

# Manure 'Odor Guidelines'

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mal facility that is in their neighborhood, whether it be a production facility or a processing facility, they're more likely to be offended by any odors that come from that facility," he said.

If an odor situation develops, the use of odor masking products often aggravates the situation.

It may not be "wise to use a masking agent because the neigh-

was using technology to come up with specific numbers to establish the acceptable "odor units" to use as guidelines, much like that used by European countries. There is no proven technology that will match the human nose — so the university made use of "human sensory panels." People were selected to determine tolerance levels for the presence of odors and to establish protocols. These kinds of efforts are part of litigation procedures in

anything." We thought we needed to address the issue."

There are answers to odor problems, many of which are simply not economically sound. In one case, in Denmark, a facility containing three thermophilic digesters — three tanks each measuring 1,800 cubic meters — digest 400 tons of manure per day. While the central processing facility takes care of potential manure problems, the cost and liability make that prohibitive in the U.S.

In the meantime, U.S. producers can do a great deal to ensure they are protected from odor lawsuits. One is to handle and spread the manure using simple common sense. He noted one case where a North Carolina farmer spread the manure on a hot, humid evening in a field before the start of a high school football game.

Also, forming a strategy to deal

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their neighbors," Williams said.

A producer also spoke at the conference about the challenges and concerns about odors.

Edwin Shank, Scotland, a 100-cow dairy farmer, also manages a 2,000-hog finishing operation. The operation encompasses about 120 acres north of Chambersburg.

About a quarter of a mile away is a shopping mall. Nearby are houses.

Shank spoke at the conference about the litigation he faced after one neighbor filed a complaint and proceedings started.

Shank said the family was "naive" and regretted the fact that they didn't involve the community from the start. "We should have involved the community in the decision-making process" to set up the finishing facility.

Shank said that he did many things, including setting up a tree barrier, to dispel the dust and odors. But he said the family was "shocked and somewhat

offended. We didn't realize anyone was that upset at us."

But Shank emphasized the importance of involving the community in decisions and allow them to see and understand how a farm operation works. It is important to talk to neighbors first and find out what they think. "I told them I was sorry and we were embarrassed," he said.

This "open communication" is essential. And work to reduce odors is important. If they detect that you're not really trying, he said, you'll have problems.

During a group action planning session at the conference, Shank said more public education of farming is necessary. Also, more farmers need to be involved in township decision making.

**Editor's Note:** Next week, part 2 examines ways in which agriculture has examined odor control from a producer and legal standpoint.

*'Whether we like it or not, individuals smell as much with their eyes as they do with their noses.'*

bors perceive that you're just trying to cover up the odor. Their olfactory system starts to sort out the fact that there is an odor along with the mask and they are more angry than they were initially."

Besides, in research on masking effectiveness, the agents simply didn't work.

"We showed that a counteragent and an oxidizing agent were the only two products that significantly improved our odor parameters," he said. "A digestive agent, chemical agent, and absorbent had no impact on odor quality parameters."

A prime benefit of odor research, according to Williams,

Europe and Australia.

They were also used to evaluate masking and other odor abatement products.

"We were getting contacted by


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producers, not on a daily basis, but a significant amount of producers that were telling us, 'I am very frustrated, I have spent revenues on products for odor control and I am not having positive results. My neighbors feel that I am not doing

with the response in a "pro-active way" should involve all the parties. Communication is key.

"My observation in North Carolina is that over 90 percent of the producers do everything they can to minimize the impact of odors to

*'I told them I was sorry and we were embarrassed.'*



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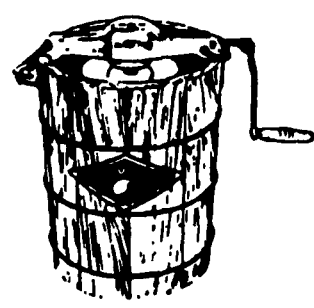
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