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THE ALABAMA CERTIFIED ANIMAL WASTE VENDOR PROGRAM

If you judge the success of a program by interest, the Alabama Certified Animal Waste Vendor Program can be considered a huge success. The three initial training sessions to prepare animal waste vendors for certification by the Department of Agriculture & Industries were recently held throughout the state and were attended by over 400 people with 262 people signing up as certified vendors.

By attending one of these training sessions, the vendors have been certified and have received a certificate that expires December 31, 1999. We realize there are many more potential vendors in Alabama and the surrounding states that come into Alabama and remove wastes from Alabama animal premises. Hopefully within the next year all potential vendors can be contacted and can attend a training session. We need everyone's help in trying to contact all potential vendors.

We realize the three training sessions that were held in 1998 were not as effective as they could have been because of the large numbers of people attending. Hopefully in 1999 we can work in smaller groups to allow more one-on-one training. We are asking local county agents to try to organize a training session in their individual counties to better accommodate the vendors and the learning environment. The most important aspect of the vendor program is ensuring that all vendors know how many tons per acre of waste they are applying. To accomplish that you must be able to calibrate your spreader truck. Hopefully by working in smaller groups everyone will be able to properly calibrate their trucks.

It is also imperative that all animal feeding operations begin contacting their county Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to implement a waste management system plan that will greatly aid all producers in their waste management. Vendor responsibility as to the timing and rate of application on various crops will be determined by the waste management system plan developed by the local NRCS office. This is a plan that will include a detailed map of the application site showing location of all fields, buffer zones, streams, wells, sinkholes, and other pertinent information.

Overall, we think the vendor program can be beneficial to all concerned parties. It has been a group effort involving many different agencies within Alabama. It is the only program of its type that any state has undertaken and we think we have a program that is workable.

We want to thank everyone for his or her cooperation and participation. Any comments or suggestions are certainly welcomed. No specific dates or locations for training sessions in 1999 have been finalized as of yet, but if anyone wants to volunteer a location and a date please contact us. To register for a future training session please call the Department of Agriculture and Industries, Animal Industry Division at 334- 240-7255.

*-Ray Hilburn, Poultry Pathologist,
State Department of Agriculture & Industries*

FIELD STORAGE FOR POULTRY LITTER: IS IT FOR YOU?

Field storage for poultry litter is short-term litter storage in piles under 6 mil plastic sheeting (a black color is best). The edges of the sheeting are buried in a soil trench around the pile. Old tires, or other heavy objects are placed on top of the plastic to hold the cover in place during high winds. The floor of the storage area should be low permeability soils or other impervious material, such as a heavy plastic membrane or a concrete pad. The site for the short-term litter storage should be selected and graded so that no rainwater can run under the pile.

Field storage may be for you if you do not already have a permanent storage structure available, and you can answer "yes" to any of the following statements:

- I occasionally clean-out litter during the winter.
- I occasionally clean-out litter during rainy weather.
- I use split applications of nutrients on my land.
- I sometimes stack litter in piles outside my houses.

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"the scoop on litter"

(Continued from front)

A “yes” answer to any of these statements could point to a need for some type of protected storage, but not necessarily an expensive permanent dry stack type structure. Field storage can be done for as little as \$0.16 per square foot for an ideal site with good soils and drainage, to \$1.85 or more per square foot for a site requiring more grading and a concrete floor. And while not as convenient as a permanent structure, field storage can be done at multiple sites in order to store the litter closer to the disposal fields. Your local NRCS office can provide more specific guidelines for field storage use, as well as give more guidance as to whether field storage might benefit you.

-Bill Prince,
Natural Resources Conservation Service

HOW MUCH ARE YOU SPREADING?

Just a few years ago, we had many fields in Alabama that received 10, 15 and 20 tons of litter per acre per year! Across the fence, were neighbors’ pastures and fields that had never received any litter. Now, most litter vendors know within a ton per acre about how much they are spreading and providing litter to many growers who previously could not get it. Vendors are doing a better job for their customers and the environment.

If you attended one of the Certified Animal Waste Vendor training programs this past summer, you saw how easy it is to estimate the amount of litter being spread. Three techniques were discussed and/or demonstrated:

1. **Guesstimating.** Most vendors have a good idea of the amount of litter (in tons) that their truck will hold. If you know how many acres in the field, you can keep spreading the litter over the field until it’s all gone. Then you can quickly calculate how many tons per acre were spread. Many vendors still use this technique. It works okay, but you must go over the field several times in order to get a uniform spread of the litter.

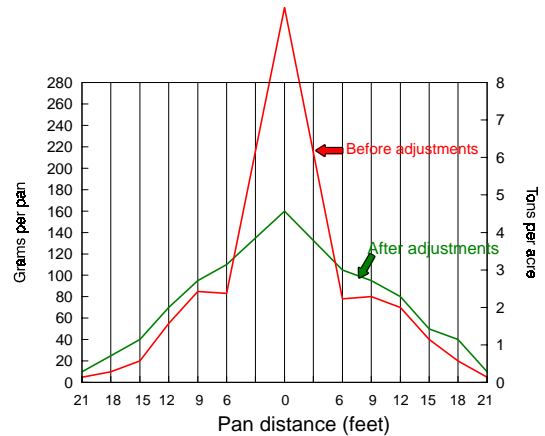
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2. **Use a tarp.** Collect and weigh the litter spread by the truck on a tarp in the field. It won’t tell you how uniform the litter is being spread, but it sure beats guessing. Here’s a quick formula for doing this:

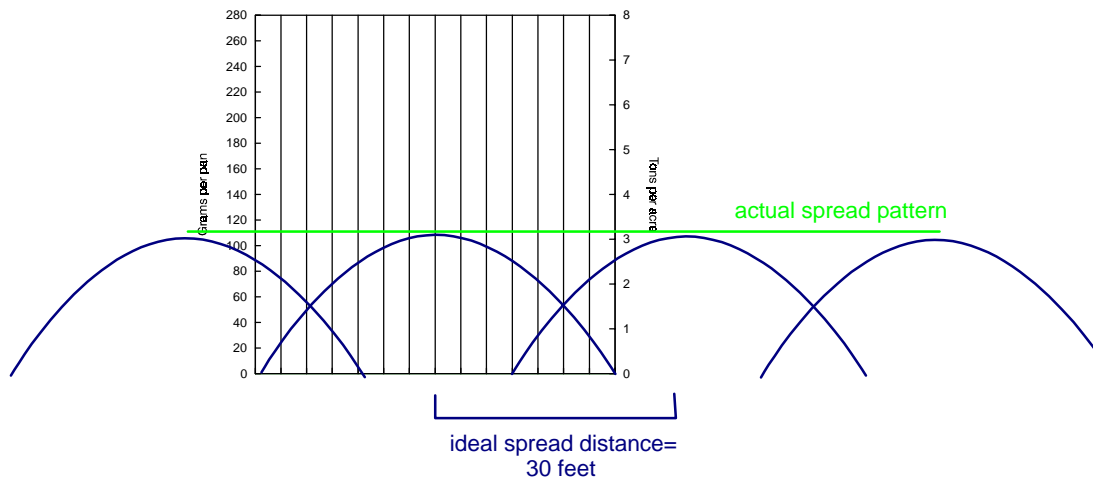
$$\frac{\text{WEIGHT OF LITTER ON TARP in pounds}}{\text{NUMBER OF SQUARE FEET OF TARP}} \times 21.8 = \text{tons litter/acre}$$

3. **Use pans.** The most difficult technique (as usual) is the most accurate. It involves using 11 or 13 pans spread out at 3-foot intervals. The spreader truck passes over the center pan. By comparing the amount of litter in all the pans, you have a good idea of the amount and uniformity of spread. From this we can determine the ideal spreader width to use. The following figures illustrate some of the spread patterns found during the field demonstrations this summer.

-Charles Mitchell, Extension Agronomist, Soils



Many spreader trucks dump litter directly behind the spinners. This can sometimes be corrected by adjusting the divider plate above the spinners.



Using pans will help a driver decide on an ideal spread distance to use for uniform litter application. In this example, the ideal spread distance was determined to be 30 feet.