



USDA-CSREES 2006 National Water Quality Conference

Nutrient Management Education Is Enhanced With Cost Share and Incentives

Across the nation, elevated soil phosphorus (P) levels are common in agricultural fields located close to poultry, swine or dairy units. The Loose Creek Watershed, located in Osage County Missouri, has a significant concentration of turkey and swine enterprises which have the potential to negatively impact water quality. The Osage County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) supervisors recognized the need to address this water quality issue and responded by forming a team with Natural Resources Conservation Service, Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and University of Missouri Extension.

Supported by funding from an EPA 319 grant, the county SWCD supervisors begin an aggressive education/demonstration effort to help livestock producers in the watershed understand the negative impacts high soil phosphorus levels can have on water quality. Landowners within the watershed who received assistance with building stackhouses, composters and other water quality enhancing practices hosted field days and provided tours. In conjunction with the 319 grant, the SWCD supervisors received a MDNR grant that provided cost share and incentives.

Guided by a producer steering committee the team designed and implemented a set of cost share practices and best management practice (BMP) incentives. The intent of the cost share and incentives was to encourage livestock producers to implement nutrient management plans and reduce the amount of phosphorus being applied to soils already exceeding the agronomic need for phosphorus. These nutrient management plans also helped producers reduce fertilizer inputs by crediting manure nutrients against crop production requirements.

In the Loose Creek Watershed, the education and cost share grants helped attain the following: Over 9,800 acres were soil tested, incentive payments for nutrient management and manure utilization practices impacted over 9,000 acres and 11,000 tons of manure were not "applied as usual", but were applied to fields with an agronomic soil phosphorus requirement.

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