Manure Applicators Workbook  2022

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Understanding Manure Gases

The four main gases produced with the decomposition of manure are hydrogen sulfide, ammonia, carbon dioxide and methane. The primary hazards of these gases are toxicity, asphyxiation and potential for explosion.

The most serious problems with manure gases occur when manure is agitated or when ventilation systems are inadequate or fail. However, gases are constantly being produced and there is never a ‘safe’ time to enter manure storage facilities or other confined spaces, such as tanks, within a manure handling system.

**Factors that increase gas production:** (especially hydrogen sulfide)
- Manure temperature increases
- Manure pH decreases
- High sulfur content in manure due to high sulfur diets
- Silage runoff
- Spoiled feed
- Bedding additives (such as gypsum)

1. The most serious problems with manure gases occur when manure is ________________ or when ______________ systems are inadequate or ____________.

2. Which manure gas is extremely toxic? __________________________

Methane is odorless, lighter than air, flammable and exposure may result in headaches/dizziness.

Ammonia is lighter than air, has a sharp pungent odor and causes eye/respiratory irritation.

**Hydrogen Sulfide** is heavier than air, extremely toxic and may cause death in seconds, has a rotten egg odor but cannot be smelled at high concentrations.

**Carbon Dioxide** is odorless, heavier than air and exposure may result in headaches/dizziness.
Working in Confined Spaces

Follow your company’s and OSHA’s plan for confined space procedures. If the plan’s procedures indicate no entry, that means NO ENTRY. Thinking that an action will only take a second, may take a life.

If your procedures allow for entry, and entry is required, take the following precautions prior to entering a confined space:

1. Ventilate the space
2. Use a retrieval system that includes a safety harness, tripod, and winch. Have adequate personnel available.
3. Utilize the buddy system with safety attendant
4. Measure hazardous gases using a gas monitor
   - The only accurate measure of gas levels is an appropriate gas monitor. When working with manure systems and working in confined spaces, a multi-gas monitor is recommended.

Factors that INCREASE RISK by decreasing gas dispersion from manure storage areas:

- Wind conditions are still
- Temperature inversions exist
- Impermeable covers are used
- A heavy crust has formed

During normal atmospheric conditions, the air temperature is warmest near the soil surface and cooler at higher altitudes (30-100 feet above the ground). Cooler air is denser than warmer air, so air is constantly moving vertically during normal conditions. During a temperature inversion, the air temperature near the soil surface is cooler than the air above, preventing vertical air movement. Temperature inversions are common during the summer, and typically start in the evening and may last until the next morning. Signs of temperature inversion include low wind speed (< 3 mph), dust or smoke hanging in the air and slowly moving horizontally, and presence of haze in low areas.

If at any time an employee of your company or the host farm loses consciousness in a confined space,

**DO NOT ENTER AND ATTEMPT RESCUE.**

**IMMEDIATELY** proceed to follow your emergency response procedures with a call to 911.

3. What is an approved method/device to determine the risk of hazardous gases being present in a confined space or near a manure pit?

4. List three safety precautions that can be taken prior to entering a confined space:
5. **Circle one:** Place tractor DOWNWIND or UPWIND to prevent gas exposure to pit worker when agitating.

6. Agitation boats can potentially ruin the storage basin if left agitating in the same spot for an extended period of time. □ True □ False
Pump and Pressure Safety

Each year, billions of gallons of liquid manure are pumped through miles of hose. To achieve efficient rates of gallons per minute, high horsepower motors are needed to push manure out to applicator tractors in the fields from storage basins or transfer tanks. This creates dangerous air and fluid pressure levels in pumps and hoses, which could potentially lead to serious injuries, or even death, if proper safety protocols are not followed.

General Safety Tips

- Conduct employee training – safety and equipment operation
- Provide proper maintenance to equipment (oil checks, grease, etc.)
- Efficient communication system (e.g. mobile radio system)

On the Pump

- Use heavy duty safety chains on caps/covers on pumps
- Pressure relief valves in chambers with high air pressure
- Correct size and type of pins/ clips/ bolts in locations
  - Insert clips in a direction that they don’t have the potential to unclip or fall out
- Be sure caps/ covers move freely before disconnecting
  - Chamber may be holding a dangerous level of air or fluid pressure
- Do not connect the air compressor hose until ready to clean out the line
  - Vibrations from the motor could loosen the connection
- Slowly turn manual valve levers

Pressure Protocol

- Know your valve/ lever/ computer control system; these controls will be different depending on manufacturer and model; not all pumps have the same design
- Monitor pressure levels closely
- Losing pressure while the pump is running safely - check hose for leaks
- Gaining pressure while the pump is running - check valves and pumps
- Start at lower PSI when first sending manure through the hose

Checking the Hose

- Check regularly for leaks; hose couplers and draglines have higher risk for leaks
- Keep a safe distance from the hose when pressurized (fluid or air pressure)
- Keep a safe distance from the area where the pig completes hose clean out
- After blow out is complete, step on the hose to check air pressure before disconnecting
- Keep non-essential personnel or the general public away from your operation

7. After the pig has cleaned out the hose, what should you do to the hose before disconnecting it from a pump? __________________________________________

8. All pumps and application set-ups have the same pressure protocols.  □ True  □ False
Following the 4Rs of Nutrient Management

**4Rs**

Manure applications should follow the 4Rs of nutrient management in order to apply the correct amount of nutrients in the most environmentally friendly way. In addition, applicators need to follow the guidelines for the farm’s 590 NM Plan and/or the NR 243 CAFO permit and plan. Two valuable documents for nutrient applicators are the Farm’s Nutrient Management Plan and Spreading Restriction Maps.

**Right Source.** Manure, urea, ammonium sulfate, ammonium nitrate, anhydrous ammonia, potash, lime or other nutrient sources are used to meet the crop needs.

**Right Place.** This includes the right fields and then as surface, incorporated or injected applications. Field maps help applicators apply the manure in the Right Place. Manure needs to be placed so plant roots can reach the nutrients and that nutrients do not run off fields or leach into groundwater. Also, identify areas where manure applications are:

- Concentrated flow channels
- Surface waters
- Saturated soils
- Areas of active snow melt
- Where vegetation is never removed
- Direct conduits to groundwater
- Tile inlets
- Within 8 feet of irrigation wells
- Within 1000 feet of municipal wells
- Within 50 feet of private wells

**Right Rate.** Application rate is indicated as gallons per acre for liquid manure or tons per acre for solid manure. In order to apply at the right rate, equipment must be first properly calibrated.

To adjust the rates, an operator may:
- Drive slower to increase the rate
- Drive faster to decrease the rate
- Increase or decrease pump pressure
- Vary the opening on valves and ports

**Right Time.** When manure can be applied is based on weather, field conditions and time of year. Do not apply manure prior to an expected major rain or runoff event. Check the Runoff Risk Advisory Forecast (see page 16).

- No winter applications are allowed in Surface Water Quality Management Areas (SWQMAs)
- In winter, liquid manure application rate is limited to 7,000 Gal/A; can be applied on slopes less than 6%

9. What two pieces of information do applicators need to apply manure correctly on a field?
   ___________________________  and  ___________________________

10. Name three areas where manure can never be applied:
    ___________________________  ___________________________  ___________________________

11. What is the maximum amount of liquid manure that can be applied in winter on slopes less than 6%? ___________________________
This map shows 3 fields: highlighted areas/icons for wells, shallow bedrock, SWQMAs, P soils, winter manure prohibited area, winter restrictions (slope >6%) areas, intermittent streams and perennial streams.

This is an example of a map that you might receive from a planner or your supervisor. The map should have the field boundaries drawn and clearly labeled. A legend of the layers should also be included. Remember if you have any questions about the maps, *always ask and have the information clarified before you begin application!*
Understanding Manure Spreading Maps from SnapPlus

SnapPlus is the software used in Wisconsin to write nutrient management plans that comply to the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection’s (DATCP) rules, NRCS’s 590 Nutrient Management Standard, DNR’s NR 243 and NR 151 rules. The mapping portion (SnapMaps) generates maps that have layers of information that help planners and applicators visually understand the landscape and where nutrient application can occur. The maps on this and the following page show key layers derived from the complete map on page 8 (note that the map is for a non-permitted farm; CAFOs may have different layers).

Color vision deficiency can also interfere with understanding the information. If you have any questions about the maps, **always ask and have the information clarified.** Maps can also be printed with a single layer of information per map, making the information easier to see. Inform your supervisor or planner ahead of time if you need additional maps.

Using the above map, answer the following questions:

12. Which field is in SWQMA? _________

13. What field has **bedrock depth less than 5 ft**? ______

14. Do any of the mapped fields have **P soils**? ________

15. How many wells (nutrient prohibited areas) are on the map? ______
Using the map on the left, answer the following questions:

**Colored solid line: Concentrated flow channel**
- Concentrated flow channels can be drawn with varying widths from 5-100 feet.
- Areas with concentrated flow channels need special management for winter manure applications to avoid manure runoff.

**Colored lines: Channelized flow buffer 200 ft**
- When they receive water from rainfall runoff or from some surface source (such as melting snow).

**Crosshatched area, multiple colors: Exclusion area**
- Field area that is not included in the field acres for nutrient management planning including areas that are not farmed, grass filter areas, vegetated buffers, non-metallic mines, sinkholes, other karst features or waterbodies. These areas do not receive any applications.

16. **What field includes a channelized flow buffer of 200 ft?**

17. Areas with concentrated flow channels do not need special management for winter manure applications to avoid manure runoff.

  - True
  - False

18. Winter is defined by the calendar months of December thru February.

  - True
  - False

19. **What field has a:**
    - winter manure prohibited area?
    - winter spreading restriction?

20. Can manure be applied in winter to the portion of the field that does not have the winter manure prohibited area?

  - Yes
  - No
Manure Regulations for CAFOs

A concentrated animal feeding operation (or CAFO) has 1,000 animal units (AUs) or more (700 mature dairy cows = 1,000 AU). CAFOs are regulated by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Under special circumstances, the Wisconsin DNR can designate a smaller farm as a CAFO if they have had a pollutant discharge to surface water or if they contaminate groundwater such as a drinking water well. CAFOs must follow the DNR NR 243 and NRCS 590 Nutrient Management Standard, including but not limited to:

- Every load of manure applied must be documented
- Manure must be sampled and tested at the frequency laid out in the permit; it is important to know who is responsible for taking the samples when pumping manure out of the pit
- No surface spreading of liquid manure February 1st - March 31st
- No surface spreading of solid manure February 1st - March 31st IF the ground is frozen or there is greater than 1 inch of snow cover
- No spreading of manure within 100 feet of a private well and 1,000 feet from a community well
- No manure spreading on soils with a depth to bedrock less than 24 inches or soils with groundwater within 24 inches of the surface
- CAFO permits and NMPs are routinely audited

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** CAFOs have additional restrictions when making applications in a SWQMA (including intermittent streams and connecting flow channels). Each farm selects from multiple strategies for applying manure in a SWQMA, so you must follow the specific instructions and maps for the farm that you are making applications on. As stated on page 9, **CAFOs will have additional map layers and colors for these restrictions.**

There are many other spreading restrictions not listed here, so you must follow the maps and instructions for the specific farm that you are making applications on.

21. What Wisconsin agency regulates CAFO farms? ___________
22. Would a farm with less than 1,000 AU be permitted as a CAFO?  □ Yes  □ No
23. Every load of manure spread for a CAFO farm must be documented.  □ True  □ False
24. When spreading manure for a CAFO farm, how far must you stay away from a private well (Karst areas have increased setbacks, see page 12)?  __________ feet
25. All CAFOs use the same strategy for applying manure in a SWQMA.  □ True  □ False
In some areas, either the soils or the rock/sand/gravel under the soil quickly allows manure, nutrients and pathogens to contaminate the groundwater wells used by local residents. Knowing what these are, and the steps to take to avoid the risk, are essential.

**Highly permeable (sandy) soils** allow rain, snowmelt and contaminants to move quickly downward. The nutrient management plan may limit rates and the time of year when manure or fertilizer can be applied.

**Karst areas** are defined as the combination of shallow soils and porous bedrock. Some types (such as the fractured limestone on the eastern side of Wisconsin) are considered very high risk, but the potential for sinkholes and karst-like features exists around the eastern, southern and western parts of Wisconsin. Since thick soils are better at filtering than shallow soils, the risk is highest when there are shallow soils above karst rock.

**What does Karst mean for me?**

Because the risk is higher, you need to take special precautions to reduce the risk of contaminating wells.

- Review the Nutrient Management Plan map to determine if karst areas are mapped
- Always be on the lookout for karst features when spreading manure
  - Sinkholes are spots where soil has washed into a crack. Often farmers filled these with rock. In some cases, streams disappear into sinkholes.
  - Fractures are cracks that allow water to enter the groundwater. In dry seasons, plants tap into the soil in the cracks, and may be able to see the pattern in alfalfa growth.

**Common NR 151 Karst regulations**

- Well setbacks increase to 250 feet for a private well and 1,000 feet of a community/municipal well
- **Less than 5 feet of soil:** Depth to rock must be verified prior to application on fields
- **Less than 2 feet of soil:** No manure applications
- **2-3 feet of soil:** Pre-till and incorporate/injection no deeper than 4 inches (liquid), solid manure rates limited to 15 tons, or manure treatment required
- **3-5 feet of soil:** Same as 2-3 feet, except injection depth limited to 6 inches
Handling a Manure Spill

When a manure spill happens, **human safety should always be your first concern!** Call 911 if needed. Then take action and follow these six steps.

1. **Control** the spill
2. **Notify** your supervisor
3. **Contain** the spill
4. **Contact** appropriate authorities
5. **Clean-up** the spill
6. **Document** the spill

26. A spill is (check all that apply):

- [ ] a. Any release of manure that has the potential to threaten ground or surface water
- [ ] b. Any release of manure greater than 1,000 gallons
- [ ] c. Any release of manure that reaches a stream or pond
- [ ] d. All of the above

27. You are an employee and are applying manure in a field and a spill occurs; match the correct task to the spill response number.

1. _______ a. Begin the cleanup
2. _______ b. Call the DNR or appropriate agency
3. _______ c. Control the spill by turning off the pumps
4. _______ d. Determine the best way to contain the spill (plow, chisel, berm)
5. _______ e. Fill out documentation and paperwork
6. _______ f. Notify your supervisor

All agricultural or livestock operations, regardless of size, must report manure spills or runoff that may affect Wisconsin's waters to the Department of Natural Resources.

**Report manure spills immediately! Call the 24-hour spill emergency hotline: 1-800-943-0003**
Spill Response and Public Relations

Consider spill response steps and public relations course of action in the following situations:

28. You are stopped by the state patrol after a complaint that your truck is “very dirty and ruining a Labor Day party” for a family along your route. How should you respond to this issue?

29. Your layline ruptured in the ditch just prior to the field entrance and is continuing to pump manure. The flow of manure in the ditch is heading west towards a well. How should you respond to this issue?

Underground Hazards

Many public utilities are buried underground and can pose a hazard when applying manure, especially when using injection. Communicate with the barn farm manager where underground utilities are located.

Do not rely on farmers and landowners to know where these utilities are located on their land. Underground hazards are rarely marked on the spreading plan map, so pay attention to any markers or signage near fields.

**Need to locate underground hazards?**

In Wisconsin, contact Digger’s Hotline http://www.diggershotline.com/

If out of state, call 811 from that location or go to http://www.clickbeforeyoudig.com/

For more information, see Pipeline Ag Safety Alliance http://www.clickbeforeyoudig.com/

Consider these hazards:

- Fiber optic lines
- Phone lines
- Natural gas/petroleum pipes
- Electric service lines
- Tile inlets/outlets

**Watch for overhead electric lines!**

Tile drainage lines have been installed in many field across Wisconsin. Pay particular attention to where drainage tile inlets and outlets are located to avoid damaging these systems and monitor them both during and after application for any manure discharge.

Air vents indicate tile drainage in nearby fields
Operating on the Road

Whether you're operating a tractor or driving a truck, there are rules of the road that apply to each type of vehicle. It is important to know the rules related to the vehicle that you are operating as you're responsible if a crash occurs or for a driving violation. Yes, distracted driving rules apply in a tractor! The owner of the vehicle is responsible for the vehicle safety such as inspections, lighting and marking, and brakes. For further information on related laws, see the WI DMV website https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/dmv/agri-eq-veh/default.aspx

Every time you pull out onto a road, you're operating on a shared public space. Your first priority is to safely get the work done and that includes avoiding a crash. Having working lights and clean, visible marking should be part of a daily check. When on the road, having lights on at all times is required for wide implements of husbandry (IoH) and a best practice for other vehicles. All motorists are required to provide warning of their intent to turn, meaning use your turn signals. A few key rules of the road for agricultural vehicles are:

General Rules of the Road for All Operators

- Must yield the right-of-way to an oncoming vehicle and yield half the roadway
- May not drive on the left side of the roadway on a grade or curve or area designated as no passing zone if it creates a hazard to oncoming traffic
- May not drive so slowly as to impede the normal movement of traffic
- Must (if practical) yield the roadway to an overtaking vehicle

In addition, for Wide IoH with required lighting and marking requirements may:

- Extend over the center of road into the lane intended for travel in opposite direction
- Extend into passing lane on a 3-lane highway
- Extend into another lane intended for travel in the same direction, if it does not impede other vehicles from the rear

For more detailed descriptions of vehicle lighting and marking requirements, as well as more information about road safety.


Wisconsin Department of Transportation:
Agricultural equipment and vehicles

30. When on the road, lights must be clean and turned on only after dark. □ True  □ False
Making Healthy Choices at Work

Healthy Practices to Prevent Fatigue and Obesity
(National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health)

- Get at least seven hours of sleep at night
- Cut down on sugar sweetened beverages, fried & salty foods.
- Increase physical activity
- Increase intake of omega-3 fatty acids
- Include more whole grains and a colorful mix of fruits/veggies
- Eat smaller meals more often during the day to help steady blood sugar levels
- Choose lowfat dairy, lean meats, nuts, seeds, and seafood

Before bed, avoid:
- Heavy or spicy meals
- Liquids, especially alcohol or caffeine
- Nicotine and other stimulants
- Light exposure from television and electronics

Key Guidelines for Truck and Tractor Drivers
(Department of Health and Human Services)

- Move more and sit less throughout the day
- Some physical activity is better than none!
  - Step out of the truck between loads to inspect semi and tanker (check tires, lights, etc.)
  - Walk around when you are not driving (shutdowns, field switching, breakdowns)
- Physical activity has immediate health benefits like reducing anxiety and blood pressure, or improving the quality of sleep and insulin sensitivity
- More physical activity = more health benefits
- Exercise before or after work

Check out My Plate for healthy recipes and tips
(USDA https://www.myplate.gov/)

- Build your own: Make your own trail mix
- Prep ahead: Portion snack foods into baggies or containers
- Make it a combo: Combine food groups
- Eat vibrant veggies: Spice up raw vegetables with dips
- Snack on the go: Bring ready-to-eat snacks when you’re out

The Runoff Risk Advisory Forecast

www.manureadvisorysystem.wi.gov

The Wisconsin Manure Management Advisory System is a set of maps to help farmers and others who apply nutrients to identify suitable cropland areas for spreading. There are several maps available, but the Runoff Risk Advisory Forecast map or RRAF is a key "on the ground" tool that you should learn to consult when conditions are questionable.

The runoff forecast provides maps showing short-term runoff risk for daily application planning, taking into account factors including soil moisture, weather forecast, crop cover, snow cover and slope. It is updated twice daily by the National Weather Service. The data is based on a system using four-kilometer grids (1.25 square mile), allowing users to look at conditions at a very local level.

The RRAF is not a regulatory tool but rather a tool to assist in assessing the risk of nutrient application runoff.

The map displays the runoff risk not just for the current day, but 72 hours into the future based on precipitation model forecasts. In the winter, the model looks out up to 10 days using the temperature forecast to predict snowmelt. This ‘look ahead’ allows better planning of manure and other nutrient applications. A few things to keep in mind:

- Assess the risk for the actual field before an application
- Even low risk fields may not be dry enough to spread
- Risk increases with soil moisture
- Some fields are inherently high risk due to soils, geology, slopes, and other factors. Always check the setback maps before applying.