United States Department of Agriculture
NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service
South Dakota

Common Conservation Practices

Comprehensive Nutrient Management Planning

Surface and ground water run-off could create water quality concerns - something we all care about. Developing a system to contain, utilize, and manage manure is what the following conservation practices are all about. Practices can be combined to create a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) to address your specific resource concerns.

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is the principal program of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for delivering financial assistance to private landowners. Please contact your local NRCS office for free technical assistance to develop a conservation plan and an up-to-date practice payment schedule (prices) through EQIP.

Conservation Practice Name, Description and Practice Standard Number

Sediment Basin (350)

- Shallow depression at a lower elevation than feedlot.
- Designed to let solids settle out before water is released to a designated area.
- Typically holds water for 12-24 hours.
- Trash screen helps trap solids.
- Typical Payment Unit: Animal Units (less than 500, 500-1,000 or greater than 1,000).

Waste Storage Facility (313)

- Used to store manure and/or wastewater.
- Pump out periods can range from 1-5 years. (evaporation or annual).
- Interior is clay or synthetic lined.
- Typical Payment Unit: Animal Units (less than 500, 500-1,000, or greater than 1,000).

Vegetated Treatment Area (VTA) (635)

- Area is used for wastewater infiltration from sediment basin.
- Seeded to grass or a perennial crop.
- Hay production is allowed .
- Typically has a one to three percent slope (six percent maximum).
- Typical Payment Unit: per acre of vegetation.

Diversion (362)

- Used to keep clean water from entering the feedlot.
- Pipe, earthen berm or channel.
- Reduces amount of wastewater in the feedlot and containment system.
- Typical Payment Unit: linear foot channel or pipe.

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Anaerobic Digester (366)

- Biological degradation of organic material in the absence of air.
- Provides volume and mass reduction.
- The energy can be converted to heat and electricity.
- Typical Payment Unit: Animal Units.

Photo source: NRCS Iowa

Waste Treatment - Biofilter (629)

- Primarily used to reduce odor emitted from confinement buildings.
- Uses wood chips or other porous organic material.
- Reduces emissions of dust, hydrogen sulfide, and ammonia.
- Typical Payment Unit: each unit.

Nutrient Management (590)

- Proper application and use of manure and/or commercial fertilizer.
- Equipment calibration and record keeping assistance.
- Limited to three years.
- Includes payment for manure testing and soil testing.
- Typical Payment Unit: Animal Units.

Waste Transfer (634)

- Moves manure/wastewater to a holding pond or vegetative treatment area.
- Includes manure pump, reception pit, slurry pump with agitator and appropriate pipe.
- A pump with a vegetative treatment system.
- Typical Payment Unit: each unit.

Windbreak/Shelterbelt (380)

- Reduce soil erosion from wind.
- Enhance wildlife habitat.
- Provide visual screens.
- Reduce odor.
- Manage snow deposition.
- Typical Payment Unit: linear foot/row.

Animal Mortality Facility (316)

- Used to compost mortalities, usually for swine or poultry.
- Can be either a lumber structure or concrete.
- Typical Payment Unit: Animal Units (based on live animal units).