock producers with local CD and NRCS staff for a field day in Whatcom County. The event focused on building climate resilience, and continuing education on manure management and soil health. This project is funded by a Department of Health Natural Estuary Program grant.



## Building nutrient management resiliency for a changing climate in NW watersheds

NMTS is working to help manure managers in Northwest Washington to reduce risks of bacteria runoff by promoting long-term planning, adaptive management practices, and building flood preparedness in response to a changing climate. In collaboration with the Whatcom, Skagit, and Snohomish Conservation Districts, NMTS conducts water quality monitoring and educates landowners to improve nutrient management and flood resilience on livestock farms.

Key components of the project include:

- Manure management, storage, and rainwater diversion.
- Infrastructure resilience and flood readiness.
- Comprehensive long-term nutrient management planning.
- Consideration of future precipitation patterns.
- Ongoing climate resiliency discussions with producers and technical experts.



## Climate and greenhouse gas mitigation

Climate and greenhouse gas mitigation remains a priority for Washington. NMTS is partnering with WSU and Washington State Conservation Commission to address barriers to climate mitigation on farms. One key project, "Pathways for Change," focuses on identifying cost-effective strategies to reduce the climate footprint of milk production, with results expected by Summer 2025.

With Climate Commitment Act (CCA) funding for dairy digesters expected in future years, NMTS staff are available to assist producers with grant applications and planning for climate-smart practices funded by the CCA.



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