



USDA-CSREES 2005 National Water Quality Conference

Small and Mid-size Animal Operations: Exploring Education, Incentives, and Policies for Water Quality Protection

Abstract: Situation. Small and mid-size animal operations contribute to water degradation. However, the number and spatial dispersion of these farms make them difficult to address. Federal/state laws focus on CAFOs posing significant potential water quality risks, but these farms may not actually impair streams. States' new CAFO rules are unlikely to include smaller operations. Therefore, water quality improvements may not be realized where such farms are prevalent. Information is needed about this water quality problem and educational, incentive and regulatory approaches for addressing it.

Objectives. To introduce a national water quality project on small and mid-size animal operations. Our goal is to develop a strategy for extension/research and public policy using knowledge from state policy practitioners, academics and others. The poster will increase awareness of the problem, identify contacts within USDA's national/regional water quality network, and encourage their involvement in project activities.

Methods. A workshop will be held in April 2005 in Baltimore with participation from: university water/policy extension specialists, state water quality agencies, and state agricultural agencies. Supporting methods include a web-based survey of extension specialists and a policy white paper.

Partnerships. Extension faculty at Colorado State University, University of Maryland, Michigan State University, and Virginia Tech. Several faculty belong to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Water Quality Project's Watershed/Public Policy team.

Resources. The project is funded by a \$20,000 grant from USDA-CSREES to Penn State University with in-kind support from the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development.

Integration of Research, Teaching and Extension. The project will bridge the gap between universities and state policy practitioners. The extension/research strategy for addressing water quality issues associated with these operations will be used by researchers, extension educators and administrators.

Results. The Poster will provide selected web survey results, key finding from the white paper, and the workshop agenda. Conference attendees' awareness and motivation to learn more about these issues, policy options, and educational strategies will increase.

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