



Workshop, Workbook Deal With New, Critical Manure Regulations

A crucial deadline looms on the horizon for many Illinois livestock producers.

By February of 2006, new federal environmental rules will require many producers (large and small) to have a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. So the University of Illinois is teaming with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency to offer workshops - and debut a new resource - that will tell producers exactly who will need a permit, how to apply, what is required and when the applications are due.

The workshops will be held February 15, 2005 at the Holiday Inn in Mt. Vernon, Illinois; February 17, 2005 at the Metro Center in Princeton, Illinois; and March 8, 2005 at the State Fairgrounds in Springfield. The workshop costs \$15., with registration beginning at 8 a.m. and the first session starting at 9 a.m. Lunch will be provided and the workshops will adjourn at 3:45 p.m. Because lunch is included, pre-registration is necessary. Call ACES Marketing & Distribution at 1.800.345.6087 to register.

Experts from U of I Extension, the Illinois EPA, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Illinois Department of Agriculture will address a variety of topics, including an NPDES permit overview. This overview will include advice for small producers who might not need a permit, said Randy Fonner, U of I Extension specialist.

"Farmers can apply for Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) funding through the NRCS," said Fonner. "Getting EQIP funds to address manure storage and feedlot runoff could make permits unnecessary for some producers."

The workshops will also debut the Illinois Manure Management Plan workbook, written by Fonner and Ted Funk, U of I agricultural engineer.

Funk and Fonner designed the workbook specifically to help producers satisfy permit requirements, but completion of the workbook will also provide compliance with manure plan



requirements in the Livestock Management Facilities Act (LMFA), administered by the Illinois Department of Agriculture, as well as requirements for a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP), required by the NRCS to receive EQIP funds.

With so many agencies (and acronyms) to keep track of, Funk and Fonner believed it was time to provide one resource that would enable producers to comply with the regulations of all three agencies--the Illinois EPA, NRCS and the Illinois Department of Agriculture.

Each agency has approved the workbook, so producers will no longer have to "try and interpret what the agencies want," said Fonner. "We think this workbook has exactly what they want."

However, Fonner wants to emphasize that the forms in the new workbook are not required - they are only samples.

"A lot of producers already have pretty comprehensive plans," he said. "We'd be upset if they thought they had to take this workbook and convert all the information they already have to this format."

What producers can do, said Fonner, is take the workbook, set it down next to their plan and go through it page by page. "Where their plan doesn't have certain pieces of information that are in the workbook, the producer can mark that and come back to it later and add it to what he's already got.

"We're not trying to create data entry work," Fonner continued. "What we are trying to do is make sure that whatever information they send in is as complete as possible, no matter what agency they send it to."

The price of the workbook is pretty good, too - it's free. The EPA has provided funding for this latest resource, which includes a hard copy of the workbook, as well as a CD with a Microsoft Word version. The package will be available at all the workshops. After February, producers can order it from the ACES marketing department, and will only have to pay shipping and handling.



As far as the NPDES permit goes, Fonner can't stress enough the importance of starting the process of applying for a permit.

"Don't wait until the last 60 days or the last 30 days to meet this deadline," Fonner concluded. "This is not something you're going to get done in a weekend. Time marches on and this window is closing very rapidly."