

# Conference Addresses Key Issues In Nutrient Management

**JAYNE SEBRIGHT**  
Lancaster Farming Staff  
**HARRISBURG** (Dauphin Co.) — Nutrient management will play a key role in practices and goals implemented by farmers in the 21st century.

To learn how to help farmers deal with nutrient management issues, more than 300 people attended a conference called "Managing Nutrients and Pathogens from Animal Agriculture" held in Camp Hill this week.

Designed to provide a forum for recent research, field experience, and government regulations on nutrient management, the conference drew people from all sectors of the agriculture and environmental industries.

Douglas Beegle, Professor of Agronomy at Penn State, was a member of the planning committee for the conference.

"We wanted to draw the multipliers as our audience," said Beegle. "We wanted to hit those people who help farmers address nutrient management

issues so they can take the information back and implement it locally."

Beegle was one of 10 people representing universities and government agencies who served on the planning committee for the conference, which they started planning early last fall.

"The committee wanted the conference to address key issues that we saw in the different areas where we work," said Beegle. "Based on the turn out for the conference, it seems like we hit the mark pretty well."

Two of the hottest issues at the conference were phosphorus-based nutrient management plans and new policy initiatives affecting farmers.

"The conference provided the opportunity to share ideas and find out what others have done so far," said Beegle.

"The phosphorus issue has a lot of people talking, and both Maryland and Delaware have already moved on the issue. We learned more about ways farm-

ers can deal with the new regulations that may be coming down the pike."

Although the conference primarily targeted service providers in nutrient management planning, about five percent of the conference attendees were farmers. Jamie Beaumont of Beaumont Farms, Ltd., in Ontario, Canada, was one of those.

"I came to the conference to get a greater overview of nutrient management and different technical perspective on the issues," said Beaumont. "I learned a lot about programs that the United States is using to deal with nutrient management and got to see how we could put it in perspective for what we're facing in Canada."

Beaumont farms 1,200 acres and milks 150 cows. He found the sessions on nitrogen and phosphorus leaching and land applications to control those two nutrients the most beneficial at the conference.

"I plan to take the information back to improve manure

application timing, rates, and soil testing for my farm," said Beaumont. "Nutrient management is really paramount to a farmer's operation. It's half the equation with the other half being economics."

Leon Ressler, Lancaster County extension agent, also attended the conference. "It was an opportunity for me to get a lot of information about nutrient management in a short time span," said Ressler.

"The conference seemed to particularly focus on the Northeast, and it covered a lot of new research and pathogen issues," said Ressler. "A bonus for me was that it was located so close to home."

Ressler has attended these type of conferences in the past. "You get to meet with people from all over the country who have worked with the key issues in nutrient management," said Ressler. "It allows us to share ideas and network with each other."

Richard Strite of Agri-

Service, LLC, in Maryland came to the conference because he provides manure equipment and does custom manure hauling for farmers in southern Pennsylvania and Maryland. He was part of the six percent of the attendees who represented industry organizations.

"I came to see what other people are doing in nutrient management and find out what regulations are coming down the road," said Strite. "Although some of the sessions were more technical, a lot of the material is information I can use to advise my customers. Farmers are always looking to suppliers for information on nutrient management."

36 experts from universities, government agencies, and private companies spoke about key issues in nutrient management. Some of the topics addressed included water quality, feed management to reduce excess nutrients, manure management practices, phosphorus-based plans, site management, and nutrient management plans.

More than 35 percent of the attendees were from universities and extension offices, while more than 30 percent were from government agencies and soil conservation districts. Six percent of the attendees were from Canada, while 28 states across the United States were represented at the conference.

The Natural Resource, Agriculture, and Engineering Service, a division of cooperative extension funded by 14 different universities, hosted the conference.



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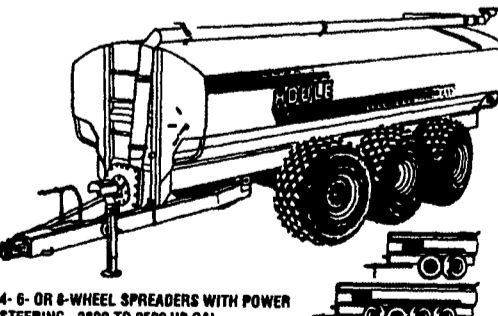
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