

# Overview of Manure Management Guidelines for PA Farmers Generating or Using Manure

## Who these guidelines pertain to:

- A. All farms that generate or use manure, regardless of the size of the farm, including farms that:
  1. Pasture livestock or poultry, or
  2. Maintain an Animal Concentration Area (barnyard, exercise lot, or feedlot), or
  3. Apply manure to their crop fields
- B. Farms that are defined as CAOs or CAFOs need to follow a different, more detailed **Nutrient Management Planning** process than that outlined below.

## General manure management requirements for farms generating or using manure:

- A. Develop a written **Manure Management Plan**
- B. The DEP Manure Management Manual provides a standardized process for developing these written plans. An alternative plan format can be used if approved by DEP
- C. The planner does not need to be a Certified Nutrient Management Planner (the farmer can write their own plan)
- D. The manure management plan written for these operations does not need to be submitted for review and approval, these plans just need to be retained on site
- E. The farm must be managed consistent with the manure management plan

## DEP authorized manure management practices to be incorporated into the manure management plan:

- A. The below DEP authorized manure management practices are described in more detail in DEP's "*Land Application of Manure, Manure Management Plan Guidance*" manual.
  - Note that alternative manure management practices from those outlined below may be implemented if the farmer gets specific approval from DEP to use an alternative practice
- B. Acceptable manure application rates can be developed using any one of the following 3 methods:
  1. The manure application rate look-up charts provided in the manual, or
  2. Nutrient Balance Sheets providing a more farm specific recommendation, or
  3. The Pa Phosphorus Index, developed with the assistance of a properly trained individual
- C. Year-round manure application setbacks for the mechanical application of manure include:
  1. 100' setback from streams (during seasons when water flows in those channels), lakes, ponds, existing open sinkholes, and from private or public active water wells
  2. The 100' setback from a stream, lake or pond (surface water) can be reduced to the following if these additional measures are taken:
    - a. 50' setback if the soil phosphorus level is less than 200 ppm P, the field is farmed using continuous no-till and if residue is removed, a cover crop is planted on the field.
    - b. 35' setback if the stream, lake or pond has a 35' permanent vegetative cover
- D. Winter spreading restrictions:
  1. Winter is defined as meeting any one of the following:
    - a. The date includes or is between Dec 15 to February 28<sup>th</sup>, or
    - b. The ground is frozen more than 4 inches, or
    - c. The ground is snow covered

- D. Winter spreading restrictions (continued from previous page)
2. Farmers may not apply more than the following manure rates during the winter season:
    - a. 5,000 gallons per acre of liquid manure
    - b. 20 tons per acre non-poultry dry manure
    - d. 3 tons per acre poultry manure
  3. The winter application field must have at least 25% crop residue cover or a cover crop
  4. The winter application field may not have a slope greater than 15%
- E. Pasture management:
1. Pastures must maintain an average height across the field of 3" during the growing season
    - Farms with an NRCS grazing plan will meet this requirement
  2. Overgrazed pastures not meeting the required vegetation height are considered Animal Concentration Areas and must follow the requirements for these areas (see below)
- F. Animal Concentration Area (barnyard, feedlots, exercise lots, etc) management:
1. These are areas for outdoor animal confinement that will not maintain the dense vegetation of a pasture
  2. The following criteria must be followed to address runoff from these areas:
    - a. Divert upslope water
    - b. Direct runoff into a storage or allow it to flow thru an adequate vegetative filter
    - c. Disallow animal access to a stream except for properly constructed crossings
    - d. Keep watering, feeding, etc areas as far from streams as practical
- G. Manure storage management:
1. All liquid or semi-solid manure storage facilities built since 2000 must:
    - a. Be designed by a Pa Professional Engineer to meet NRCS standards
    - b. Have an engineer certification stating the storage was built to the required standards
  2. Certain manure storages are required to have a DEP permit, those being:
    - a. Liquid or semi-solid manure storages with a volume in excess of 2.5 million gallons
    - b. Liquid or semi-solid manure storages with a volume in excess of 1.0 million gallons if the storage is being built in a Special Protection or Agriculture Impaired watershed
  3. Proper manure storage maintenance:
    - a. Check for leaks, cracks, overflows, trees, or other issues threatening storage integrity
    - b. Must maintain the required freeboard at all times
      - i. 12" for manure storage ponds
      - ii. 6" for all other manure storage structures
- H. In-Field manure stacking of dry manure:
1. In-field stacking is acceptable on unimproved areas if the following conditions are met:
    - a. 100' setback from streams, lakes, ponds, water wells, open sinkholes
    - b. Placed on areas with a slope of less than 8%
    - c. Cover the stacks with an impermeable cover if on the area for more than 120 days
    - d. Divert upslope water if necessary
  2. Stacking on improved areas is allowed as long as runoff from the stack does not directly reach streams, wells, sinkholes or other water resources.