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The 4R Certification standards were created by the 4R Ontario Steering Committee in close collaboration with the Nutrient Stewardship Council, the Ohio Agri-Business Association and The Fertilizer Institute in the U.S. to ensure alignment between cross-border efforts to implement 4R Nutrient Stewardship and minimize nutrient losses under the 4R Certification Program. The standards are reflective of the best available science, technology and regulatory requirements for Ontario conditions.

Members of the 4R Ontario Steering Committee represent a diversity of stakeholders including Fertilizer Canada; the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA); the Ontario Agri Business Association (OABA); the Grain Farmers of Ontario; the Ontario Federation of Agriculture; the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario; Conservation Ontario; The Nature Conservancy – Ohio; the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change; the International Plant Nutrition Institute; the Ontario Certified Crop Advisor Board; and Ontario agri-retailers.



Right Source @ Right Rate, Right Time, Right Place®

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FERTILIZER CANADA

Program administered by Fertilizer Canada on behalf of the 4R Ontario Steering Committee



4R Nutrient Stewardship Certification Program in Ontario

Voluntary program for Ontario agri-retailers and nutrient service providers implementing 4R Nutrient Stewardship

About

4R Nutrient Stewardship is being implemented across Ontario through a Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC), formalized in 2015 alongside the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs; Fertilizer Canada; and the Ontario Agri Business Association (OABA). The three MOC signatories collaborated with the previously mentioned partners to form the 4R Ontario Steering Committee. The Ontario 4R Certification program, modeled after the program being adopted by agri-retailers in Ohio, encourages agri-retailers, nutrient service providers and certified professionals to adopt science-based, proven 4R Nutrient Stewardship best management practices (BMPs).

4R Nutrient Stewardship BMPs must be customized to fit each farm's unique climatic, soil, cropping and operational conditions. Continuous improvement can be achieved by employing science that optimizes the economic, social and environmental performance of BMPs utilized in implementing the voluntary 4R Nutrient Stewardship program in Ontario. These standards, and the corresponding evidence to meet those standards, will be audited by a private, third-party to provide a consistent, recognized program for Ontario agri-retailers.

4R Nutrient Stewardship



4R Nutrient Stewardship works to increase production/profitability for growers while ensuring the future of the agricultural industry.

RIGHT



SOURCE

The **Right Source** means ensuring a balanced supply of essential plant nutrients including granular fertilizers, liquid fertilizers and/or manures.

RIGHT



RATE

The **Right Rate** is applying just enough fertilizer to meet the needs of the plant while accounting for the nutrients already in the soil.

RIGHT



TIME

The **Right Time** means applying fertilizer when the plant will get the most benefit and avoiding times when fertilizer can be lost to the environment.

RIGHT

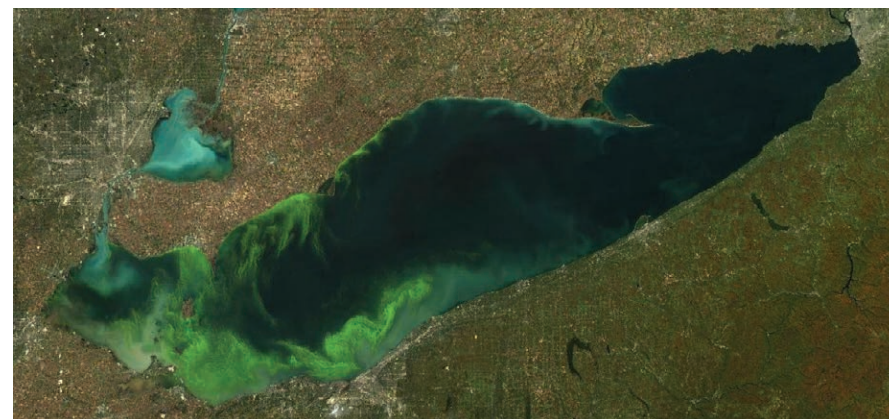


PLACE

The **Right Place** is where the plants can easily use fertilizer and where it is less likely to be lost to the water or air.

Why?

The Ontario agriculture industry is committed to working towards the long term improvement of the Great Lakes water quality. By supporting the need to protect and restore the ecological health of the Great Lakes, we are committed to being a part of the solution to ensuring the Great Lakes remain “drinkable, swimmable and fishable.” The industry recognizes the potential for regulations, the importance of environmental stewardship and its role in ensuring the proper use of fertilizer.



ALGAL BLOOMS IN LAKE ERIE

Additionally, end-use customers are starting to demand that steps be taken to prove the agricultural industry is committed to sustainable practices. Food companies and sustainable supply chain initiatives recognize the value of the 4R Nutrient Stewardship framework so we can assist growers in addressing compliance questions and assist in accessing new markets for their products. It will be critical for members of Canada's value chain to respond in a proactive and cohesive manner to the challenges and opportunities presented by the growing global demand for sustainably grown ingredients.

The complete
4R Certification Standards Manual
is available at 4rcertified.ca

How?

The 4R Certification program in Ontario is comprised of 37 auditable standards. Of that total: six address training and education, 12 address nutrient recommendations, 10 address nutrient application and nine address maintenance of proper documentation. Each standard and the corresponding evidence to meet those standards will be re-evaluated on a two-year cycle by a private, third-party auditor, via an in-person audit, to maintain certification.

Goals

Optimize crop uptake of nutrients and minimize nutrient losses

Create long-term positive impacts on water bodies associated with agricultural production areas, including the reduction of eutrophication and incidence of harmful algal blooms, and helping to meet water quality standards

Encourage sharing of the most up-to-date information about responsible nutrient stewardship with Nutrient Service Providers and growers; and other interested groups

Help the agricultural sector adapt to new research and technology in the area of nutrient stewardship

Third Party Audit

The Agri-Chemical Warehouse Standards Association (AWSA) is the third-party audit body conducting the 4R Certification Program audits in Ontario

Audits evaluate all four categories of standards: training and education, nutrient recommendation and application, and documentation

Audits occur on a two-year cycle to maintain certification

Benefits for Ontario Agri-retailers

By helping growers complete a 4R plan to get their acres counted, a retailer is getting the first and best opportunity to fully understand the growers' fertilizer requirements

4R is based on current, region-specific nutrient best management practices

Becoming 4R Certified allows Ontario retail locations to use the 4R sustainability certification and communicate to growers and external stakeholders that they are part of the solution

Staff earn CCA credits for training

It's the right thing to do at the right time

Allows retailers to show they have their grower customers' best interest in mind as 4R Nutrient Stewardship can help growers realize inefficiencies in their use of fertilizer on their farms and find bottom line savings for more effective and economical use