Fact Sheet

New Jersey Livestock Farmer Survey: *Is my farm environmentally friendly?*

Michael Westendorf, Extension Specialist in Animal Sciences

Livestock owners need to be aware of their effect on our environment and natural resources. Regardless of the kind of livestock you have, proper management of animal and land resources are important to limit potential impact on natural resources. Take this quiz to determine how eco-friendly your livestock operation is.

A. Grazing and Pasture Management
(*add 3 points for each "yes" answer)

1. Yes ☐ No ☐
   Are your animals fenced at least 30 feet from ALL sensitive water features such as: well heads, creeks, streams, lakes, ponds, and wetlands?

   The area between the animals and water is called a buffer strip. Steeper slopes need wider strips and all buffer or filter strips should have permanent vegetative cover. (Ideally, livestock should also be kept off septic systems to prevent compaction and damage to the system.)

2. Yes ☐ No ☐
   Is your buffer strip maintained in good vegetative cover like tall grass, not weeds?

   Trees and shrubs along surface water are encouraged.

3. Yes ☐ No ☐
   Do you use fences, crossings, and limited access points to control animal access to sensitive waters?

4. Yes ☐ No ☐
   Do you drag or harrow manure in your permanent pastures?

B. Manure Storage
(*add 3 points for each "yes" answer)

5. Yes ☐ No ☐
   Is your animal manure stored at least 100 feet from sensitive water features?

6. Yes ☐ No ☐
   Is the manure stored on a concrete pad or compact clay, or removed and disposed regularly (monthly)?

C. Nutrient Management
(*add 3 points for each "yes" answer)

7. Yes ☐ No ☐
   Is manure applied on soils in such a manner to prevent phosphorus levels from getting too high (e.g. soil tests results are within Rutgers University guidelines)?

Page 1 Total _____

8. Yes ☐ No ☐
   Do you follow a formal manure management plan?

9. Yes ☐ No ☐
   Is manure spread on land that has slight or moderate slopes (<8%) and is at least 100 feet from sensitive waters?

10. Yes ☐ No ☐
    Is manure spread only during the growing season and not on frozen soils?

D. Clean Water
(*add 2 points for each "yes" answer)

11. Yes ☐ No ☐
    Is clean water from the barn roof or surrounding area directed away from the manure storage, animal lots, and bare soil?

12. Yes ☐ No ☐
    Is the storm water from your property collected so it can infiltrate into the soil? This helps recharge our ground water.

E. Erosion Control
(*add 2 points for each "yes" answer)

13. Yes ☐ No ☐
    Are gullies on your property stabilized and soil erosion controlled?

14. Yes ☐ No ☐
    Is the amount of bare soil on the property minimized, possibly through pasture seeding and management?

15. Yes ☐ No ☐
    Is the runoff from bare and paved areas (e.g., arenas, driveways, and parking lots) filtered through a vegetative buffer strip?

16. Yes ☐ No ☐ (*add 1 point a piece if used)
    ___ Buffers of borders around the fields
    ___ Vegetative filters to prevent runoff into open bodies of water

    ___ Terraces to limit erosion
    ___ Strip cropping or contouring of fields
    ___ Use of winter cover crops to prevent erosion

F. Feed Management
(*add 2 points for each "yes" answer)

17. Yes ☐ No ☐
    Do you manage milkhouse waste, silage waste, and excess or contaminated feed disposals to prevent contact with stormwater and/or other water sensitive areas?

18. Yes ☐ No ☐
    Do you have feed bunks, mangers, and feeding areas that minimize feed contact with the ground and minimize stormwater contamination?

19. Yes ☐ No ☐
    Do you reduce phosphorous level in the diet to minimize excretion of phosphorous?

20. Yes ☐ No ☐
    Do you monitor the feed intake of your animals to prevent feed overconsumption and minimize waste?

21. Yes ☐ No ☐
    Do you balance diets to minimize overfeeding nutrients?

22. What is the best description of how you feed your animals? (*add 1 point a piece; check only two)
    ___ Try to balance diets with forages and concentrates
    ___ Get advice from my feed store
    ___ Get advice from Extension
    ___ Use the services of a consulting nutritionist

Page 2 Total _____

2

Total Score (two-pages) _____

Points earned (57 possible)   <u>Grade</u>

0-25 Poor   Serious attention should be paid to correcting "no" answers.
25-35 Fair   There is room for substantial improvement.
35-45 Good   Good work - keep going.
45+   Very Good   Outstanding Farm Management!

This survey is meant to give you a relative idea of your environmental risk. It is not meant to be a score of your overall management. However, if you score very low on the test, you may want to have a more thorough waste management plan of your farm completed. Please contact your local Extension agent. Rutgers Cooperative Extension is working closely with state and federal partners to assist producers with animal waste management. Your local agent will be able to refer you to the people who can give you more assistance.

Reference and adapted from:

Gilkerson, B. 2006. Is my barn eco-friendly? University of Minnesota Extension Service in Hennepin County. www.extension.umn.edu/extensionnews/2005/ecofriendlybarn.html