Integrated Nutrient Management Program Work Group  
MINUTES December 13, 2004

Attending:

Nutrient Management Planning on the Ground Perspectives: Rich Wildman, Agricultural Consulting Services and Skip Hardie, Hardie Family Farms:

Hardie Farm Background
- Skip’s dad, Dave, started the farm in North Lansing in 1951. In 1977 Skip started partnership with Dave. Currently farm is 3 person partnership, Skip, Steve Palladino, John Flemming. 800 milking cows.

Agricultural Consulting Services Background
- In 1983 started ACS. Initial focus was IPM, site specific fertility and recordkeeping services. In 1980s one of their clients, Southview, was sued. Began litigation support.
- Rich came to realization that there is no correlation between farm manure management and being sued. The best defense is producing in accordance with acceptable practices.
- An issue at that time was that there were no defined standard, accepted (manure related) practices.
- Today, change in ACS focus to support environmental compliance. Moved into manure systems, engineering, data collection and reporting.
- Brian Boerman works for ACS with Hardie Farm.

How have your attitudes about nutrient management / impact of agriculture on the environment changed?
- Hardie farm irrigated manure for quite a while. Changed to 5000 gal tanker spreading due to odor issues. Using drag hose on most acres the last few years. Have 3 lagoons. All connected by underground buried lines.
- 1980 and 1987 manure fish kills in Salmon Creek from farm. Now they pay a lot of attention to manure applications.
- Need for better weather forecast. CNMP allows manure application but producer must take risk of rain / snow melt carrying manure to water.

How do you work together to create and maintain a CNMP and comply with other required environmental regulations?
- Rich: Some inefficiencies in process:
  - Data Collection,
  - Government regulations that don’t always make sense. For example: fencing around lagoon – standard results in expensive solution, over-engineered for site.
- These types of complexities are barrier to getting best information to farmers.
Skip: It is worthwhile to have a business relationship with high quality business such as ACS. For their farm it is worth paying for and using information that ACS has the capacity to provide instead of paying less for a plan that sits on the shelf.

Need for planner to have capacity for follow-up support.

**What are your greatest challenges when addressing environmental concerns?**

- Rich/Brian: One challenge is finding and interpreting information from DEC, EPA.
- Brian has to bring regulations to farmer who may question the creditability of rules.
- Skip relies on them to have expertise to bring together compliance and need for production, profit.

Skip: As a dairy farmer he feels that he has a personal, public responsibility to ensure environmental quality.

- Threat of lawsuit. Perception is reality. CNMP to-date hasn’t offered any legal protection. Farmers don’t get sued over endemic background pollution, get sued over big event.

**How has the potential conflict of farm management relative to profitability and environmental impacts or regulations effected your business or businesses that you work with?**

- Not many new dairies being established in NY – evidence of strict regulations?
- DEC – NY AEM working hard, doing good job in balancing regulations, farm needs.
- Hardie Farm Costs: Farm has ~ 5 million $ in assets, $ 400,000-500,000 invested in manure handling equipment. Now they are going to invest $ 1.5 million in methane digester. The digester will control odor control, produce electricity and increase ability to export manure. Downside is maintenance and cost.
- Manure problems keep farm from growing in size.

**What should the College of Agriculture be doing to support your nutrient management efforts?**

- ACS will focus on being conduit from researchers to farmers. Work needs to be done to show fate of nutrients in environment.
- Don’t work on problems out there now – Producers need CALS to work on issues coming in future. Danny: current funding addresses immediate needs or products funded by companies.

**Upcoming Meetings:**

*January 5, 2005 in 300 Rice Hall from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm*, Don Pettit (NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Programs) will present information about the Conservation Security Program.

*February 2, 2005, 1:00-2:30; 133 Emerson Hall*, Brian Aldrich, BEE: Transferring Technology from NYSERDA Ag. Innovation Manure Projects.