AFO or CAFO: Evaluating environmental issues on your farm

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Who?

- Dairy farms of any size that want to prepare their business for the future.
- Dairy farms that are considering growth into CAFO size.
How?

• Tap into AEM
  – Contact your District and/or a Certified Planner

• 5 Tiers
  – 1 & 2: Environmental Assessment
  – 3: Planning
  – 4: Implementation
  – 5: Evaluation
How?

• Assess
  – Farmstead Areas
    • Barnyards
    • Milkhouse Waste
    • Manure Handling
    • Silage Leachate
    • Mortality Management
    • Clean Water Flows
    • Other
  – Field and Pasture Areas
    • Manure & Fertilizer Mgt.
    • Soil Erosion
    • Other
How?

• Work with a planner to make a plan
• Pick a practice or two and implement
• Apply for cost share funds for the rest
  – Soil & Water Conservation District
    • NYS Ag. Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Grant
  – NRCS
    • EQIP and others
What about CAFO?

- History
- Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) required
  - Annually updated
- 200 – 699 cows = medium CAFO
  - Still some time left to implement CNMP
- ≥ 700 cows = large CAFO
  - Fully implemented CNMP
Key CAFO Rules

• General:
  – Prepare a CNMP
    • Certified Planner
    • Keep clean water clean & dirty water handled
  – Schedule the practices
  – Follow the plan
  – Record what is done
  – If change, make sure it fits the requirements
  – NO DISCHARGES from farmstead (unless extreme rain)
  – If discharge, report to DEC
Key CAFO Rules

• Manure Storage:
  – Engineer certification
  – Freeboard
  – 25 yr/24 hour storm
  – Monitor depth
  – Housekeeping!

• Feed Storage:
  – Control runoff
  – Catch “low flow”
  – Maintain the screens!

• Milkhouse Waste

• Barnyards

• Mortalities
Key CAFO Rules

• Field Issues:
  – 3 year soil test schedule
  – Annual manure tests
  – Balance for N
  – Follow Land Grant Guidelines
  – Spreading setbacks
  – Control soil erosion
  – Assess leaching and runoff risk
Key CAFO Rules

• Field:
  – Rates
    • Plus or minus planned rate, not double!
    • Calibrate spreaders
  – Setback distances
    • 100’ or 35’ grass buffer
    • Stream, ponds, wetlands, tile inlets
    • Follow the maps
    • Make corrections
  – Observe:
    • Tile flows
    • Streams
    • Substantial visible contrast
What if 180 cows and want to grow over 200??

- Will (likely) need a Permit
- Evaluate needs before going over 200
- Work closely with a planner or other good advisor
Take Home messages:

• Handle manure properly
  – Besides, it’s worth more now

• Environmental pressure

• CAFO is rigid - need to follow plan and do the paperwork

• If headed to 200 cows or more, start planning!

• Smaller farms - can still do practices
  – Tap into AEM
  – It’s easier on your own timeline
Take Home messages:

• How to get started?
  – Local District, NRCS, and/or private planners
  – AEM Tier II Assessment and Tier III Planning

• Funding
  – Field nutrient management planning may pay for itself
  – AEM Planning and NYS Ag Nonpoint Source Abatement Cost Share
    • Contact your District
  – EQIP Cost Share
    • Contact NRCS