

Farm Bureau Challenges EPA Statements On Water Quality, Livestock

PARK RIDGE, Ill. — Information distributed by the Environmental Protection Agency to promote new regulations related to livestock farms and water quality contains statements that are "incorrect and unsupported by the facts," according to the nation's largest farm organization.

In a letter this week to EPA Administrator Carol Browner, the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) asked the agency to correct the stated inaccuracies and "make clear the actual facts" related to concentrated animal feeding operations and water quality.

According to the letter, AFBF has "repeatedly pointed out to EPA that agriculture, particularly livestock agriculture, does not contribute 60 percent of all river pollution as EPA's officials have repeatedly misstated in recent years."

Farm Bureau's letter pointed out that states have assessed only 23 percent of the nation's stream miles. And, based on that 23 percent, which represents the most polluted areas of the U.S., EPA assumes that agriculture contributes to 60 percent of total impaired stream miles.

"This clearly does not indicate that 60 percent of all pollution, as implied by EPA's statements, comes from livestock agriculture," AFBF's letter stated.

Recent published statements from key EPA officials, however, falsely characterize that "wastes from large factory farms are among the greatest threats to our nation's waters

and drinking water supplies." Farm Bureau is requesting EPA to supply the scientifically produced numbers to support its statement.

"The National Water Quality Inventory reports done in the 1990s do not support that statement," according to AFBF's letter. "In fact, the 1998 report indicates that animal feeding operations are major contributors to only 0.3 percent of the 842,426 stream miles that were assessed." And, of all waters in the U.S., (animal feeding operations) are major pollution con-

tributors to only 0.1 percent of the 3.6 million total miles of streams and rivers.

"While EPA prominently mentions that there are 376,000 livestock operations that confine animals, nowhere in EPA's fact sheet is there any mention of the fact that only 2,736 miles of streams have major impairments due to animal feeding operations," AFBF's letter stated. "Neither does it mention for comparison purposes that municipal point sources still cause major impairment of 6,667 miles

of rivers and streams. These numbers for animal feeding operations do not justify blatantly misleading statements."

According to AFBF, America's farmers and ranchers have made great strides to do an even better job to protect the quality of the nation's streams. Farmers who raise livestock and poultry plan on voluntarily spending millions of dollars on conservation and water quality improvements. The agency's public statements aside, EPA's own numbers show that agriculture

is not the leading cause of pollution in the U.S.

"Livestock operations, in particular, are a minor portion of the total pollution claimed to be contributed by all of agriculture," AFBF's letter stated. "The EPA statement leads one to believe that livestock operations, especially large ones, are the major cause of water pollution in the U.S., but EPA's numbers actually show a quite different reality. We ask again that (EPA) correct these inaccuracies and misleading statements."

Learn How To Store Pesticides Over The Winter

will save time and money too.

Every pesticide label has a section on "Storage and Disposal." It is usually printed at the end of the label's text and this is where you can find out about any specific storage requirements.

Some pesticides will break down in high heat, others will break down if they freeze. Read the labels on the products you have left over this year and make sure you are following the manufacturer's recommendations for storage.

It is always best to plan your pesticide purchases so you have only enough to get you through the season. If you don't have extra left over, you won't have to store it. In practice, however, even the best planners sometimes have pesticides left over. The 2000 Penn State Commer-

cial Vegetable Production Recommendation guide offers these tips to get your pesticides through the winter safely:

- Keep them at temperatures above freezing, under dry conditions, and out of direct sunlight.
- Keep pesticides in their original containers, with complete labels, and follow specific storage recommendations on the label.
- Store herbicides separately from other pesticides to avoid contamination.
- Write the purchase or delivery date of the product on the label with a permanent marker. Products may lose their effectiveness over several years, and you need to keep track of how old it is.
- Ventilation is important for storage of most pesticides.

Improperly stored pesticides will deteriorate. Some of the general signs of deterioration are excessive lumping or caking, not suspending in water (wettable powders and soluble powders), separation of components (emulsifiable concentrates), or failure to appear milky when mixed with water (emulsifiable concentrates and oils). If you suspect a pesticide has deteriorated in storage and you are having doubts about using it, check with the manufacturer.

The 2000 Penn State guide also has a list of 45 commonly used pesticides and their storage requirements on page 6. Refer to this list now, before the onset of winter, to make sure your pesticides are safely stored. If you don't have the guide, call your local extension office.

Emelie Swackhamer
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Proper winter storage of unused pesticides may save you more money than you think. Obviously, you can eliminate the cost of having to replace a pesticide ruined by improper storage.

Not so obvious are the financial rewards realized by having a properly-stored pesticide perform at 100 percent of its potential next year, instead of at a reduced efficacy.

The last thing any grower needs is herbicide failure or less protection from pests or disease than they were counting on. Additionally, some improperly stored pesticides may crystallize and could clog up application equipment when you go to use them next year. Avoiding this

Pennsylvania December Milk Production Down 1.6 Percent

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Milk production in Pennsylvania during December 2000 totaled 901 million pounds, down 1.6 percent from last December's production, according to the Pennsylvania Agricultural Statistics Service (PASS).

The number of milk cows in the state during the month averaged 613,000 head, down 3,000 from November and 6,000 head less than December 1999.

Production per cow averaged 1,470 pounds in December, 45 pounds more than November but 10 pounds less than in December 1999.

Milk production in the 20 states surveyed during December 2000 totaled 11.9 billion

pounds, virtually unchanged from production in these same states in December 1999. November revised production, at 11.4 billion pounds, was up 1.1 percent from November 1999.

The number of milk cows on farms in the 20 major states was 7.84 million head, 81,000 head more than December 1999, but 4,000 head less than November 2000.

Production per cow in the 20 major states averaged 1,522 pounds for December, 16 pounds below December 1999.

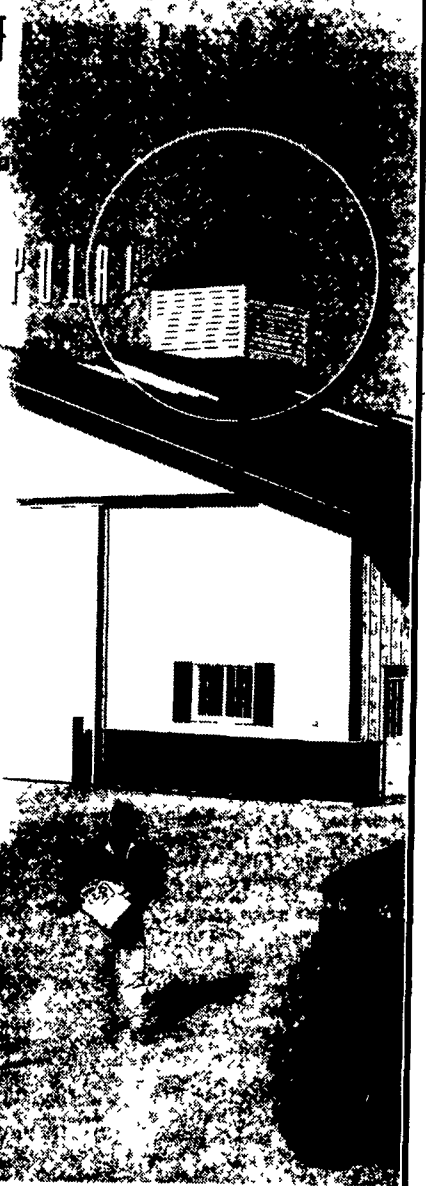
During the October-December period, the 20 major states produced 86.2 percent of the nation's milk. If producers in the remaining 30 states not surveyed monthly followed the trend shown by the 20 reporting states, U.S. milk production would be 13.85 billion pounds for December.

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