

Video provides advice on manure

By Alberta Agriculture
News release

Western Producer
December 21, 2000

A newly released video entitled *Completing the Cycle: Nutrient Management* will be of interest to livestock and crop farmers.

The video provides an overview of the nutrient management cycle and how producers can profit from planning. It includes discussions with experts on how to use manure nutrients in crop rotations, carefully matching soil and manure test results to crop nutrient requirements, to provide crops with exactly what they need. Grazing management experts provide information on how to extend the grazing season and reduce manure handling.

By preserving and using nutrients at all points in the cycle, operators convert manure problems into advantages. Not only can operators increase profits and improve environmental stewardship, they can get the bonuses of good neighbor relations and improved consumer confidence in the end-product.

"Nutrient management planning is adopting practices that optimize economic profit of fertilizer and manure use, while protecting the environment," says Mohamed Amrani, with Alberta Agriculture in Edmonton.

A complete plan includes storage site selection, odor control, spreader calibration, record keeping and emergency response. Amrani said the plan must be reviewed every year and changes implemented when new information becomes available.

As the video points out, this nutrient management model is practical. Across Alberta, many farmers working with cow-calf, hog, dairy, poultry and grain production, are successfully putting the science of nutrient management into practice. Bernie Kotelko of Highland Feeders realizes all components of his operation have value and he is capitalizing

on that. "When we look at the bigger picture, it's part of our whole system. Where we've got cattle in the pen, they're producing a nutrient. We're adding value to it with the composting process. We haul it out to our fields and it's nutrients for the crop that will feed our next pen of cattle," he said.

Work with neighbors

Brian and Mark Perkins run a hog and grain operation, producing much of their own hog feed. They say one significant change in how they are applying manure is that they are working with neighbors.

"There are people who buy manure from us. We apply manure on their land on the same basis used when we apply it on our own land. We're now to the point where we don't have enough manure to meet the demand."

Bill Stewart, a cow-calf operator, moved his winter feeding area to higher ground to improve manure management and reduce runoff concerns.

"Farming is a tough business and we do want to preserve the environment, but there has to be some economic advantage. I really believe that moving my cow herd has some economic advantages."

Developing and implementing good nutrient management helps farmers and ranchers improve the bottom line and produce in a safe and environmentally sound manner.

The video is available for sale from the Alberta Agriculture Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, T6H 5T6, or by calling 800-292-5697. The cost is \$10 per tape, plus shipping and handling, plus GST (\$12.84 total.) This video can also be borrowed from Alberta Agriculture district offices.