Healthy Lands For Healthy Horses
Increasing the Adoption of Best Management Practices on Horse Farms in Ontario

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Presentation Outline

1. Horse Farms in Ontario
2. Agri-Environmental Programs in Ontario
   A. Nutrient Management
   B. Environmental Farm Plan
   C. Barriers to adoption
3. Healthy Lands for Healthy Horses Project
4. Lessons and Next Steps

Archived presentation available at: http://www.extension.org/pages/Live_from_the_National_Water_Quality_Meetings
Large: 135 acres, 7/8’s mile track, swimming pool, tack shop, blacksmith shop, 5 equicizers, 1 vet, 5 barns, 90 stalls, 31 paddocks, 245 horse capacity

Medium: 40 acres, New show-jumping facility, innovative ‘green’ designs, composting system, 20 stalls, 8 paddocks, Indoor riding arena, riding ring

Archived presentation available at: http://www.extension.org/pages/Live_from_the_National_Water_Quality_Meetings
Small: 10 acres, a small private horse farm with riding trails, small stable, paddocks

2. Agri-Environmental Programs in Ontario

A. Nutrient Management

- Estimated 378,000 horses, on 54,169 farms (average 6 horses per farm)
- Nutrient Management Act, 2002
  - Regulations apply to large farms
  - Many horse farms not subject to Act because of size
- Many horse owners are not aware of adequate manure management practices
- Improving manure storages in simple, cost-effective ways greatly reduces the risks from manure

Source: http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/engineer/facts/07-045.htm
http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/95-629-x/4187772-eng.htm
B. Environmental Farm Plan

**Philosophy**
- Voluntary & confidential
- Self-directed, risk reduction approach
- Continuous on-farm improvements

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**EFP Process**
1. Farmer attends workshop
2. Completes workbook
   a. Ranks farm
   b. Identifies improvements
   c. Develops action plan
3. Confidential peer review
4. Apply for cost share

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EFP Program Uptake

Hogs (5.1%)
Greenhouses (9.4%)
Poultry (6.9%)
Other (4.4%)
Dairy (21.1%)
Beef (18.4%)
Field Crops (31.5%)

C. Barriers to BMP Adoption

- Many horse farms are not subject to Nutrient Management regulations because of their size
- The Environmental Farm Plan Program has not seen high uptake from the equine sector
- The sector may not be receiving the environmental information that they want and need
- Most horse owners don’t identify with traditional livestock organizations
- Increasing uptake requires reaching the sector in new ways (e.g., Equine Guelph, workshops)

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Addressing the Barriers

— 2009 Project conceived (by external partner)

- Identified the need for new outreach
- 3 workshops over 3 years in areas where horse farms are concentrated
- Multiple partners (each with delivery capacity and technical knowledge)

Partners

- Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (Lead)
- Credit Valley Conservation
- University of Guelph
- Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association
- Equine Guelph
- Ontario Trail Riders Association
- Ontario Equestrian Federation
- Uxbridge Horsemen’s Association
- Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority
- Kawartha Conservation
- Central Lake Ontario Conservation
- Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority
- Grand River Conservation Authority
- Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food & Rural Affairs

1st Workshop

- April 2009
- North of Toronto
- 70 attendees
- All partners contributing
- Key Issues:
  - Manure management
  - Pasture management

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Lessons From the Workshop

- Horse owners like to talk with each other
- Horse health is key for horse owners
- Most questions related to manure and pasture
- High interest in following up and taking action
- Many small horse farm owners wanted much more environmental information

http://www.equineguelph.ca/healthylands.php

Next Steps

- OMAFRA continues to work with its partners to address the needs of the equine sector
- More workshops in more watersheds
- Need to develop more targeted outreach materials
- Need to help promote that grants are in fact available
- Evaluate impacts of workshops and on-farm projects
- Examine longer-term sustainability of project

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