

# Deadline Looms For 2010 Nutrient Management Assistance

COLUMBIA, MO.

Permitted animal feeding operations now can apply for cost-share funds as they face new nutrient management standards in 2010.

Operations have until Jan. 29 to apply to programs offered through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service for incentives to help pay for new nutrient management plans.

"Given the economic hardship that's out there in agriculture – particularly with animal feeding operations – this is an opportunity to get a quality plan written for less," said John Lory, University of Missouri Extension environmental nutrient management specialist. "For some poultry operations the cost might be around \$3,000, but if you're talking about a large dairy the cost might be nearer to \$10,000, and that's a lot of extra money to set aside."

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides financial assistance to help develop environmentally friendly management plans for cropland, grassland, pastureland, non-industrial private forestland or other agricultural lands.

The NRCS program creates a comprehensive plan that accounts for everything from the generation, collection and storage of nutrients to handling, land treatment and actual nutrient management of that animal feeding operation, said Darlene Johnson, an NRCS resource conservationist.

Last year, Missouri farmers received \$17 million through EQIP, although there was more than \$70 million in requests from eligible applicants.

"We had well over four times the amount of requests than money available last year, which is typical, but if you don't come in and sign up you have no chance to get part of that," Johnson said. "We also recommend you not wait until the Jan. 29 deadline to come in, because making sure everything is in order can take some time."

More than 550 permitted animal feeding operations exist in Missouri, and most will need new plans to meet requirements in the next year.

"The reality that many permitted facilities will need new plans is just now registering with farmers, so this short deadline might slip by unnoticed," Lory said. "We want them to understand that if they haven't had a plan written in the last year, the likelihood is that they'll have to get a new one in 2010."

Lory noted an NRCS Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) would meet or exceed the new technical standards for nutrient management plans on all permitted operations. He also encourages smaller unpermitted farms with less than 1,000 head to consider applying.

"One important thing is that NRCS will provide the incentive payment to the farmer and he can choose a planner to write the plan from a list of qualified Technical Service Providers," he said. "With the increased regulatory and environmental scrutiny taking place, the best way to be fully prepared is to have a plan."

Visit your local NRCS office for more information and to sign up for EQIP before Jan. 29. Information on the Missouri EQIP program also is available at <http://www.mo.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/eqip10.html>. △



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