

Conference Addresses Manure Management Practices And More

URBANA, ILL.

New conservation practices and manure storage capacity are just two of the topics that will be addressed at the 2009 Livestock Manure Management Conference workshops. The workshops, set for March in Effingham and Princeton, Illinois, are sponsored by the University of Illinois, the Illinois EPA, and the Illinois Pork Producers Association.

One topic of discussion will be a new conservation practice standard released by the Natural Resources Conservation Service in November of 2008.

"The vegetative treatment area (or VTA) standard is a new tool that can be used for managing waste water, such as feedlot runoff or water coming off an outside feed storage area," said Ted Funk, Extension specialist and director of the conference. "There will be research-based numbers on how large to make the area, what soil types work best, what grass species work well, what the limitations are. If producers are going to use this practice, they'll learn how to put it to work."

Manure storage capacity and weather related manure releases will also be addressed at the conference.

"Inspecting manure storage structures to make sure they're in good shape needs to be an ongoing thing," said Randy Fonner, Extension specialist and one of the coordinators of the conference. "Maybe you need to replace a valve, maybe there's been some rodent burrowing. Preventive inspections can catch something before it becomes a problem."

Because 2008 was a wet year, weather related manure releases have been a concern, said Fonner. "We heard a lot of discussion about storages that were 'fuller than full,'" he said. "The added pressure [of a significant rainfall] can cause a real problem, especially if you aren't keeping up with your inspections and the integrity of your storage isn't great."

A panel has been set up to discuss manure storage capacity planning, and several producers will talk about how they dealt with rainfall and full storages.

Funk said another session of particular interest to swine producers will be a discussion of the status of key Illinois livestock court cases.

"A large swine facility in Illinois had a water line through the wall of their manure pit fail," said Funk, "and a lot of manure was released. As a result, the Illinois Department of Agriculture made a change in their rules and now you can no longer have pipes going through pit walls."

Funk said the discussion will provide a forum for people in the industry to see why the rules changed, and what the effect is going to be.

"The effect on new construction will be substantial," said Funk. "The cost and complexity of construction – taking water pipes over walls and not through them – will rise significantly. But the environmental risk is lessened, so the increased safety is a good thing."

Other topics that will be addressed at the workshops include current Farm Bill programs, the latest technology for manure management and precision farming, and a producer panel on manure marketing.

Each workshop will also host a trade show that features vendors who offer the latest in manure management equipment and services.

The manure management workshops will be held Tuesday, March 24, 2009 at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Effingham and Thursday, March 26, 2009 at the Wise Guys Bar & Grill in Princeton. The workshop costs \$40, with registration beginning at 8:15 a.m. and the first session starting at 9:00 a.m. Lunch will be provided and the workshops adjourn at 4:00 p.m.

Because lunch is included, pre-registration is necessary. To register, call ACES Marketing and Distribution at 1-800-345-6087 before March 17 to guarantee your space. Δ



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