

Swine Producers Discover

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Normally, a hog will produce about two tons of waste per year. Using a strawdust bedding at 15-25 inches reduces that amount of waste to only about 450 pounds a year — manure and sawdust combined.

The material is basically composted, which would require turning and other management techniques, to ensure that the manure is ready converted and odor is reduced. A drawback is that about 26 cubic feet per meter of air flow would be required per pig per day using the bedding system. The material would have to be mixed at least once a week — which would translate into additional labor hours per day, depending on the size of operation.

Kephart said that this operation is in use in England and other European countries. In this country, the question would be, what

about excessive summertime heating?

Kephart said the concept "is neat, but the logistics are a bit of a disaster."

Pennsylvania generates about 28 million tons of manure, with more than half of that generated by the counties in the southeast alone, according to Gerald Martin, associate, Pequea-Mill Creek Project.

Martin told the farmers that "life isn't as simple as it used to be," since World War II, when the advent of cheap, available nitrogen sources boosted crop output tremendously and paved the way for high-intensity livestock production.

Back then, the farm itself provided all the inputs. But ever since, farms have become increasingly surrounded by urban areas and have easy access to additional feed sources. This translated into additional manure and manure problems.

Farmers need to do more, as part of their social responsibility, to ensure environmental stewardship and achieve the balance necessary for crop nutrient needs.

With the experiences of the Rural Clean Water Project, results indicated that nutrient management plans provide the most effective approach to improving water quality where there was a contamination of groundwater from nutrients, according to Martin.

To help the farmers who attended, a workshop outlined ways in which to see if a balance can be obtained on a farm. The form, reproduced in this issue of *Lancaster Farming*, can be used if there is an excess of nutrients, or a deficiency in nutrient needs on the farm. This form was prepared by the Lancaster County Cooperative Extension.

On page 1, crop nutrient needs, farmers fill in the spaces marked D, for yield goal and in E, how many acres and multiply those factors based upon crop nutrient needs. On page 2, nutrients produced, farmers fill in D, number of animals in the operation; make an adjustment in E, for number of months out of year that the facility is needed; weight adjust, in F, for more accurate animal weight determination; and then multiply those factors to obtain how many nutrients are being produced.

The final figures subtract what lies in excess because of the legume crops, and then subtracts what is needed from what is produced.

Farmers should start seeking help now to begin writing nutrient management plans. The Lancaster County Conservation District has personnel to write plans for farmers, at this time, for no charge. But that could change in the future.

Farmers have a variety of alternatives once a plan is in place to ensure the balance of nutrient needs and environmental stewardship for their high-producing cropland, according to specialists at the Nutrient Management for Pennsylvania Pork Producers on Wednesday at Yoder's Restaurant. Here, Jeff Stoltzfus, Eastern Lancaster Adult Farmer Instructor, right, helps Dave Brubaker, Hershey Ag representative, during the nutrient assessment workshop part of the meeting.

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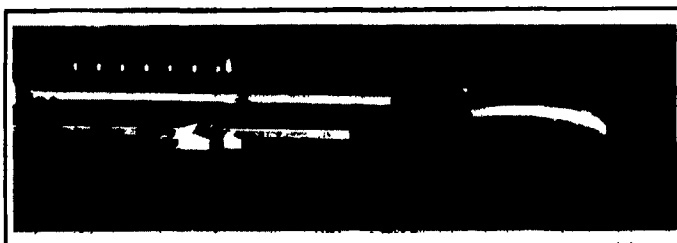


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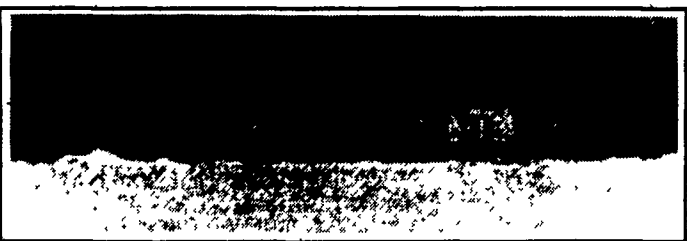


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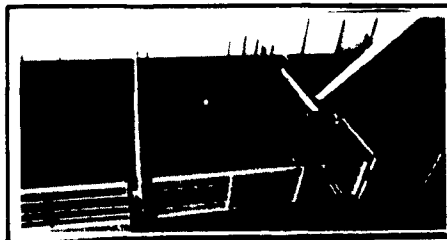
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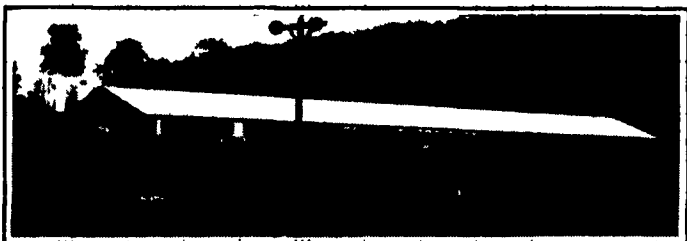
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