



Feedlot Inventory Brings 100+ Operations Into Compliance

Featured Project

Manure management systems, filter strips and other conservation best management practices have been implemented at more than 100 feedlot sites in Rock County from 2002-2008. The project sites were identified during a Level III feedlot inventory conducted by the Rock Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD).

Rock SWCD staff conducted 655 site visits and identified 128 feedlots that required corrective action. All but 20 have been fixed as of September 2009. Of those remaining 20 sites, 10 have implemented partial fixes, and each of those landowners has signed an Open Lot Agreement, which requires them to bring their operations into compliance by October 2010.

The feedlot inventory also helped the Rock SWCD secure competitive grant funds, such as federal EQIP funds and state Feedlot Water Quality Management grants. Comprehensive data was collected for each feedlot in the county, including which sites had the highest pollution potential and what would need to be done to bring those sites into compliance. That data enabled the SWCD to clearly identify priorities and to develop effective grant applications to pay for high-priority projects.



Sediment basin and filter strip project for a site with 300 feeder cattle.

Location: 655 sites throughout Rock County

Partners: Grants to pay for feedlot projects have been provided through the State Conservation Cost-Share Program, administered by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources, and the Federal EQIP program, administered by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). The Southwest Prairie Joint Powers Engineering Services provided almost all of the engineering work on any lots that received state and federal grants, and also assisted the other landowners who made corrections on their own. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (PCA) also participated in developing the work plan and providing guidance regarding state feedlot regulations.



Project Timeline: Planning began in 2002, including a delegated county feedlot program work plan, a communications plan, and the Level III Inventory plan. Quarterly meetings began with staff from Rock County, PCA and BWSR. Existing data was used to develop a method to prioritize facilities for inspection, and the inspections began in July 2002. A database and file system were created for documenting data from each site and to maintain / update registration information. Rock County hired a technician in August 2002 to support the feedlot inventory. Inspections of all sites was completed in 2004.

BWSR Featured Project

Project Costs / Funding Sources: Rock County received \$80,000 through the U.S. Attorney General from fines that were part of two separate plea agreements in 2002 and 2003. The fines were paid by several individuals who were involved in banking and feedlot management in Rock and Pipestone Counties. BWSR received \$130,000 for participation in the inventory and oversight, and Pipestone County received \$105,000 for feedlot cost-share grants and for developing manure management plans and implementing other best management practices. Additional state and federal dollars provided cost-share grants to landowners: \$480,550 through State Cost-Share (BWSR), \$415,805 through the Federal EQIP program, administered by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). NRCS also provided \$40,000 in EQIP Engineering Assistance.

Keys to Success: Public outreach meetings were conducted by the SWCD, which helped ag producers understand the purpose of the feedlot inventory and the plans to secure grant funds for feedlot upgrades. Reaching out to producers in these face-to-face meetings diffused controversy, and several attendees even volunteered to be among the first landowners to have their feedlot inspected by Rock SWCD staff. Federal funding through the USDA NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) was also a key to helping landowners pay for projects that brought feedlots into compliance with environmental regulations.



Feedlot conservation practices installed as a result of the Rock County Level III Feedlot Inventory have included (clockwise, from top) Roof and runoff control structure, filter strip, and settling basin.



BWSR roles: As part of the plea agreement, BWSR staff participated in the feedlot site visits and provided an oversight role by reviewing quarterly reports prepared by Rock SWCD staff. BWSR also administers the State Conservation Cost-Share grant program and the Feedlot Water Quality Management grant program, which provided state funds to match federal and local funds for feedlot projects.

Local contact for more information: Doug Bos, Rock SWCD, (507) 283-8862