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LPE Center News, September 2006

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LPE Center News



September 2006

Connecting Experts With Those Advising Producers

<http://lpe.unl.edu>

In this issue:

- *October 20 Web-Cast to Discuss CAFO Regulations.....1*
- *How Do I Connect to the Webcasts?.....1*
- *N. Carolina project Examines Technologies for Waste Management.....2*
- *Small Producers Receive Assistance Through Innovative Program.2*

September 15 Webcast Reminder

“CNMP Development Course and Its Role in Local TSP Education.”

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LPE Webcast Series

October 20 Webcast to Discuss CAFO Regulations

EPA is revising the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitting requirements and Effluent Limitations Guidelines for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) in response to the order issued by the Second Circuit Court of Appeals. This change will impact several key provisions of current EPA regulations governing animal agriculture.

George Utting, who is with the Water Permits Division in EPA’s Office of Wastewater Management, will present these proposed changes for our October 20 seminar. George has provided leadership within EPA in the drafting of the 2003 comprehensive changes to the regulations and these most recent proposed changes. We are fortunate to have this topic addressed by an individual playing a central role in the development of EPA’s CAFO regulations.



George Utting, US EPA

George will discuss the proposed changes in the context of the current 2003 CAFO regulations and the 2nd Circuit Court decision with a focus on:

- Which CAFOs will need an NPDES permit?
- EPA’s expectations for achieving a “Agricultural Storm Water” exemption and why this is critical to CAFOs
- Public disclosure procedures for nutrient management plans.

Date/Time: Friday, October 20, 2:30 pm Eastern, 1:30 pm Central, 12:30 pm Mountain, and 11:30 am Pacific.

How to Attend: Go to <http://lpe.unl.edu/webcast2.html> for directions.

What’s Going On In the LPE Learning Center?

How Do I Connect to the Webcasts?

Those wishing to view the webcast, are encouraged to complete this checklist several days ahead of time. More information is posted at <http://lpe.unl.edu/webcast2.html>.

Step 1: *What software do I need?* Real Player is required to view the webcasts. If you do not have it already, download a free player at real.com.

Step 2: *Test your Connection.* Test your Real Player installation by clicking on the link above. If the test is unsuccessful, contact your IT staff or internet service provider. A common cause of problems is security settings on your computer or network.

Step 3: *Connect to the webcast.* On the appropriate day and time (about 15 minutes before the webcast is scheduled to begin), connect by clicking on the link above or from the <http://lpe.unl.edu> home page. If you experience difficulties connecting or viewing the webcast, contact your IT staff or internet service provider.

N. Carolina Project Examines Technologies for Waste Management

An effort to identify technologies that could replace the lagoon and spray field system used on most North Carolina hog farms has been completed. The project was funded by Smithfield Foods and Premium Standard Farms under agreements they reached with the North Carolina Attorney General in 2000.

Under the "Smithfield Agreement" a team, led by researchers at North Carolina State University, was charged with identifying, developing and evaluating environmentally superior technologies. Of almost 100 candidate technologies submitted, only 18 were selected for evaluation. Technologies that met the environmental performance criteria in the agreement were further evaluated for economic feasibility.

The only liquid treatment system that 'made the cut' involved separating the liquids from the solids and treating the liquids in a series of large metal tanks. Four solids treatment technologies met the performance criteria. One mixes the waste with a carbon source and composting it. Two burn the solids

and collect by-products for other uses. The fourth anaerobically digests the solids to produce biogases.

The economic analyses concluded that these technologies may work for new or expanding operations, but were too expensive to replace existing systems. Researchers pointed out that several other technologies could become economically feasible if modified. The development of financial incentives for using these technologies could also tip the balance.

"This project represented a major effort and while it may not have produced the 'silver bullet' that many hoped for, it has expanded our knowledge base and provides a basis for future research and development to reduce cost and enhance environmental protection" concludes Mark Rice, NCSU extension specialist.

More information about the Smithfield Agreement and the technologies that were evaluated is at http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/waste_mgt/smithfield_projects/smithfieldsite.htm.

Spotlight On...

Small Producers Receive Assistance Through Innovative Program

When it comes to environmental issues surrounding livestock and poultry, most attention is focused on large operations. In fact, many small- and medium-sized farms face challenges similar to their larger counterparts.



A pump used to move runoff from a small debris basin to a vegetative treatment area.

Economic realities and a desire to do the "right thing" motivated several producers to seek creative solutions offered by the Livestock Producer Environmental Assistance Project (LPEAP).

The LPEAP, funded by the Nebraska Environmental Trust, provides cost-share and technical assistance for on-farm demonstrations that minimize environmental risk using new concepts and technologies. Some projects include constructed wetlands, clean water diversions, vegetative treatment areas, low water stream crossings for cattle, lagoon abandonment, and others.

"We want producers, regulators and service providers learn about and evaluate these technologies" says

Chris Henry, University of Nebraska extension engineer. Jason Gross, project coordinator adds, "We hope that we are developing solutions today that will become common conservation practices tomorrow."

One key to the project's success has been strong support from stakeholders, especially NRCS, Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, Nebraska Farm Bureau, and the farmers. "All of the producers who have established a treatment system came to us as volunteers. None of the projects we installed are regulated activities" Henry said.

More information about the LPEAP is available at <http://afo.unl.edu>.



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