

DeRouche adds that it should be a group effort for livestock producers to help educate each other on options and practices that will improve the environment.

"I see the state regulatory agencies such as KDHE relying on state service groups such as NRCS (National Resources Conservation Service) and Extension, as well as state livestock organizations like KLA (Kansas Livestock Association), the KCA (Kansas Cattlemen's Association) and the Kansas Pork Association, to help educate their producers as well. It will be a team effort to help bring everybody up to speed," DeRouche says.

Who will pay?

According to the USDA release, Congress increased funding for land and water conservation programs by \$2.9 million in the 2002 Farm Bill. This money is supposed to help livestock producers meet the rule's requirements by bringing the total funding for these programs to \$51 billion over the next decade.

"The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) was authorized at \$200 million in 2002 and will ultimately go up to \$1.3 billion in 2007; 60% of those funds must go to livestock operations," the USDA release said.

DeRouche says that even though livestock producers may have had difficulty receiving EQIP money in the past — that's expected to change.

"Previously, yes, it was a lot more difficult for livestock producers to get that money, but now more has been designated from that Farm Bill, and a lot more money has been put into that kitty for that purpose," he says. "A lot more money is designated for waste management systems. Over the next number of years the trend will certainly shift towards producers who will want to upgrade or do some things with their livestock facilities."

The EQIP money is dispensed on a county-by-county basis. The county board, whether that's NRCS or another agency, decides which projects in its county will be funded. However, if the county isn't allocated the money, livestock producers will have to seek funds other than the EQIP money.

"There are a lot more applicants than probably what there are dollars to go around," DeRouche says. "It is going to increase. It is not going to be a total savior for everybody by any stretch, but it certainly is going to help a lot more as we move into the next couple of years."

Of the EQIP money that is expected to reach the hands of livestock producers, a lot of it is earmarked for waste management systems, such as constructing a lagoon or some diversion terraces for drainage coming off lots, or for moving facilities off a creek to a different location.

"The new regulations are certainly workable and reinforce good, sound management practices based on the size of operations," DeRouche says. "The biggest thing is for producers to work with their livestock groups within their individual states and become informed about how this potentially affects them."

"Realistically this is not going to affect many from the purebred side unless they have a large feedlot themselves, but it is going to be affecting more of their customers or some of the feedlots that they work with to feed some of their cattle out. Their role is to work with them and to be informed as they get questions from potential customers or fellow cattlemen that they work with so that they are at least somewhat knowledgeable about how this affects people in their areas."



Editor's Note: For a complete version of the rule submitted to the Federal Register, view www.epa.gov/npdes/caforule on the Web.

Isn't it interesting?

CAFO (confined animal feeding operation) — How unfortunate that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) came out with an acronym that puts calves at the forefront of people's minds while, in reality, beef cattle are far from having the greatest negative environmental impact.



The document that the EPA is submitting for publication in the *Federal Register* tells the story in its own words.

"By sector, USDA estimates that operations that confine poultry account for the majority of on-farm excess nitrogen and phosphorous. Poultry operations account for nearly one-half of the total recoverable nitrogen, but on-farm use is able to absorb less than 10 percent of that amount. ... Dairies and hog operations are the other dominant livestock types shown to contribute to excess on-farm nutrients, particularly phosphorus."



Joel DeRouche, Kansas State University (K-State) Research and Extension livestock specialist in northeast Kansas, says that is not the whole story.

"The whole environmental thing falls back on everybody. Oftentimes we kind of point fingers and say it is the pork industry, or the poultry, or the cattle people doing the polluting, but we are all in this together," he points out. "All of the livestock organizations, regardless of species, need to be working together on this. When the lawsuits and the public scrutiny comes it isn't usually species-specific, but it is on everybody, and the more all of the livestock groups work together, the better off we will be."



While it is hard to think about what your own operation might have to go through to be in compliance with these rules, DeRouche encourages producers to work with state livestock associations, Extension and other environmental groups. Remember, producers of all species of livestock are in it together to protect both the environment and the lifestyles that rural agriculture provides.



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