



2009 CSREES National Water Conference; St. Louis, MO

Small Acreage Livestock Pollution Prevention: Developing and Conducting a 4-H Volunteer Training Program in Rhode Island

Alyson McCann*, Holly K. Burdett, Marcia Morreira, Katherine Petersson, Fred Launer, Heidi Wright, and Judith Swift
University of Rhode Island
* alyson@uri.edu

Abstract:

The University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension (URI CE) Water Quality and 4-H Programs received a three year National Integrated Water Quality Program Extension Education grant in September 2006 to create a train-the-trainer education program for small acreage livestock owners in Rhode Island. The education program is working with URI 4-H volunteers and focuses on livestock pollution prevention best management practices (BMPs). This target audience is often ineligible for traditional agricultural assistance programs and their goals and conditions are often significantly different from those of large scale livestock operations.

During year one of the program, a needs assessment of the target audience was conducted to identify barriers and incentives for adopting livestock BMPs that protect water resources and health. An existing fact sheet and self-assessment series that enables livestock owners to conduct their own site assessments has been piloted with URI freshman animal and veterinary science students during years one and two of the program to determine ease in use and to develop effective training tools. Both the needs assessment and pilot education with students has shaped the development of a train-the-trainer education program for small acreage livestock pollution prevention. The URI Department of Communications Studies has assisted with the development of various educational tools and outreach methods to ensure effective communications, appropriate message content and appeal to the target audience.

This poster will highlight the volunteer outreach and training program and will include examples of educational and evaluation tools developed. The poster will also present project impacts to date, including number of trained volunteers and hours of service completed in educational programming as well as short term outcomes such as increase in knowledge and awareness in livestock pollution risks and BMPs.

Impact Statement:

Developed and printed a color post card and color poster display. Printed fact sheet 1 (existing fact sheet and self-assessment series) for distribution. Developed the following: a slideshow on livestock pollution risks and BMPs for volunteer training program and URI Animal Science students; a flyer for the URI 4-H Program describing the training program and volunteer opportunities; a new website template for easier navigation by target audiences and new webpage content, www.uri.edu/ce/healthylandscapes.

Conducted education with 50 URI Animal Science students delivering a slideshow and conducting a site assessment of URI Peckham Farm using the fact sheet and self-assessment series. Developed framework and established dates for volunteer training program to begin November 2008. Conducted volunteer outreach with URI 4-H Program and attended the following events with outreach materials: 6 URI 4-H Program workshops and clinics attended by over 50 adults and 100 youth, the URI East Farm Festival, 5 URI 4-H Program fairs. Conducted a list serv announcement to URI 4-H Program as well as direct outreach to former focus group participants. As of August 2008, 14 volunteers (9 adults and 5 teens) are pledged to participate. Developed a framework and outline for the educational video and production began August 2008 with filming of BMP installation at URI Peckham Farm and contacting livestock farm owners to coordinate preliminary site visits. Program website was assigned to MBA graduate students (MBA 576) to provide an evaluation in terms of overall design, presentation, ease in navigation and understanding the information presented, and appeal to target audiences.

Coordinated and conducted steering committee meeting and developed and distributed an annual program summary and a project update. Developed a poster highlighting year one accomplishments and attended the 2008 USDA

CSREES National Water Quality Program Conference. Participated on Small Farms Team with the National Livestock and Poultry Environmental Learning Center for development of eXtension website content. The URI Program Website received recognition by and commendation from this national team. Participate in the planning and evaluation of innovative livestock BMPs at URI Peckham Farm. This is part of two Conservation Innovation Grants funded by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Rhode Island. Practices include use of geotextiles and gravel on a livestock yard to reduce mud and runoff, and innovative composting methods.

Category: Rural Environmental Protection

Type of Presentation: Poster Presentation