

Contingency Plans Help If Weather Creates Manure Problems

ANDY ANDREWS
Lancaster Farming Staff

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — Brutal weather last winter not only contributed to frozen water lines, rolling power outages, and collapsed buildings. Those who handled manure faced additional difficulties as well, including topping off of facilities and a general inability to spread the material.

"Last winter, particularly with the heavy snows, the ice cover, the melting and everything — there were just a lot of complaints that we had to respond to," said Don Robinson, administrator for the Lancaster County Conservation District.

Fines were levied by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission on a few farmers who allowed manure to run into gutters and waterways, a violation of the Pennsylvania Clean Streams Law, according to Derek Pritts, waterways conservation officer with the Commission.

The fines ranged from \$250 to \$5,000 per day. One farmer was cited for a fifth offense, with a fine of \$3,000.

While most farmers are in compliance and do their best, a small percentage need to be aware that a discharge, even if accidental or an act of nature, is still punishable with a fine under the Fish and Boat Code, according to Pritts.

But although the winter was harsh, incidences of violations have remained statistically the same year to year, according to Pritts. Whatever the weather, farmers should have some sort of plans worked out to ensure that discharges do not move into any form of waterway. Discharges include manure, milk, milk waste, silage, and other materials.

"The farmer was really in a bind last winter," said Robinson. "It was such a tough winter. Their manure storages were filled to capacity, threatening to overrun. Even the best of farmers, the good planners, still got caught short."

In some cases, the six-month standard storage plan was exceeded because of the big snows and bitter cold. Farmers couldn't get the pits emptied because of subsequent crusting. They couldn't get out into the fields.

Consequently, farmers were calling for help from the conservation districts all throughout the state. In Lancaster, conservation technicians had a difficult time coming up with adequate recommendations.

Some options were provided, according to Robinson, including placing manure into fields farthest away from a stream or taking the manure to a neighbor's storage unit.

Robinson provided the following "common-sense" approaches to dealing with manure during a harsh winter and what to do to prevent being cited:

- Make sure facilities have adequate storage. The industry standard is six months. Adequate storage is the first priority.

- Have contingency plans in case there is an accident or if bad weather creates an overtopping situation. Know how to contain a possible spill and what to do to clean it up. "Knowing what you're going to do ahead of time is often times good prevention," said Robinson.

- "Ask yourself, if this happens, how will I handle the situation?" said Pritts.

- Put in grass buffer strips between the crop field and the road ditch, especially if the ground slopes near a creek or road ditch. In many cases, an adequate strip can contain manure once melting starts. Soil Conservation Service (now Natural Resource Conservation Service) guidelines call for a 20-foot buffer strip and two feet for every percent of slope, according to Robinson.

- Install adequate conservation

measures. That is "probably the most important thing that farmers can do to head off potential problems like this," said Robinson. These measures include the installation of contour strips, terraces, diversions, tillage options, and good residue management.

But with a harsh winter like last year's, farmers with good conservation practices "experienced

problems," said Robinson. "Even the best of designs, in a winter like last year, where you could not get out in the fields or where you didn't get it completely emptied, the farmers need to have a contingency plan in mind."

It is better to be prepared and to work with the conservation district ahead of time than to face stiff

fines, according to Pritts. The Commission works closely with the district to ensure compliance.

"Most farmers don't like to be caught in a situation like that," said Robinson, "and they're usually very willing to work with the district to come into compliance."

For more information, contact Robinson at the conservation district, (717) 299-5361.

Water Rights Meeting Set

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Regulation of water use and its impact on agriculture has received a lot of attention in the past year.

The regulations which were reviewed in public hearings this past summer have been withdrawn and a new proposal is currently under consideration by the Susquehanna River Basin Commission.

This proposal will be discussed, as well as topics on irrigation management, at a meeting on Feb. 22 at the Sheraton Inn Harrisburg.

The Sheraton is located at the Union Deposit exit (exit 29) off of interstate 83. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. and the meeting will

conclude at noon.

Topics on the agenda include drought patterns in Pennsylvania, designing and managing an overhead irrigation system, designing and managing your trickle irrigation system, and consumptive water use in agriculture.

Other topics to be discussed

include Pennsylvania water law, Maryland's water registration program, and registration of agricultural water use in Pennsylvania — what's in it for agriculture?

For more information or to register, contact Leon Ressler, Penn State extension office, (717) 394-6851.

Get MOOOvin' with Milk!

TROY-BILT

THIS SPRING, GROW WITH A GARDEN LEGEND

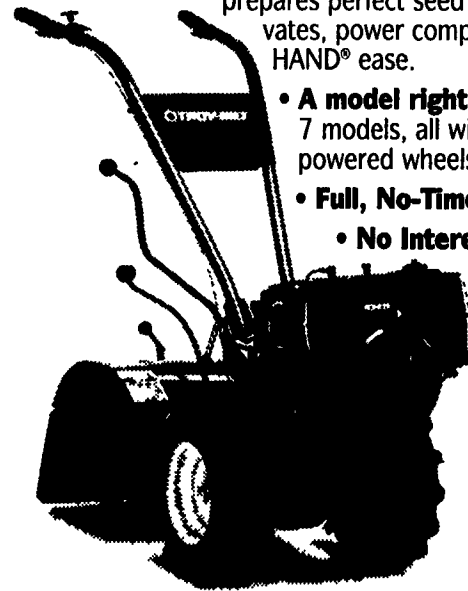
6 Months FREE* Financing!

- Plan ahead now, grow your best garden ever this summer!
- The choice of over 1.2 million of the best gardeners prepares perfect seed beds, weeds, cultivates, power composts with JUST ONE HAND® ease.

- A model right for you: pick from 7 models, all with tines-in-the-rear, powered wheels.

- Full, No-Time-Limit Warranty!

- No Interest*, No Payments for 6 Months for qualified TROY-BILT® Easy Pay customers thru 2/28/95.



Important Information Regarding Credit Terms * After 6 months the APR, based on your state of residence, is as follows AK — 18% on first \$1,000 of balance 7.92% on excess, AR 7.92%, AL, CT, FL, LA, MA, ME, MN, NC, ND, PA, RI, WA, and WI — 18%, KS — 18.96% on first \$1,000 of balance, 14.4% on excess, NE — 18.96% on first \$500 of balance, 18% on excess SC — 16.92% TX — 17.64% WV — 18% on first \$750 of balance, 12% on excess DC and all other states — 18.96% Minimum finance charge is \$ 50 for each billing cycle in which a finance charge is payable (except for residents of AR, CT, DC, HI, ID, KY, LA, MD, NE, NM, NC, ND, OR, and RI)

FINAL OFFER DEADLINE 2/28/95

See us at the **HARRISBURG BUILDERS SHOW**
February 25 Thru March 5

TROY-BILT

HOLLINGER'S
Lawn & Garden Equipment

HERSHEY

EPHRATA

1515 E. Chocolate Ave
533-4060

4126 Oregon Pike
859-5545

Mon. thru Fri. 8-5:30
Financing Available

Sat. 8-12
"We've Got The Power."

Your Yard Care Headquarters!

3 PT. SNOW PLOWS IN STOCK

KUBOTA

FINANCING AVAILABLE

WE SHIP PARTS UPS

LEBANON

RI 47 Box 405 Lebanon PA 17042
RI 419 1 mile West of Schaefferstown
717-949-2000

STORE HOURS

MONDAY-FRIDAY 7:30-5:00
SATURDAY 7:30-12:00

2 Locations

CALL FOR DETAILS ON LEASING

LANCASTER

1950 Fruitville Pike Lancaster PA 17601
At Route 30 & Fruitville Pike
717-569-2500

LOOKING FOR A GOOD USED 4 W/D DIESEL LOADER TRACTOR?

Check These Over - You Won't Be Disappointed!



- KUBOTA B-1550, 17 HP, Cab, 57 Hrs
- KUBOTA B 20 TLB, 20 HP, 442 Hrs
- FORD 1710, 26 HP, Syn, 89 Hrs
- KUBOTA L 2650 DT8, 29 HP, 350 Hrs
- KUBOTA L 2550 GST, 29.5 HP, 390 Hrs
- KUBOTA L 2950 DTW, 31.7 HP, Cab, 321 Hrs
- FORD 1920, **SOLD!** Syn, 1078 Hrs
- KUBOTA L 2650 **SOLD!** ST, 34 HP, W.B.H., 1,250 Hrs
- KUBOTA L 4150 HDT TLB, 50 HP, 900 Hrs

CLEAN - LOW HOURS - WARRANTY