



Conservation Practices on Fields Used for Manure

Livestock System Progressive Planning Fact Sheet

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On fields where manure and organic by-products are applied as beneficial nutrients, it is essential that runoff and soil erosion be minimized to allow for plant uptake of these nutrients.

Components

- Potential for nitrogen or phosphorus transport off-site (that is, to surface water and/or groundwater)
 - Will water move into and through the soil or stay on the surface? (hydrology group)
 - What is the texture of the soil?
 - How steep are the slopes in the field?
 - What is the soil level of phosphorus?
 - Does the water move in concentrated flow in the field?
 - Are there surface inlets?
 - Is the field tile drained?
 - How far away is surface water?
 - How is crop residue managed?
 - Are cover crops used?
 - Is there vegetation between the edge of the field and surface water?
 - What application rates of manure are used?
 - How is the manure applied (surface, incorporated, or injected)?
- Locate sensitive areas such as sinkholes, streams, water-bodies, wells, gullies/swales, surface inlets, tile outlets, drinking water sources, and property boundaries

- Identify and implement conservation and management practices needed for erosion control and water management in order to control offsite transport of nitrogen and phosphorus
- Identify, by field, if winter application of manure is acceptable
- Develop maps showing sensitive areas, setbacks, and locations of practices/activities

Resources

- USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Private Consultant or Certified Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) provider
- Local Conservation Districts
- MAEAP Technician
- NRCS as part of a conservation plan

Timing

The need for conservation practices can be identified throughout the year. However, a better job can be done when it is easy to see the field surface (growing crops are small, no snow cover).

Conservation practice implementation timing varies by practice. For example, practices such as Filter Strips and Grassed Waterways need to be seeded during times of the year that will provide both good germination and growth conditions for the grass, yet will avoid heavy rainfall until the grass is established. Practices such as Residue Management are implemented after the crop is harvested.

