

Leon Ressier takes a sample of manure at a local pig farm.

Ressler Heads Up

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Water Program and offers free soil and manure testing. The test results are plugged into a computer along with the farmer's management practices to devise a plan that tells the farmer how much manure to apply and when to spread it in order to increase crop yields.

Ressler considers his work to be part of a voluntary educational program for farmers. "The challenge for us is to find ways to address the water-quality problem through education. The problem can be improved if farmers have the information they need."

The problem with the water is its level of nitrates: water samples taken in the Eastern Lancaster County area exceed the maximum amount considered safe for human consumption. This excess can be attributed to the improper use of manure and commercial fertilizer. Ressler and Stoltzfus are working to alleviate this problem.

In some cases, farmers need only to stop buying additional fertilizer, their livestock's manure being high enough in nutrients for their crops.

But for those with more livestock than their land can support, the answer lies in part in applying less manure, either less often or in smaller quantities. "Farmers buying lots of feed probably have the most serious problem with excess

nutrients," said Ressler. "Most of the nutrients in feed stays on the farm - it's not converted to animal product. In these cases, we encourage the farmer to take the extra manure to rent, sell it, or even give it away."

A big issue in nutrient management is what to do with the additional manure. It is, according to Ressler, a problem yet to be solved.

"One option for farmers with a facility problem is to investigate Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service contracts where the government shares the cost for building a storage container," Ressler commented. "If the problem is an excess of manure

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Part of the problem in dealing with extra manure is that should a buyer be found for it, the cost of transportation is usually more than the manure's nutrients are worth.

"There was a pilot study this summer involving incinerating poultry manure," Ressler com-mented. "But they found that this method wasn't feasible.

"What we need to do," he continued, "is find a way to increase manure's value to be able to effectively eliminate excesses."

In the mean time, Ressler and Stoltzfus will do their part to clean drinking water by testing soil and manure and educating farmers. Ressler's goal is to provide nutrient management plans to 100 farms during the next 12 months.

Atlantic Local Elects Philipp President

SOUTHAMPTON, Pa.-Michael H. Philipp, Kennedyville, Md., was elected president of the Kennedyville Local of Atlantic Dairy Cooperative District 10 at the local's annual meeting Sept. 17.

W. Kent Dulin Jr., also of Ken-

nedyville, was named both vice president and secretary/treasurer. Robert P. Payne, Still Pond, Md., was appointed delegate to attend the cooperative's annual meeting in November. Named alternate delegate was Roy W. Crow, Kennedyville, Md.



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