IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# Animal Feeding Operation Updates

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
**October 17, 2019**


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## Wet weather challenges for manure application

*Flooding poses extreme problems for some producers, but record rainfall throughout the year also presents challenges for getting the crops out and the nutrients in.*

A wet fall and spring, followed by locally heavy rains may mean storage structures are nearly full. What's a producer to do?

"Unless the weather comes through, many producers simply aren't going to be in a position to wait for perfect conditions this fall," says Trent Lambert, supervisor of DNR's Mason City field office.

Locally saturated soils may leave few crop fields available. But DNR has specific options for confinement site producers and commercial applicators to consider—as they work to protect water quality and keep storage from overflowing.

"Producers faced a similar situation last year when some were forced to land apply manure on frozen and/or snow-covered ground," Lambert said. "I think we would all agree this is the least desirable option, based upon the potential for negative water quality impacts and nitrogen loss."

"My first recommendation is to deal with storage issues sooner rather than later," he added. "Ideally producers would wait until soil temperatures drop to 50 degrees to minimize nitrogen loss. But if manure storage is tight, producers may want to weigh the risks and advantages of applying at the first available opportunity instead of waiting."

Some options to consider include transferring manure to another storage location or land applying on non-traditional crop acres, like hay ground. Other options might include partially emptying basins, hand-picking application fields, reducing rates until fields dry out or adjusting manure management plans for surface application.

Note: Several choices require changes in the manure management plan, or have requirements such as meeting separation distances. For more detailed recommendations developed last year, see Some Tips for Confinement Manure Application.

Producers with totally roofed facilities (confinements) must retain all manure between periods of application. So first, and most important, call the DNR field office to discuss site-specific alternatives.

## Time's getting short – check your manure applicator certification

Harvest moons mean harvest is just around the corner, and we know manure application will follow as soon as the crops are out.

Please take time now to make sure your applicator certification is up-to-date. As Jeff Prier, DNR's MAC training coordinator says, "There is always new information in the training, and we'd rather see you and your staff certified than have to issue a notice of violation or assess a penalty."

There are three ways to become certified:

1. Commercial and confinement applicators may watch a video during monthly scheduled dates and times at their local Iowa State University Extension and Outreach office. Find training and viewing opportunities at your local extension office. Although not required, registration ensures that there will be space and training materials available.
2. Or, consider taking advantage of DNR's online training and fee paying option. First you will have to create an IowaID, following the prompts. Find more information about the certification program at www.iowadnr.gov/manureapplicator or http://www.agronext.iastate.edu/immag/mac.html.
3. 3. Finally, applicators may take and pass a test to renew or become certified instead of training. Please schedule a testing time at your local DNR field office.

## Public Input sought as Common Ownership definition goes up for revision

The DNR is seeking public comments on a rule proposal amending the definition of "common ownership" in the Animal Feeding Operations section (Chapter 65) of the Iowa Administrative Code.

Developed in response to a petition from the Iowa Pork Producers Association, the proposed rule would replace the word "majority" with "10 percent or more," meaning that

a person, business entity or any other ownership structure would be considered a common owner (making it a single animal feeding operation) if there is an ownership interest of 10 percent or more of two or more confinement feeding operations located within the regulated separation distances of one another.

The definition would not apply to open feedlots or dry bedded confinement feeding operations, or to facilities built before the effective date of the rule.

Those interested in commenting must submit written comments to Kelli Book, 502 E. Ninth St., Des Moines, IA 50319 or Kelli.Book@dnr.iowa.gov by Oct. 29. Or, attend the public hearing at 1 p.m. in Conference Room 4E in the Wallace State Office Building, 502 E. Ninth St.

## Construction Design Statement form revised

Please note: the Construction Design Statement (DNR form 542-8068) was revised in September.

The revised version adds a checkbox under Section 1.C to indicate the producer understands no domestic wastewater or laundry facilities can discharge to a manure storage structure. Under Additional Requirements Section 2. Groundwater separation requirements, the revision includes a statement (in boldface) regarding conditions for perimeter tile outlets.

The Construction Design Statement form is required when proposing construction of a formed manure storage structure for a new or expanding confinement feeding operation (totally roofed) that meets these conditions:

1. Has an animal unit capacity (AUC) of more than 500 animal units, e.g., more than 1,250 finishing hogs, 500 steers or immature dairy cows, or 357 mature dairy cattle.
2. Does not require a professional engineer's design.

If a professional engineer prepares a site-specific design, use the Professional Engineer Design Certification (form 542-8122) instead of the Construction Design Statement.

## AFO Survey Results

The results are in from the recent readership survey and overall, you gave the Animal Feeding Operations (AFO) eNews some pretty high ratings.

Level of satisfaction with the newsletter was high, with 93% survey respondents saying they were Satisfied, Very Satisfied or Neutral with the newsletter.

When asked about the importance of newsletter topics, readers said regulations and rule updates were the most important topics to them, followed closely by tips and hints to deal with challenges like adverse weather. Deadline reminders and training opportunities were less important, but still ranked Important or Very Important to 65% and 57% of respondents respectively.

Readers ranked links to helpful information as the story they were most likely to read, followed closely by interviews with technical experts, dates to remember, real life examples from producers who have solved problems and interviews with DNR staff. Overall, there was little difference between their preferences.

Overall, people were satisfied with the timeliness of articles with 71.7% saying they were Very Satisfied or Satisfied.

Thank you to everyone who took the survey. We appreciate your input and will use it to improve the newsletter. If you have additional ideas, please feel free to email them to the editor, Karen Grimes at Karen.Grimes@dnr.iowa.gov.

## Why wait to make the most of your manure nutrients

When applying anhydrous ammonia or ammonia-laden manure, waiting until soil temperatures drop below 50 degrees maximizes nitrogen availability and minimizes its loss.

Check out two articles in the latest Manure Scoop blog, from Iowa Manure Management Action Group's (IMMAG) update. One features the science behind 50 and cooling. The other highlights how manure application timing affected yields, effectiveness and nitrate-nitrogen losses through tile lines for four corn-soybean rotations.

Check Iowa State University Extension and Outreach's real-time soil temperature data map at http://mesonet.agron.iastate.edu/data/soilt_day1.png.