



Feedlot upgraded in Fillmore County through state grants and loans

Featured Project

A feedlot project completed in Fillmore County is part of a larger effort to restore water quality in the Root River, and it demonstrates how local and state government agencies have worked together to help landowners finance environmental improvements. Livestock manure benefits crop production when it is applied correctly by providing nutrients and organic matter to the soil. However, if not properly managed, runoff from feedlots, and from fields on which manure is applied, can contribute nitrogen, phosphorus and bacteria to surface and ground water causing water quality degradation.

The Fillmore Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) had been working with a producer for a couple of years to develop a plan to bring the feedlot into compliance and to sign up for funding to make the project financially feasible. The feedlot is located in an impaired watershed, making it a high priority project for the Clean Water Fund Competitive Grant program. The program is funded through the Clean Water Land and Legacy Amendment and administered by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). These state grants provide up to 75 percent of the total eligible project costs, however landowners sometimes struggle to pay the remaining 25 percent.

BWSR coordinates the grant program in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), which offers low-interest loans to landowners through its Agriculture Best Management Practice (Ag-BMP) Loan program. SWCDs work with eligible landowners to apply for grants and/or loans during the same application period. Applications for feedlot projects are all sent to BWSR, whether they are requesting a grant, a loan or both. The Fillmore SWCD applied for and received a competitive grant for 75 percent of the eligible project cost and a loan that paid for the remaining costs. That allowed the landowner to pay for the upgrade over a period of 10 years at a low interest rate of 3 percent. The partnership of state agencies, working cooperatively with SWCDs, has resulted in improved administrative efficiency and has led to many projects getting completed instead of being delayed while a landowner seeks financing elsewhere.

Location: Fillmore County, Pilot Mound Township

Partners: Fillmore SWCD, Fillmore County Feedlot Program, BWSR, and MDA



Pictured (top): Before the project was completed, the open lot was located next to a road, and runoff was going into the road ditch. **The lower photo** shows the completed project, which involved relocating the lot and building a structure that is designed to control runoff and provide shelter for livestock.

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Project Timeline: The producer began planning a few years ago by looking at other feedlot fixes completed around the county and talking with other producers. The producer began working with the SWCD in 2008 on development of a fix and seeking cost share funding for the project. Construction was completed over the summer of 2010 with cattle occupying the facility by October 2010.

Project Costs / Funding Sources: Total project costs were \$240,000, plus private engineering fees and services of \$3,900. Funding for the project was through BWSR Clean Water Fund Grant Dollars and the MDA Ag BMP Low Interest Loan Program.

Keys to Success: This feedlot fix is just one of many that have been completed and continue to be completed in Fillmore County. This project highlights the high performance of the County Feedlot Program and the Fillmore SWCD working together with the livestock producers of Fillmore County.

BWSR role: Administration of the Clean Water Fund Grants to provide cost-share dollars to Counties/SWCDs for Livestock Waste Management Practices.

Measurable Outcomes: MinnFarm is used to calculate the pollution reductions from feedlots. The following pollution reductions were accomplished by this project: Fecal coliform - 4.3 colony forming units (CFU) per year; Nitrogen - 260 pounds per year; Phosphorus - 88 pounds per year; biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) - 1,040 pounds per year; chemical oxygen demand (COD) - 4,682 pounds per year.

Another measurable outcome from fixing up the feedlot is having the ability to capture the manure produced by the livestock and utilizing it as fertilizer on cropland. By being able to capture the manure the producer is able to land apply the manure at agronomic rates according to their Nutrient Management Plan. They can also time the applications so that the nutrients in the manure are used most efficiently by the crop reducing the risk of leaching or runoff of excess nutrients. By better utilizing the nutrients in the manure the producer is able to cut down on their commercial fertilizer costs.

Contact for more information: Fillmore SWCD Website: www.fillmoreswcd.org

Anne Koliha, Fillmore SWCD Technician, 507-765-3878 ext 3, anne.koliha@fillmoreswcd.org

