

Being a good farm neighbor

Environmentally responsible behavior and good public relations are essential to success of livestock operations. Even with best intentions and plans, livestock operations may not be positively perceived by all. In Iowa, now more than ever livestock producers need to be cognizant of their neighbors and strive to enhance relationships with neighbors and the community.

Before manure is applied, or an operation is expanded, livestock producers need to lay the groundwork that will benefit their farm or operation, the environment and be acceptable to nearby neighbors. Talking to neighbors is extremely important, this helps educate the public on the livestock production process and how the operation stimulates the economy when a producer buys corn from local markets or employs area residents.



Tips to Consider Before You Build or Expand your Operation

- Be sure your location is a best choice and have other options available. Be prepared to defend your selection of site other than just convenience.
- Research local weather records to determine wind direction and micro-climates.
- Utilize trees as a screen for odor and aesthetics. Notify your neighbors of any changes you propose. Explain the change in detail.
- Design storage facilities and plan application equipment and application areas in such a way that neighbors can be notified before you apply nutrients.
- Demonstrate the environmental safeguards you have in your operation.
- Start your permit process well in advance (6-10 months in some areas) of anticipated construction. Begin your communication plan to neighbors and the community at the same time.
- Be prepared should your project require a public hearing.
- Be honest and up-front in all communications.
- Expect that not everyone will be in favor of your project.
- Arrange for tours of facilities that are similar to what you are planning. Strive to turn the fear of the unknown into the knowledge of the known.
- Do business locally when possible. Demonstrate the benefits of your business to the community.
- Be active in your local community.

Contributors

- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- Agribusiness Assoc. of Iowa
- Iowa Farm Bureau Federation
- Iowa Poultry Association
- Iowa Turkey Federation
- Iowa Pork Industry Center
- Iowa Beef Center
- Iowa Pork Producers Assoc.
- Iowa Department of Natural Resources
- Iowa Cattlemen's Assoc.
- Division of Soil Conservation, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship
- Iowa State Dairy Association
- Iowa Commercial Nutrient Applicators Assoc.
- Coalition to Support Iowa's Farmers
- Iowa Corn Growers Assoc.
- Iowa Soybean Association
- Iowa State University, University Extension
- Iowa State University, College of Agriculture

Iowa Manure Manager Series

Tips to Consider When Applying Manure

- Meet with your neighbors before manure application. Key points to remember: Livestock manure completes a sustainable agricultural system and reduces the amount of commercial fertilizer applied to fields. Be sure to mention that you have to apply during a small time period and try to offer an idea of when you will be done.
- Sincerely respond to concerns expressed by neighbors.
- Be mindful of community events.
- Meet and exceed all legal requirements.
- Stay current on and use technology to minimize odor.
- Consider updating and improving your application equipment.
- Research using pit or feed additives.
- Consider planting trees around livestock facilities.
- Inject or incorporate all manure.



- Be mindful of wind, temperature and other weather conditions when applying manure.
- Apply manure as few times as possible.

Other Tips to Consider

- Manage mortalities.
- Develop an emergency response plan.

- Train employees or family members in best management practices.

Hard-working farm families collaborate with their neighbors, area businesses and local communities creating a sustainable blend of social and economic development. The land produces crops. These crops are fed to livestock, used in food processing and transformed into renewable energy. Hogs, cattle and poultry produce an organic fertilizer used to grow crops. And the cycle begins anew. The bottom line: Take all reasonable steps to minimize the impact of manure application and livestock operations on your neighbors and community.

Resources:

Iowa Pork Producer Headlines, Fall 2006
www.iowapork.org

Iowa Pork Producer September 2004
<http://www.iowapork.org/download/IPP-0409.pdf>

National Pork Board
<http://www.pork.org/PorkScience/Environment/default.aspx>

Coalition to Support Iowa's Farmers
<http://www.supportiowasfarmers.org/>

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