



USDA-CSREES 2006 National Water Quality Conference

Implementing a market-driven certification program for for-hire manure applicators

Background: In 2003, three states came together under a Section 406 regional grant proposal (Great Lakes Region) to develop a market-based, voluntary training and certification program targeting for-hire manure applicators.

The Market Incentive: To create a market based incentive, this project partnered with ~10 insurance companies serving the Great Lakes Region. Risk Reduction staff (underwriters) were brought on-farm to gain a full understanding of manure application methods. A 3-tier educational approach was then developed, targeting those areas representing the highest risk.

Level 1 is basic information and testing for all employees on spill response, common sense application and state-specific regulations. Firms implementing level one receive an average of 10% off their liability insurance

Level 2 is advanced information and testing for crew supervisors

Level 3 is development and implementation of an EMS (Environmental Management System). Participating firms receive an additional 10% reduction for the spill response plan, plus 7-20% more off, depending on the detail/recordkeeping in their EMS. In addition, they can receive up to 50% off their pollution liability insurance.

Results: The average participating firm has seen their insurance costs drop by more than \$1,600 per year. Reported manure spills/runoff events are up, however state regulatory staff attribute this to the fact that participating applicators are no longer afraid to report problems. When accidental releases occur, they are contained and cleaned up quickly. In Wisconsin, less than 5% of the manure spills that resulted in a fish kill involved a trained and certified applicator in 2005

Moving Beyond the Great Lakes Region: This curriculum and implementation model are being packaged for other regions or states to adapt. Within the region, Ohio is already adapting and implementing this approach, and a private hog enterprise in Illinois has adapted it for all of their facilities. EPA and Land Grant staff from two other regions (EPA Region 6 -Southern and Region 2 – New York et al) have initiated contact with the project coordinator. Other states and producer groups have inquired about adapting this approach for livestock producers. It is our intention to develop a national facilitation project shortly.

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