Livestock Waste Management 1996

The Situation
The livestock industry, particularly the dairy industry, continues to grow in the Magic Valley. Since 1978, the number of dairy cows in Gooding, Jerome and Twin Falls Counties has grown from 28,000 to 134,000 milking cows. During the same period of time, local communities saw an increased awareness of the environment. Increased concerns about livestock waste, coupled with an increased number of animals producing waste and a lack of understanding of the industry, began to create problems for county planners and for the dairy industry. Negative and often incorrect information about the dairy industry became common in the local press.

Our Response
County faculty and specialists performed two studies to provide factual, scientific data on the chemical composition of waste lagoons and seepage from waste lagoons. County faculty then provided this information to local planners. Extension faculty served on local planning and zoning boards in six counties and provided factual information regarding the concerns and benefits of livestock waste that would assist in orderly and environmentally sound growth of the dairy industry.

Extension provided workshops to dairymen, educating them on the aspects of livestock waste management, including containment and application of liquid and solid waste. Workshops were also provided to lenders, contractors and realtors to increase understanding of the waste concerns and to provide a coordinated effort in the design and construction of waste facilities.

Achievements
In the past two years, 197 dairymen have received assistance from Extension to prepare a waste system plan that would insure compliance with Idaho Department of Agriculture requirements. The Idaho Department of Agriculture, zoning departments, realtors, lenders, contractors and dairymen are now working together to properly design and install waste management facilities that will meet the needs of the community and the environment.

For More Information
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