

# SPREADING LOG

*The Professional Nutrient Applicators Association of Wisconsin Newsletter*

April 2008

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## Manure to Offset Fertilizer Prices

Given the steep rise in fertilizer prices (Urea from \$250 to \$600+ per ton in the past 5 years, with more than a quarter of that jump since last fall), many of your clients will be looking to you to help maximize the nutrient value of their manure that will be applied to their cropland. But maximizing value may increase your bill. Here are some things to keep in mind when farmers ask about where manure should go:



1. If the farm has a nutrient management plan (a 590), a professional agronomist has considered the options and has made a set of manure recommendations for each field. If you deviate, do not go above the recommended application rate. Make sure the farmer tells the agronomist what rate was applied to insure the crop does not run short of nutrients.

2. If the farm does not have a plan, put manure where it makes the most sense. This means it goes onto fields with the greatest (most expensive) nutrient need. Determine this by considering not only the crop nutrient need, but also the soil test levels in the field. For example, a 150 bushel corn crop (southern WI) will remove 57# of Phosphorus (P) and 44# of Potash (K) (along with a recommended maximum 160 units of Nitrogen (N), for a crop recommendation of 160-57-44 (N-P-K). To meet this need with commercial fertilizer, the farmer could use 250# of starter and 350# of urea, spending about \$120/acre.

If this is a high fertility field (past manure or heavy fertilizer applications), the soil test should let the farmer drop to 100# of starter. That saves \$40/acre. But the field will still need Urea.

If this is a low fertility field, the farmer would still need the high rate of starter UNLESS enough manure was applied (say 6,000 gal dairy) to meet the P and K needs of the crop. The farmer also saves about 1/3 of the urea cost by using manure for N (see below). Putting the manure on a low fertility field not only saves \$60+/acre, BUT, it also saves time. A farmer with a 6 row planter can get 10-15 more acres per day planted if they drop starter from 250 to 100#/acre (and how many times does a farmer say "If the rain had held off a few hours, I could have gotten that last field planted).

Nitrogen is a large expense with corn acreage. At 40 cents per unit (urea has 46 units per 100# of product), 160#/acre can cost \$64/acre. At 50 cents/unit (state Average cost on March 15 for cash purchases), the cost is \$80/acre. Spreading the manure out over more acres to meet the P and K need (and speeding planting) means the farmer will need to spend more on your services, and will be applying supplemental N to all corn fields instead of just those that didn't receive manure.

3. Given the choice, applying manure to alfalfa fields after plowdown is a poor option. An alfalfa plowdown can provide up to 190# lbs of N to the next crop. Even a poor stand (less than 1.5 plants per square foot) can provide 90-130 lbs of N to the next crop (subtract 50# from the above if field is sandy soil).

Bottom line: Many farmers will be requesting that their manure cover more acres using lower rates. Make sure you are prepared.



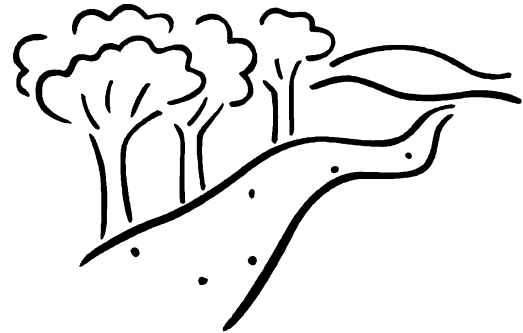
## Township Roads & Overtopping Pits

This spring's wet weather has put many manure pits at or near capacity and spring road bans will have a significant influence on how manure can be transported over the next few weeks. If a transfer or land application of manure is necessary to prevent a storage structure from failing or overtopping, the farmer should notify their Land Conservation Department, Township officials and Regional DNR Ag Runoff Staff in advance of hauling to assess the situation and JOINTLY discuss possible options for solving the problem, which could include on-site application, hauling with equipment that doesn't exceed weight restrictions or selecting alternate routes.

By bringing people from these disciplines together, most situations should be addressed in a manner that is protective of the environment and the public investment in local roads. It is also important to note:

\* WPDES permit farms need to contact their local DNR Ag Runoff Staff waste contact before doing a transfer or land application in this situation.

\* If it is determined that the environmentally safest method requires transportation down the road to a neighboring engineered manure storage, the farmer and applicator are responsible for road damage.



## Spring Road Weight Study



For the past few years, the Association has been working with the applicator associations in MN, IA and OH, the manure equipment, tractor, and tire industry and the DOT in 3 states to create a research study to examine the impact of our

equipment on township and county roads. The first of 5 sets of test runs were completed on March 26 at the MN Road test facility near Albertville, MN.

This first set of runs (just as the frost came out) focused on smaller equipment: tankers 6,000 gallons and under, straight trucks (4,000 gallon tanks) and an AgChem unit. We varied tire types, tire pressures and loads. The data is currently being analyzed, and we hope to have some preliminary results to share later this summer.

This spring's runs could not have been done without the cooperation of several key individuals. First and foremost, we need to thank Gene Metz of the Minnesota Association and Roger Boecker, who spent untold hours working on logistics, getting equipment to the track, and coordinating drivers.

From Wisconsin, Dave Eisentraut, Ernie Sundstrom and Chris Lindstrom sent equipment and drivers to the track.

Having experienced drivers was a key component to getting the testing done 4 days ahead of schedule.

Equipmentwise, Houle (Roc Bernier and Courtland Equipment) and Husky (Walter Grose) provided tankers, John Deere (Matt Schleicher and Ruldolf's Equipment) and Massey Ferguson (Barry O'Shea and Blane Clark) provided tractors, Dave Lovell provided an AgChem unit. A number of MN applicators provided pumps, hoses, and other necessary equipment to fill the tankers. The co-op in Albertville and Pioneer Seed provided portable scales for weighing tankers.

Technical services provided by the MN Dept of Transportation staff and researchers from the University of Minnesota, Iowa State University and the University of Illinois also ensured a smooth operation.

There are probably others that helped that we've overlooked, but we are grateful for their contributions. Watch the newsletter for a list of needs for the fall season (early September).



## 2008 PNAAW Members

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## A Crash Course in Adding Value

1. **Tell the truth.** Ironically, truth is often so scarce today that we assign an even higher value to it than we did in the past.
2. **Practice personality power.** What happens when you extend ourselves to others genuinely and enthusiastically.
3. **Attract through artistry.** We increase the value of things when we make them aesthetically pleasing.
4. **Meet needs in advance.** Often people forget about the details that need to be taken care of until the very last minute. Anticipating how you can be of service to your customers is a magnanimous gesture that will create great value.
5. **Add 'good stuff.'** Such as enjoyment to another's day, enthusiasm, and humor.
6. **Subtract 'bad stuff.'** Such as waiting, defects, mistakes, irritation and frustration, and misinformation.
7. **Simplify.** Make it easier for people to get what they need from you.
8. **Improve.** Look for ways, big and small, to improve the quality of your work and interactions with others.
9. **Surprise others.** A thoughtful gesture surprises others and lifts their spirits.
10. **Entertain others.** People love to be entertained. We pay closer attention, learn faster, and are more engaged when we're entertained (Sanborn, 2004, p. 52-60).



Reference: Sanborn, M. (2004). The fred factor: how passion in your work and life can turn the ordinary into extraordinary. New York: Doubleday.