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## **Heartland Manure Management Policy and Practice: Continuity of Effort and Results**

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### Abstract:

Intensive livestock production in Midwestern states makes manure management a high priority for controlling excess nutrients in soil and water. The Animal Manure Management issue team (AMM) of the Heartland Regional Water Coordination Initiative has targeted a regional need created by recent changes in federal regulation of large livestock and poultry facilities (concentrated animal feeding operations, CAFOs) and nutrient management requirements of USDA conservation programs. State and federal agencies are defining rules and regulations for acceptable manure management plans and conservation practices that impact both the livestock industry and the agencies that serve and regulate them. In 2002 the AMM leadership made a commitment to work with regulatory agencies, research and technical specialists and the livestock industry toward regionally consistent and effective CAFO regulations and comprehensive nutrient management plan (CNMP) requirements that met public environmental and regulatory objectives while also being practical and economic for operators to understand and comply. They have achieved significant outcomes attributable to regional coordination, the common denominator of which is strong relationships due to long-term continuity of effort. Clear goals and a broad acquaintance with potential partners are necessary but not sufficient for regional progress. Without a dedicated long-term effort to develop relationships and earn respect there are in fact few rewards and many disincentives for coordination of issue-based programs either within or among organizations. Regional coordination funding from the National Integrated Water Quality Program has made it possible to focus on building trust, creating and utilizing regional partnerships - tasks which foster long term outcomes in spite of ongoing changes in regulations, research findings, emerging issues, and turnover of public agency personnel. Stakeholders recognize and value their efforts.

### Impact Statement:

The Heartland Animal Manure Management issue team's efforts have resulted in workshop and training sessions, model planning documents, information and education materials, and influence on policy and regulations. Overall, the team's outcomes have been three-fold: 1) improved efficiency and effectiveness of government agencies via improved communication, coordination and access to research-based information, 2) greater on-farm functionality of nutrient planning processes due to Heartland's engagement of the regulatory community in both integration of science and review of plan implementation procedures; 3) engagement of agencies in the application of the alternative technology option of the CAFO regulations specific to open lot systems of the midwest. In the long term these will increase the ability of the livestock industry to protect water quality through improved environmental manure management.

Category: Committee for Shared Leadership  
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