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**Building Grass-Roots, Intensive, Runoff Water Monitoring Projects:
The North Dakota Discovery Farms**

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Abstract:

Like many states, North Dakota has focused much of its water quality improvement efforts on decreasing the negative risks associated with livestock manure runoff. Regulations have been imposed and significant cost share dollars have been made available to producers to better manage livestock facility runoff. ND producers, regulators, academics and conservation managers all agreed that regulations and recommended best management practices are primarily based on assumptions. By building a grass-roots team of affected individuals, ND implemented a statewide intensive runoff water monitoring project to test these assumptions. The project is modeled after the WI Discovery Farms and recruited three livestock operations willing to allow monitoring of edge of beef feedlot runoff and tile drainage impacts. The project is a combined effort of the producers, NDSU, USGS and the ND Dept. of Health.

Impact Statement:

The North Dakota Discovery Farms will impact water quality regulations in ND, agricultural producer response to water quality issues and the general public's understanding of livestock production and water quality. The project will enhance partnerships with producers, researchers, regulators, and technical service agencies. Each Discovery Farm will become a public learning center by hosting field days and acting as the source of new and innovative management practices.

Category: Watershed Assessment and Restoration

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