

Current Environmental Issues

Most agricultural best management practices for manures are now based on providing sufficient N to meet crop requirements at a realistic yield. Documented problems with nitrate (NO_3)-N contamination of groundwaters in areas with high animal densities have been the driving force to change this approach. A number of emerging environmental issues such as

- eutrophication of surface waters by P in runoff,
- fate of trace elements,
- antibiotics, pesticides, and growth hormones in manure, and
- effects of pathogens in manure on human and animal health

have forced us to re-evaluate the N-based management of animal manure. All nutrients, pathogens, and other materials in manure must be considered in making the most economical, environmentally safe use of manure.