

Environmental Assessment and Action Plan

When it comes to environmental challenges, knowledge is power. Please use this tool to evaluate your own operation thoroughly. The following self-assessment and action plan is designed as a tool to

- improve your operation's efficiency.
- make sure you are conforming to current regulations.
- provide you with a road map to ensure environmentally sound management techniques today and well into the future.

Some of the evaluations in the assessment may not apply to your operation; however, they may give you ideas on other activities that you may want to do.

This is your assessment and action plan. Honestly evaluate your operation using the following questions. Mark the proper boxes and action steps that need to be taken. You don't have to share this assessment with anyone, but don't be afraid to ask for help. There are numerous public and private sources that can help you not only in answering the questions but also in designing the action steps that will make up your environmental management plan.

<i>Water Quality</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
1. Do you know your depth to groundwater?			
<i>Action to be taken:</i>			
2. Have you had your well water tested for nitrates and bacteria?			
<i>Action to be taken:</i>			
3. Are manure applications made in a manner to prevent runoff into ditches, streams, lakes, or neighbor's land?			
<i>Action to be taken:</i>			
4. Do you apply manure to sloping ground? If yes, can you use techniques to reduce the amount of runoff?			
<i>Action to be taken:</i>			

5. Do you utilize filter strips, vegetative borders, or setbacks when applying manure or lagoon water in proximity to environmentally sensitive lands (ditches, rivers, streams)?		
<i>Action to be taken:</i>		
6. Do you consider the distance to a well when you load or apply manure?		
<i>Action to be taken:</i>		
7. Are livestock fenced from the stream corridor?		
<i>Action to be taken:</i>		
Your water quality issue:		
<i>Action to be taken:</i>		
Your water quality issue:		
<i>Action to be taken:</i>		

<i>Nutrient Management</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
1. Do you have a plan for the utilization of the nutrients that are produced by your facility?		
<i>Action to be taken:</i>		
2. Do you determine the nutrient content (minimum N, P, and K) of manure or lagoon water at a minimum of once per year?		
<i>Action to be taken:</i>		
3. Do you annually soil-sample the fields that will receive manure or lagoon water applications?		
<i>Action to be taken:</i>		
4. Do you credit other sources of nutrients, such as legumes (soybean, alfalfa, etc.), sludge, and nitrogen from previous year's manure application?		
<i>Action to be taken:</i>		
5. Is runoff potential considered before applying manure or lagoon water to frozen or saturated ground?		
<i>Action to be taken:</i>		

6. Do you base your manure and fertilizer application rates on realistic yield goals for specific fields?		
<i>Action to be taken:</i>		
7. Do you use plant tissue analysis to determine the efficiency of nutrient uptake?		
<i>Action to be taken:</i>		
9. Do you know what your manure or irrigation water application rates are and calibrate equipment to ensure that the proper rate is delivered?		
<i>Action to be taken:</i>		
10. When possible, is manure injected or incorporated into the soil after application to avoid volatilization loss and odor problems?		
<i>Action to be taken:</i>		
11. Is manure uniformly applied to soil?		
<i>Action to be taken:</i>		
12. Do you keep records of manure or lagoon water application that include date and time of application, wind direction, amount applied, nutrient analysis, and soil test reports?		
<i>Action to be taken:</i>		

13. Are manure applications made at a time to maximize nutrient uptake in the plant (spring or side dressed)?			
<i>Action to be taken:</i>			
14. Are cover crops used to maximize nutrient uptake of manure if applications are made in the fall of the year?			
<i>Action to be taken:</i>			
15. Do you avoid making applications of manure to coarse-textured soil (sands) in the fall and wintertime unless winter cover crops (winter wheat, rye grass) are used?			
<i>Action to be taken:</i>			
		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
16. Is irrigation of lagoon water conducted at multiple times and reduced rates to maximize infiltration and minimize runoff potential?			
<i>Action to be taken:</i>			
Your nutrient management issue:			
<i>Action to be taken:</i>			
Your nutrient management issue:			
<i>Action to be taken:</i>			

<i>Facility Management</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
1. Do you have a map of your facility showing drainage patterns and bodies of water?			
<i>Action to be taken:</i>			
2. Do you have a plan and materials available for spill/overflow control of manure?			
<i>Action to be taken:</i>			
3. Do your manure storage and treatment facilities meet specifications and guidelines found in the USDA NRCS Field Office Technical Guides or that of state or local regulatory agencies?			
<i>Action to be taken:</i>			
4. If runoff storage ponds or treatment lagoons are used, are they designed to handle all runoff and rainfall from a 25-year, 24-hour storm?			
<i>Action to be taken:</i>			
5. Do you conduct inspections on manure storage areas, pumps, tanks, and other pertinent manure storage and handling equipment?			
<i>Action to be taken:</i>			
6. Do you maintain records of inspection activities (for at least 3 years), of any spills or overflows that occur, and of water quality?			
<i>Action to be taken:</i>			
		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
7. Do you use a preventive maintenance program that includes periodic testing of equipment, repair, and records of maintenance?			
<i>Action to be taken:</i>			
8. Do you have an employee-training program that includes pollution prevention techniques and what to do in case of a manure spill or overflow?			
<i>Action to be taken:</i>			
9. Do new hires receive manure management/pollution prevention training within 30 days of employment?			
<i>Action to be taken:</i>			

10. If using lagoons, are rainfall records kept to determine the contribution of precipitation to field saturation and storage capacity?		
<i>Action to be taken:</i>		
11. Are you current on all necessary permits needed for manure storage and handling?		
<i>Action to be taken:</i>		
Your facility management issue:		
<i>Action to be taken:</i>		
Your facility management issue:		
<i>Action to be taken:</i>		

<i>Odor Management</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
1. Is manure applied in the morning, rather than in the late afternoon?		
<i>Action to be taken:</i>		
2. Is wind direction considered before applying manure?		
<i>Action to be taken:</i>		
3. Is manure spread on holidays or weekends?		
<i>Action to be taken:</i>		
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
4. Are vegetation barriers such as bushes and shrubs used to filter and dissipate odors?		
<i>Action to be taken:</i>		
5. If you are using outdoor lots, are you using methods to reduce the amount of moisture in the manure?		
<i>Action to be taken:</i>		
6. Are appropriate neighbor relations techniques used to prevent or handle complaints about odor?		
<i>Action to be taken:</i>		
7. Do you dispose of dead animals according to state and/or local regulations?		
<i>Action to be taken:</i>		

Your odor management issue:		
<i>Action to be taken:</i>		
Your odor management issue:		
<i>Action to be taken:</i>		

<i>Health & Safety</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
1. Does your ventilation plan consider both animal and human health?		
<i>Action to be taken:</i>		
2. Do you have necessary safety equipment and placards around manure storage areas?		
<i>Action to be taken:</i>		
3. Are you or someone at your facility trained in first-aid techniques?		
<i>Action to be taken:</i>		
4. Do you notify other personnel when someone is working or entering a confined-space manure handling facility?		
<i>Action to be taken:</i>		
Your health & safety issue:		
<i>Action to be taken:</i>		