



Title: Overview of Livestock Environmental Management System Pilot Projects

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Organization: UW-Madison Environmental Resources Center

State: WI **Region:** Great Lakes

Year of Funding: 2001

Theme: Pollution Assessment and Prevention

Situation: Globally, innovative agricultural producers, processors, and trade organizations are exploring the promise of Environmental Management Systems (EMS) to improve performance. Cooperative Extension is involved with a variety of state-specific pilot projects in the U.S. to support these efforts. Will farmers find value for their operations in developing an Environmental Management System that goes beyond current regulatory and farm program requirements? Will farmers significantly improve the water quality performance of their operations as a result of implementing an EMS?

Objectives: Partnerships for Livestock Environmental Management Systems is a 4-year project to explore whether and how the development of an EMS can be useful to varied livestock operations. Objectives are to determine: 1. How the EMS framework can best fit livestock producers' needs and constraints, and integrate with business management. 2. Improvements needed in the current institutional support and regulatory context for environmental management in the pilot states. 3. Environmental management tools and procedures that can best assist livestock producers to implement EMS.

Methods: Both the Partnerships pilots and other state projects have developed tailored pedagogies and resources. The various approaches consistently address farm environmental planning and resource impact analysis; priorities for alternative practices or infrastructure; implementing best management practices and documenting standard operating procedures; monitoring environmental results and reviewing regular performance checklists; and reviewing the total system to phase in a new round of improvement goals. Number of pilot farms varies by state, from 5 to 50.

Partnerships: The project includes Research and Extension partners in 10 states (NE, IA, MT, TX, ID, NY, WI, GA, PA, VA). Affiliated pilot projects are underway in UT and NC, the latter led by the state environmental agency. Partners include producer and environmental organizations, and government agencies.

Research: The project entails research on EMS applications to state agricultural research stations, and best practices for Environmental Management System education (including systematic evaluation of on-farm education practices, Extension program strategy, and interactive educational materials development); direct education of farmers engaged in implementing an EMS; and outreach to state agency, farm organization, environmental organization and other partners to explore how an EMS program might integrate and satisfy their multiple and sometimes conflicting goals.

Resources: This project has been funded through a USDA Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems Grant, and additionally supported by the Environmental Protection Agency Non-Point Source Control Branch, and the USDA/NRCS, as well as by states through cooperating Extension educators.

Results: Most of the state pilot projects have developed, or are currently developing, Livestock EMS Guidebooks for farm use, EMS models, practical environmental management systems on pilot farms and on state agricultural research stations, and increased capacity for further Extension education on agricultural EMS. Outputs include evaluation reports comparing effectiveness of varied educational strategies. Outcomes will include improved educational programs that integrate EMS strategies, and improvements in environmental management infrastructure and daily practice.



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