



USDA-CSREES 2007 National Water Quality Conference

Providing Incentives for Implementing Nutrient Management Plans in the New York City Watershed

Nutrient Management Plans (NMPs) developed for livestock farms often involve manure spreading schedules that are substantially different from the farmer's traditional spreading practices. The Nutrient Management Credit Program, an incentive program tied to compliance with the NMP, has been an effective tool to encourage this change in practice. The purpose of the Nutrient Management Credit program is to encourage heightened stewardship of manure resources to improve water quality. By implementing an incentive for farmers to follow their NMP closely on a daily basis, we have achieved a greater impact on reducing nutrients and pathogen transport to the water supply. Farmers who follow their NMP and operate related BMPs correctly are eligible for an annual credit. Credits can be used for equipment or services that are part of their nutrient management strategy. Compliance requires; attending a Nutrient Management Workshop, spreading manure in accordance with their NMP, maintaining manure management records, and following operation and maintenance requirements of related BMPs including manure storage facilities. Each year, participants submit their nutrient management records for evaluation. Program personnel check the records for completeness and compliance with the NMP. A peer review group of four farmers evaluate participant records and have final approval authority. Eighty participating farms have achieved a very high level of compliance with their NMPs, earning over \$500,000.00 in incentives in the last three years. The Watershed Agricultural Council, a local farmer led organization, supports agricultural and forestry economic viability through the protection of water quality and the promotion of land conservation in the New York City Watershed region. Development and implementation of whole farm plans is accomplished through partnerships with Cornell Cooperative Extension, County Soil and Water Conservation Districts, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, and funding by the New York City Department of Environmental Protection.

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