

Nutrient Management Plans Will Affect Animal Producers

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — Many of Pennsylvania's livestock producers may be affected by the state's Nutrient Management Act. The act requires livestock operations that generate or use large amounts of animal manure to develop and implement nutrient management plans.

Now is a good time for farm owners and operators to determine whether their facilities will need to comply with the act's requirements, according to an expert in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences.

"The Nutrient Management Act was passed in July, and State Conservation Commission regulations based on the act will be issued within the next two years," said Dr. John Becker, associate professor of agricultural economics. "This gives producers who will be affected an opportunity to get a jump start on nutrient management planning."

Under the act, animal operations that exceed a certain animal density per acre are considered concentrated animal operations

and must develop and implement sound nutrient management plans.

"If a farm's animal density exceeds two animal-equivalent units per acre on an annualized basis, that farm will be required to develop and implement a nutrient management plan," Becker said. "An animal-equivalent unit equals 1,000 pounds of liveweight livestock or poultry, regardless of how many animals comprise the unit."

"Of particular interest in the forthcoming regulations will be the formula developed to calculate a farm's animal density, particularly in a mixed livestock enterprise."

Affected operations in existence when the regulations become effective must prepare a nutrient management plan (NMP) within one year of the effective date of the regulations. "Operations that come into existence or expand after the regulations become effective must prepare a plan within three months after the facility starts operating," Becker said.

The NMP and any plan amend-

ments must be developed by a nutrient management specialist who certifies that the plan was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the act. Plans are to be submitted for review and approval to the local conservation district or to the State Conservation Commission if the farm is in a county that elects to not accept administrative authority.

"Within 90 days, the reviewing agency must either approve, disapprove or modify the plan," Becker said. "The agency must notify the person submitting the plan of its action in writing, and must include a specific explanation for disapproval or modification."

Approved plans must be fully implemented within three years. "This limit can be extended by two years if the plan requires substantial capital improvements," Becker said. "But the owner must demonstrate that the improvement costs cannot be financed through available funding sources, including a Nutrient Management Fund created by the act."

The act also gives farmers a degree of protection from fines, penalties and other complaints. "If nutrient pollution results from actions that are in compliance with an NMP, the farm owner is exempt from fines and penalties under the Nutrient Management Act," Becker said. "This insulates farmers from fines and penalties under the act itself."

"Moreover, if a person is fully and properly implementing an approved management plan, the person's actions are to be considered a mitigating factor in any civil action for damages alleged to

be caused by actions performed under the approved plan."

Becker said that the act does not limit the power of state agencies and departments to enforce other statutes. Common law nuisance claims and state environmental laws such as the Clean Streams Law and the Solid Waste Management Act are unaffected by adoption of the Nutrient Management Act.

For more information about nutrient management, contact your county's Penn State Cooperative Extension office.

Report Potholes On PennDOT Hotline

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — As of March 7, citizens throughout south central Pennsylvania were able to once again use PennDOT's toll-free hotline service to report problem potholes on state roadways.

The hotline is to be available to callers from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. It is to be in operation for four weeks, until April 1.

The toll-free number for PennDOT's District 8, which covers the eight-county region of south central Pennsylvania, is 1-800-932-4855. This area includes Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Lancaster, Lebanon, Perry and York counties.

According to District Engineer Baily Hoffman, the hotline assists PennDOT crews in locating problem potholes that oftentimes develop overnight during this time of year.

"The frequent changes from freezing cold weather to mild weather contributes to the development of potholes throughout our area," Hoffman said. "Quite a number of potholes have developed over the past month. The hotline will assist PennDOT crews in scheduling and making repairs."

Callers who use the hotline service should provide the following information to the hotline operator:

- the location of the pothole in terms of the county, township, city, or borough;
- the traffic route, state route, or local road name where the pothole is located; and
- the location of the pothole based on existing landmarks such as buildings, billboards, signs, etc.

Hoffman reminds callers to call back if the telephone lines are busy, as may be the case during peak periods.

Pothole hotline calls are noted and sent directly to the appropriate county maintenance office for action. Normally, problem potholes are scheduled for repairs within two weeks.

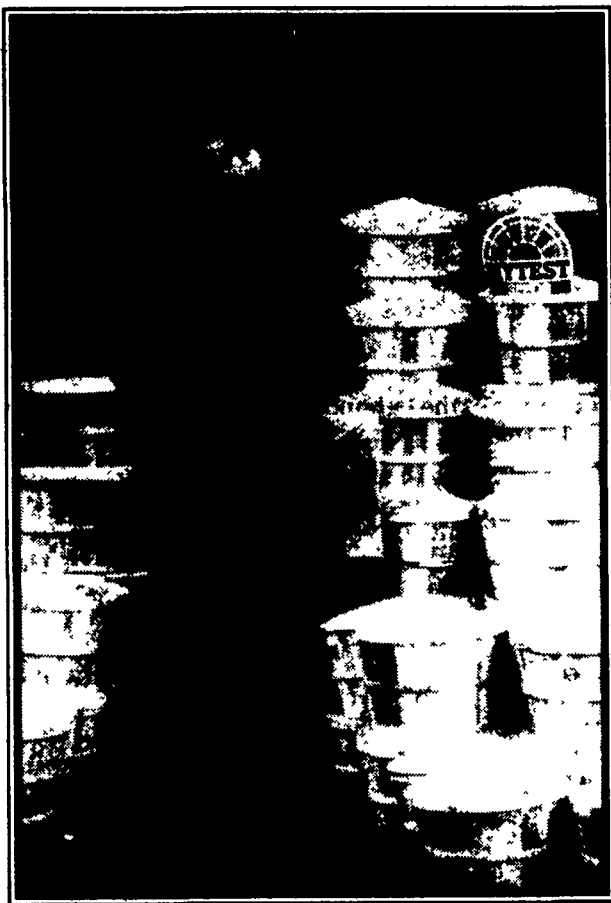
Last year, 440 calls were received on the hotline for the District 8 region.

Lebanon Holds

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Except for a small amount to cover the cost of the hog, the majority of the proceeds she earned from the sale of her grand champion market hog at the Farm Show went to the Farm Show Youth Scholarship Fund and to her church youth group.

Others recognized for many years of service were the Richard and Carol Kreider family, who received a standing ovation from the crowd for their many years of dedication to organizing activities, donating time and money to ensuring that not only the 4-H program, but that the county fair and the fairgrounds were in good shape.



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