



USDA-CSREES 2006 National Water Quality Conference

[Water Quality Risk Assessment Tool for Livestock Facilities](#)

A water quality education program was developed in 2004 that consisted of a partnership amongst Washington State University, Washington State Department of Agriculture, Washington State Department of Ecology, Natural Resources Conservation Service-WA, Washington State Conservation Commission, Environmental Protection Agency, and Conservation Districts statewide. An identified outcome was a Water Quality Risk Assessment Tool for Animal Feeding Operations. The tool was developed to be implemented in three forms: a paper version, an Excel™ based computer version, and an on-line version. The tool was organized to be used as a 2-step process, with step one as determining if the animal operation was an animal feeding operation. Step two involved answering a set of twenty-nine questions and ranking the relative risk as either higher or lower. The ranking of any given category as high resulted in the recommendation of a best management practice to reduce the risk of having a negative impact on water quality.

Training on use of the tool was provided at a 3-day water quality education workshop entitled "Animal Feeding Operations and Water Quality: Resources and Livestock in Balance". The primary intended audience for the workshop was staff of conservation districts and environmental agencies. An overall goal of the education workshop was to inform participants how animal feeding operations may maintain non-Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) designation and compliance according to the federal CAFO rule and the expected state permit. The program consisted of a combination of presentations on technical topics, ten real-farm case studies, an applied water quality risk assessment tool for producers, and a technical water quality risk assessment tool for conservation planners. Case studies were chosen as the preferred education method to learn water quality assessment tools and implement knowledge presented by technical speakers.

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