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**Responses from 10-state's Extension staff and faculty related to their professional development in manure management and water quality**

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Abstract:

An electronic survey to Extension staff and faculty in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, and Wisconsin was utilized in the fall of 2008 to begin a three year project to network Extension professionals across state boundaries on topics related to manure management and water quality. The survey was developed as a way to gain interest in the project and assess needs and priorities for the project. A key contact person in each state sent an email to a select group in their state to respond to the survey. Eight of the 10 states sent a directed email to known staff working on manure issues; two states sent a broader emailing out, for a total of 806 people contacted. Thirty-six percent responded, with 92% completing the entire survey of 13 questions. Seventy-six percent of the respondents were single county, multi-county or district Extension staff, which is the target audience for future professional development opportunities. Sixty-six percent of the respondents have not had multi-state interactions in the last five years related to manure management. They indicate gaining their knowledge on manure and environmental issues from in-state specialists, peers and web sites and self-guide discovery. The initial survey responses indicate Extension county and district staff have had little multi-state interaction in the last five years, (60% had none) yet their priorities and needs are similar. Funding and other administrative issues may be barriers to multi-state interactions.

Impact Statement:

The electronic survey reached an equal mix of Extension staff who indicated they were generalists, agronomists, and livestock. Dairy, beef, swine, poultry, horse, sheep, goats, llama, deer, ostrich and alpaca were all listed as being served. When asked what the most frequent types of questions they receive the top four topics were: dollar value of manure as a fertilizer, regulations, land application of manure, and crop producers looking to utilize manure for fertilizer. When asked, where they go for manure and environmental information, peers, extension specialists and web sites and in-state, were the top three responses. Relying on state Extension in-service opportunities and self guided training were overwhelming the top two methods for professional development. Although the majority of respondents indicated they could teach a session on the economic value of manure nutrients, they still responded that this topic was their number one choice for continued professional development training. The other top four priorities for professional development were: technologies for manure, air quality and odor mitigation, grazing land management and impact of livestock rations on manure. Top items the participants would like to receive from this project include printed materials, scripted power points and DVD type media on the web.

Category: Human Dimensions

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