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Webcast Series Resumes With the “Value of Manure in Energy Production”

Note: The incorrect date for this webcast was given in the last newsletter. The correct date for this presentation is September 21, 2007.

From campfires in the old west, to the highly engineered systems of today, animal manure has long been recognized as a viable source of energy. What types of technologies are being developed to capture the energy value of manure? What situations are good candidates for these technologies? Bill Boyd, engineer and leader of the NRCS National Manure Management Team will discuss experimental technologies as well as those that are already being demonstrated and situations for which these technologies are best suited.

No discussion on this topic is complete without an overview of the economic considerations. Kelly Zering, an economist with North Carolina State University will discuss factors that can affect the economic feasibility of using manure for generating energy on the farm. More information about this webcast can be found at http://lpe.unl.edu/pdfs/07septflyer.pdf.

Date/time: Friday, September 21, 2007 at 2:30 pm (eastern); 1:30 pm (central); 12:30 pm (mountain) and 11:30 am (pacific).

How to participate: Software requirements and instructions for participating in the live webcast can be found at http://lpe.unl.edu/webcast2.html.
Web Soil Survey 2.0 Is a Comprehensive and Useful Resource

What is the largest natural resource information system in the world? That distinction belongs to the NRCS Web Soil Survey (WSS). This online resource provides soil data and information from the National Cooperative Soil Survey. It includes soil maps and data for more than 95 percent of the nation’s counties and NRCS anticipates having 100 percent in the near future.

The WSS does not require special software to operate; it is available through your web browser. If it has been a while since you used this resource, you may want to check out the new features in the recently released version 2 such as improved precision in drawing boundaries and custom maps.

The program has several ways to find the area for which you wish to obtain data including: latitude and longitude, range and township and others. Once you have located the area of interest, it can be selected and other layers of data added. When finished, you can create and print a custom map.

Future plans for the web soil survey include the ability to save an area of interest for future sessions, and to search by rural 911 addresses. The web soil survey can be accessed at http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/.

EPA Funded Research Will Examine Hormones in Manure

There is a great deal of research information available about the effects of hormones on the growth rate and feed efficiency of animals, but little is known about the amount and fate of these hormones once excreted in the manure. This knowledge gap is significant because US Geological Survey and other research has found steroid hormones in water bodies downstream from intensive animal agriculture production areas.

What happens to these compounds after being excreted by the animal? Are there differences between manure storage, handling, or application practices in the risk of hormones reaching water? If they do reach water, what are the effects on aquatic ecosystems?

To answer those questions, EPA has assembled a multi-disciplinary team from several of its laboratories. In addition, several other research projects are being funded by grants through the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) STAR program. These projects will begin work in 2007. Information about the projects that were funded can be found at: http://cfpub.epa.gov/nicer_abstracts/index.cfm/fuseaction/recipients.display/rfa_id/435/records_per_page/ALL.

A workshop on the “Fate and Effects of Hormones in Waste from CAFOs” will be held August 20-22. More information is available at: http://www.scgcorp.com/starawards07/index.html.

The LPE Learning Center will also be hosting two webcasts on this topic during 2008.

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