

# SPREADING LOG

*The Professional Nutrient Applicators Association of Wisconsin Newsletter*

**August 2009**

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## **Road Study Update**

In July, representatives from PNAAW, the Minnesota and Ohio/Indiana Applicator associations, tanker, tire and tractor manufacturers met at the Minnesota test track facility (MN Road) with the researchers to discuss the findings from the first half of the study and plan out the final year of testing.

The primary discussion focused around the failure of the asphalt in the approach to one of the sensed sections. A full analysis of the cracked and failed pavement revealed that the asphalt thickness in this area was only 2½ inches rather than the expected 3½ inches. The section with the recommended asphalt thickness did not show visible damage. It was also observed that the most damage occurred after 11:00 am each day, a possible indication that daytime heating (either from sunshine or the high number of loads going over the section) may be an issue in spring.

Other observations showed:

- The August 2008 testing produced a higher structural strain on the pavement but damage was lower than the early spring 2009 testing.
- In some cases, the 80,000 lb semi produced greater maximum subgrade stress or maximum asphalt strain than the manure equipment.

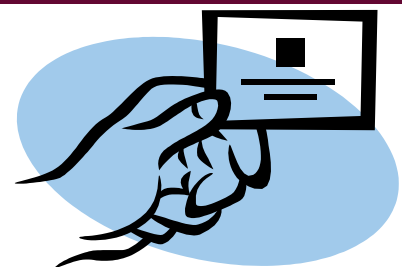
Discussion about future testing included:

- Replicating the 2008/2009 testing this fall and next spring to ensure consistent results.
- Shifting the edge of pavement run towards the center of the pavement (to ensure entire tire is inside the white line and not hanging off the edge of the road).
- Focusing the final testing set (Fall 2010) on tires and tire design.

The researchers are planning to present a summary of the data at the annual meeting in January.

## **Certification Reminder**

Check the expiration date on your Level 1 cards – almost ¼ of certified members will need to be trained in-house and take the test in the next few weeks.



## Applicator Directory Update

Kevin with UW-Extension is in the process of updating the applicator equipment listing. The category of “number of pumps” has been replaced with “pumping equipment,” so we will be including the size (52 foot agi-prop) of your equipment this year. You can call Kevin at 920-391-4652 and update your listing.

## Manure Spill/Incident Inventory

As noted in the last newsletter, the Association provided partial funding for a college student (Eric Ronk) to review and summarize the manure incidents in the state and provide a summary of the root causes (contacting applicators to verify information in the process), which would be used to update our training program. The research phase took much longer than expected, with more than 220 incidents documented just in the DNR files since January 1, 2005.

Eric will begin reviewing the county spill records in September, and after the hauling season ends, he will be contacting applicators to verify/correct information.

The current data is skewed (as smaller farms are much less likely to report incidents than the large farms, which are required by their permit to report) and the data has not been verified, so no data is being released yet. That said, there are some interesting observations:

- Incidents at the farm site account for about 40% of those reported to the DNR.
- Another 40% are transportation related (between farm and field). Only 20% are field application issues.
- For transportation incidents, more than half involved manure spilled into a road ditch.

## What are W soils and why should you care?

Both the Nutrient Management Standard (590) and NR 243 (the rules governing WPDES permitted dairy farms) prohibit/regulate manure applications on W soils. W soils are those with less than 12 inches to the apparent water table. In the case of NR 243, 24 inches to water table or bedrock is the standard to be used.

While bedrock depth does not vary by season, the water table does. At certain times of the year, it may be very close to the surface or at the surface (when water is ponded in a field, it is actually above the surface of the soil). At other times, it may be 8 or more feet down.

NR 243.14 now requires the farmer to verify where the water table is before manure can be applied to ANY field with a W soil. **Manure can not be applied to the areas of a field with W soils without first verifying where the water table is.**

The DNR interim guidance explains that field verification is only required when the NRCS soil description time period overlaps with the manure application schedule for the farm. Example: Field 1 has W soil type. The corresponding NRCS soil description for the W soil type describes apparent water table is within 12 inches of surface between Nov-April months for most years. The CAFO farm plans to apply manure to field 1 (which is in alfalfa hay) only during the summer (July, Aug). If there is no overlap, no field verification is necessary. Only if application schedule overlaps with soil description time period, is field verification needed.

How do you keep yourself and your client out of trouble?

1. Talk to the nutrient management plan writer. Get a copy of a map showing where these soils are before the hauling season starts.
2. Talk to the farmer and plan writer and verify who will make the determination of water table depth (each WPDES farm submits their own method for doing this to DNR, and that method must be used and documented).
3. Do not apply to any field under a WPDES permit without verifying this information

At least one meeting between applicators, nutrient management plan writers and farmers will be held in September to discuss the issue and try to come up with a strategy that can be given to all applicators in the state.

## Borrowing Money

*Given the current farm economy, many applicators are having cash flow issues. Borrowing money from family may be an option you are considering, but there are many things to think about first.*

For many entrepreneurs, heading to Mom and Pop is the second branch they shake, after looking at their own financial contributions. If you plan on making it your next stop, think again. According to many experts, parents may be the largest single source of start-up capital in the United States, but having a banking relationship with your parents is fraught with potential problems. Before continuing further, ask yourself, “Is money for this venture worth damaging or losing my relationship with my parents?” At the moment, you may just be thinking about speeding ahead with your venture, and all you can see is success: the reality is, however, you could fail. If you do, you might not be able to pay your parents back in a timely fashion- or ever.

Consider your parents’ emotional ties to money. Especially if your parents or grandparents are in their eighties and lived through the depression, for many money means security. If you borrow money, they may never truly feel secure until you have completely paid it back. Also, if you take a trip to Paris while you still owe them money, will you feel guilty? Will you feel guilty if you purchased a new car? Will you truly be secure in expanding your business if you are not secure in your lending relationship? If you are borrowing money from friends or family, be sure that the loss of that money will not affect the lenders’ future or lifestyle. Borrowing Grandma’s last \$50,000 is not fair to Grandma.

In addition to borrowing money directly from parents, you may consider asking them to cosign loans. Remember, that legally obligates them to the debt and will impact their financial transactions and borrowing capabilities. Also, your parents, friends, or relatives may be more willing to loan you money if you put up your house, car, or jewelry as collateral.

Remain at your job and save for another year before striking out on your own, rather than risking the capital of those you love. Mixing money and personal relationships is never easy, and with family and friends it tends to be even more emotional and volatile. Long-running family issues come into play, and sibling relationships may also be harmed. There are unseen and unknown issues for both parties. How will you deal with them? If your folks get sick, will you be able to pay back loan? If your dad and mom want to be part of the business to oversee their investment, how will you feel?

If you are still willing to borrow from friends and family after reviewing potential issues and problems, here are a few things you can do to alleviate some of the difficulties:

- Put everything in writing.
- Make it a business loan, not a personal loan. Have loan papers drawn up. State the amount, payments, duration of loan, interest rate, payment date, collateral, and late-payment penalties.
- A provision in the loan may be included for repayment in case of emergencies. This will alleviate much of the stress and concern for both parties.
- Discuss thoroughly with your lenders the company’s goals. Make sure they understand that the money will be needed for a certain length of time. If the business starts to be profitable, it will require their cash infusions for working capital.
- Discuss your fears for potential problems, and encourage lenders to discuss their issues as well. Putting feelings and concerns out on the table early may stem future problems.

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