"Managing Manure Spills and AFO/CAFO Emergency Planning"
July 9, 2010

The webcast is archived at:
http://www.extension.org/pages/Manure_Spills_and_Emergency_Planning

How should roadway build-up be handled? No spill, but where tanker exits or enters field the roadway gets heavy build-up.
Kevin Erb: There are two issues here – mud/dirt and manure that should be addressed. Both can pose a safety hazard to traffic on the road for several days or weeks after the problem occurs. The simplest solution is prevention. If mud is the concern, can we avoid driving in and out of wet fields (roadside transfer), use a field entrance away from wet areas, or even wait a few hours or days until the field dries enough to reduce or eliminate the problem? For manure, many commercial applicators and farmers are taking steps to secure the load. With solid manure, keeping the load covered until it enters the field helps. For liquid, not overfilling the tank, reducing speed when turning, or modifying the tank to have a spring loaded trapdoor or even a sealed system can make a big difference.

When leaving the field empty, driving with one set of tires completely off the road (so mud is left on the shoulder rather than the driving lane) can be helpful IF the shoulders are wide enough to safely allow it. Slower speeds will reduce mud throw from wheels, reducing the area of cleanup.

Once mud or manure are tracked or spilled on the road, safety becomes an issue. Some farmers will rent or borrow signs from the township or county (such as SLOW or TRUCKS ENTERING HIGHWAY) to slow other vehicles. Homemade signs are not acceptable, as they may increase your liability. Depending on how much mud is tracked on the road and traffic volumes, scraping the mud off with a skid steer or tractor on a regular basis will help. Some farms have invested in a street sweeper or other equipment to remove mud after scraping, but adding water can make the road much slicker and increase accident risk. To keep the neighbors happy, each tractor driver should have a supply of pre-purchased tokens or certificates to a local car wash – if someone complains or expresses a concern, giving them one to clean the car now and a second if needed is inexpensive goodwill.

Can any of you discuss what should be done if the 5:00 news does show up? Should the EPA address things like who would be the spokesperson and what the responses should be?
Melony Wilson: It is a good idea to have an environmental goal statement that all employees know. That way, if the news does show up and approaches any employee, instead of hearing no comment they will hear the environmental goal statement. After stating the environmental goal of the operation they should be instructed to direct additional questions to the proper spokesperson for that operation. And I think it is a good idea to have this as part of the emergency response plan.

Tommy Bass: An environmental statement defines the operation's goals including environmental stewardship in a brief sentence or paragraph. "Triple A Farms is committed to profitably producing quality chickens, while preserving our family's agricultural heritage, being good neighbors, following all rules and regulations, and protecting the environment." Producers can receive assistance in developing prepared statements or in general emergency communication to the public from Extension, Agricultural Communication Departments at Land Grant Universities, from their local emergency preparedness committee's public information officer and possibly from representatives of their lag lenders and insurers.
Kevin Erb: Many farms and commercial applicators carry the boss's business card with them, and when asked, they will make the goal statement, but immediately say that they should talk to the person in charge and hand them the card with the owner's cell phone number. If asked a follow up question, repeat that they really should talk to the owner or person in charge—she or he are the ones most familiar with the cleanup and what steps have been taken.

The Soils Description Map (digi-Map) can provide detailed information on karst soils.
Kevin Erb: Karst maps are intended to give you a general idea of where karst features may occur. It is critical that the farmer and the applicator discuss each field for application, noting any karst features that occur not only in that field, but in down-slope fields as well.

The open surface liquid impoundment marker on the left of slide 6 in the "Simple Steps and Technologies for Manure Spill Prevention" does not appear to be properly installed.
Shawn Hawkins: The federal CAFO rule sets the minimum marker requirements by simply stating that it must "clearly indicate the minimum capacity necessary to contain the runoff and direct precipitation of the 25-year, 24-hour rainfall event." However, many producers want to obtain additional information from installed level gauges, such as the volume either remaining or contained within the impoundment, or perhaps the number of feet above or below say the design solids storage volume. I believe that the marker in question represents a volume stored (I'm assuming the impoundment is empty), with the number above the mark for that volume (e.g. "2" might be 200,000 gallons). Regardless of what the numbers represent, the minimum requirement for the rule is then met by simply placing another distinctive annotation on the gauge, such as the black line painted on the gauge in question.