



NEWS RELEASE

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SUBJECT: Manure runoff risk advisory forecast available online

New tool to help farmers prevent manure runoff from fields

MADISON – Farmers can now go online for the latest forecast showing the risk that runoff from manure spread on their fields could pose to lakes, rivers or groundwater, state agricultural and natural resource officials say.

Wisconsin's runoff risk advisory forecast shows what parts of the state are at high risk over the next three to 10 days for runoff based on rainfall, snowmelt, soil conditions, temperatures and weather forecasts. The forecasts are updated three times a day by the National Weather Service.

"With our new runoff risk advisory forecast, farmers don't have to guess how risky it is to spread manure," says Jim VandenBrook, water quality section chief for the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.

The forecast is part of the Wisconsin Manure Management Advisory System that state and federal agricultural and natural resource agencies and the University of Wisconsin have put in place to help Wisconsin farmers know when conditions are right to spread manure on their land. The advisory available on the web at: [<http://www.manureadvisorysystem.wi.gov/>] and also can be easily reached by searching online for "manure advisory system."

"By checking the forecast, farmers will know when conditions are right to spread manure so that it stays on the fields and fertilizes the soil instead of risking pollution of streams and groundwater," VandenBrook says.

(more)

Public service announcements promote runoff risk advisory forecast

Public service announcements promoting the runoff risk advisory are being sent to radio stations across the state this week, and will be aired on agricultural programming on several stations starting next week, according to Tom Bauman, Department of Natural Resources agricultural runoff coordinator.

"We think this is a valuable tool to help farmers protect their bottom line and Wisconsin waters," Bauman says. "This ensures that runoff warnings are based on the latest information about conditions on the ground, not what the calendar says they might be."

The risk advisory also contains recommendations if farmers cannot avoid spreading manure on days when the risk of runoff is high, and links to a DNR video showing precautions farmers can take if they must spread, including finding lower-risk fields, and how to respond if a manure spill or runoff does occur.

The runoff risk advisory joins the nutrient application restriction maps featured on the Wisconsin Manure Management Advisory System for several years. The restriction maps help farmers develop nutrient management plans that guide where, when and how much manure can be spread. Following such plans can avoid long-term phosphorus build-up in soils, reduce the chances of nitrogen leaching into groundwater, and cut the risk of winter spreading on fields where it should be avoided, VandenBrook says.

The mapping website is a joint project of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection; Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration-National Weather Service River Forecasting Center; U.S. Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service; University of Wisconsin-Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences and Soil Science Department; Discovery Farms; UW-Platteville and its Pioneer Farm; and U.S. Geological Survey.