

Odor Control Has No Simple Solutions

Last Of A Series

Editor's note: Last week, the odors conference held in New Holland examined the challenges of studying odors and how to control them. This week looks at further studies about odors and how municipalities have reacted to odor concerns.

ANDY ANDREWS

Lancaster Farming Staff
NEW HOLLAND (Lancaster Co.) — When odors are under attack, what must farmers do to stem the problems that arise?

Charles Abdalla, associate professor of agricultural economics at Penn State, told producers and municipal planners at a recent conference here that there is a "diversity" of stockholders in the concerns about odor, flies, and water quality from manure. "It is difficult to generalize about the solutions," he said.

Abdalla reported the results of a "changing landscape" that is "creating a sense of unease." Penn State conducted a mushroom study last year. Twenty-eight of 54 farmers contacted in the study responded. Of the 28 that responded, 41 percent reported there were neighbor complaints from the mushroom farms.

Factors affecting the complaints were farm size, nearby housing density, and the increases in the number of homes near the farm.

Is co-existence possible? "It's possible," said Abdalla, "but there are some cases where it isn't. The problems are very complex and are often interrelated." It's important for all parties involved in the procedure to recognize each other's interests and see change as an ongoing problem.

Abdalla also related a way in which this approach resulted in a "win-win" situation in New York state. There, N.Y. dairy farmers participated in a cost-share water quality program using best management practices. Established was the Watershed Agricultural Council, working with New York City, to ensure fresh water supply from the Catskill Mountains to eastern New York state.

The relationships that developed were fruitful and worked for both parties.

Counties in southeastern Pennsylvania are going through rapid demographic changes, according to Stan Lembeck, professor of agricultural economics and rural sociology at Penn State.

While the population of Pennsylvania has stayed on the same level, 11.7 million, in the past 10 years, there has been a movement of population to many of the agricultural areas in the southeast, away from the cities.

The increasing presence of urban populations will pose a challenge for producers in the year 2000 as they did in 1980 and 1990. About 40 percent of the people now live in the Class II townships, with a population density of 300 people per square mile. These townships are home to many animal agricultural facilities.

One of the first methods used to control odors by people outside of agriculture is township zoning.

"Zoning is sometimes thought of as a magic bullet, a Swiss army knife with a blade for every problem," said Lembeck. This thinking is often detrimental to agriculture.

Zoning sets the standards before

the activity begins, but ignores the challenges faced by a changing environment, economy, and technology. Yet 65 percent of the municipalities — 1,600 of the 2,600 municipalities in Pennsylvania — have some form of zoning laws in place.

Paul Heinemann, associate professor of agricultural engineering at Penn State, provided detail on the study of odor modeling using the stack modeling approach in studies of air pollution. Research is ongoing to study the dynamics of odor formation and movement in the environment.

Some of the legal issues of nuisance regulations were examined by John Becker, Penn State professor of agricultural economics.

Of particular concern are the notions of what is a normal and customary way of farming when markets and technologies are changing so rapidly?

A producer also spoke at the conference about the market challenges producers face on top of the concerns for the environment.

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how, in turn, nuisance litigation could be a concern. Profit margins are shrinking,



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which translates into producing more hogs with less expense. The move is to more hog numbers at

multiple sites, which helps with nutrient management. As a result, producers have had to work with new technology because of the concerns with manure holding area leaks and handling of the material.

Also, hog finishing technology has changed rapidly. In 1984, a typical hog finishing at 210-215 pounds produced a 150-pound carcass with a 1.5-inch backfat measurement. Now, a 255-pound hog has a 190-pound carcass with .65 to .7 inches of backfat.

Producers have had to work closer with the packers to develop products that consumers demand. But along with the demands include a bigger size operation to make feed delivery and feed use more economically feasible.

As a result, the hog industries have moved from the southeast to areas north and west of Harrisburg. About 70-80 percent of the farmers involved in Hostetter's business are dairy farmers that are hog finishing floor producers.

For his farms, "water quality is very important to us." It will be challenging for farmers to keep their industry profitable while at the same time working to ensure a clean environment.

Maryland DHIA Report For November

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Howard County				
Herd Name	Herd Breed	Herd Cows In Milk Avg		
		Breed	Herd T	FCM T
David & James Patrick	H	135		76.2
Paul F. Harrison Jr.	H	96		76.1
Patrick, David & James	Ayrshire	63		68.9
Merry Acres Farm	H	45		67.1
University of Maryland	H	111		65.0
Kent County				
Herd Name	Herd Breed	Herd Cows In Milk Avg		
		Breed	Herd T	FCM T
Centerdel Farm Inc.	H	126		83.5
Fair Hill Farm Inc.	H	253		74.3
P. Thomas Mason	H	77		72.9
Greenwood Acres	H	77		72.7
McGuire Bros. Inc.	H	52		72.5
Larry Yetman	H	38		72.3
Roy W. Crow	H	67		72.1
Wm & Kathleen Schrodol #2	H	145		71.3
R&E Brink	H	62		67.9
Wintacres	H	98		66.2
Clover Leaf Farm	H	62		65.8
Jonas & Ruth Stoltzfus	H	74		65.6
Marva Association				
Herd Name	Herd Breed	Herd Cows In Milk Avg		
		Breed	Herd T	FCM T
Glad-Mar Farm Inc.	H	182		67.8
Montgomery County				
Herd Name	Herd Breed	Herd Cows In Milk Avg		
		Breed	Herd T	FCM T
Beneva Farms	H	68		77.1

Mendelssohn Terrace Farm	H	135		69.6
Clifton Farms	H	128		69.3
Kingstead Farms	H	44		67.4
Potomac Valley Assoc.				
Herd Name	Herd Breed	Herd Cows In Milk Avg		
		Breed	Herd T	FCM T
True Vine Holsteins	H	78		73.8
Queen Annes County				
Herd Name	Herd Breed	Herd Cows In Milk Avg		
		Breed	Herd T	FCM T
Pintail Point Farm	H	85		78.1
Boone Brothers	H	146		75.7
Lester C. Jones, Inc.	H	641		75.7
Benjamin Stanton	H	52		75.5
F&J Moore	H	132		75.5
LJ & WE Palmatary	H	189		72.2
Harry L. Schrader & Sons	H	177		67.2
F. Reed Leaverton	H	92		65.7
Talbot County				
Herd Name	Herd Breed	Herd Cows In Milk Avg		
		Breed	Herd T	FCM T
Wm. Brinsfield	H	62		83.5
Washington County				
Herd Name	Herd Breed	Herd Cows In Milk Avg		
		Breed	Herd T	FCM T
Curtis W. Ausherman	H	169		75.3
Debaugh Farms	H	95		72.9
Marsh-Haven Farm	H	86		70.2
Creek Bound Farm	H	105		66.5
Marvin L. Zimmerman	H	152		66.4
Pryor Brothers	H	93		65.0

Safety Of Foods

A Team Approach

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.)—A Statewide Forum focusing on enhancing the safety of Pennsylvania foods will be held on April 17 at the Harrisburg Hilton and Towers.

The Forum is a component of a four-year project designed to develop educational approaches to food safety. It will be hosted by Penn State Cooperative Extension.

The forum on food safety is open to food producers and processors, representatives from the food service industries, federal and state agencies, academia and consumer groups, and all others involved in the food system. It is designed to encourage the discussion of food safety issues by representatives from all areas of the

food system. The goal of the Forum is to produce a "Food Safety Plan" that will develop and implement educational programs throughout the Pennsylvania food system.

Some of the key issues to be discussed at the Forum will include the state of food safety in Pennsylvania; the complexity and the integrated structure of food systems; and the effect of globalization of the economy, technology and regulatory changes, and consumer choices on the safety of Pennsylvania foods.

The Forum will include keynote speakers and panel discussions with representatives from every sector of the food system. After the panel discussions, Forum participants will be divided into

small, multisector sessions to discuss issues that are critical to developing a food safety plan for Pennsylvania.

The day's activities will end with a dinner and a presentation of results from each work session. Designated delegates from each sector of the Pennsylvania food system will be asked to stay an additional day—April 18—to work on the development of the food safety plan.

For more information on the Forum or the project, contact Claudine Nuemberger, Coordinator, Penn State Cooperative Extension, Department of Veterinary Science, 115 William L. Henning Building, University Park, PA 16802-3500, or call (814) 863-5846 or 863-2160.