

Policy Options to Reduce Agricultural Nutrient & Sediment Runoff To Our Lakes

EXISTING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

In a small (59 square miles) area with high runoff, identify nutrient and sediment runoff from individual farm fields.

Pay farmers part of the cost of installing farming practices that will reduce nutrient and sediment runoff to our lakes.

This is currently under way. (Grant funded) ^{A61}

Develop a simpler, quicker, cheaper way to identify individual farm fields with high nutrient and sediment runoff. ^{A6d}

Expand what was done in the 59-square-mile area to all farms in the Yahara lakes watershed, starting with sub-watersheds that load the most nutrients and sediment to the lakes. ^{A6}

If farmers refuse to install (after being offered grant money), or fail to maintain farming practices designed to reduce runoff, use Dane County's stepped enforcement policy to achieve compliance with state and county rules. ^{A69}

Run soil tests on all cropland and pastureland in the Yahara lakes watersheds. Soil phosphorus (P) levels for each farm field are often unavailable, and are a major factor in identifying how P is entering our lakes. ^{A63a}

Work with farmers and crop consultants (provide training) to develop multi-year nutrient management plans that detail crop rotations, tillage practices, manure and commercial fertilizer application (NRCS 590 plans).

Review and ensure the plans are followed. ^{A63c}

Prohibit the application of manure and any other P-containing fertilizer to farm fields with a soil P level of 200 ppm or more. An exception would be necessary starter fertilizer. ^{A63b}

Dredge sediment from selected drainage ditches, and incorporate that sediment back on the farm fields. Do this only after nutrient & sediment runoff from the fields have been controlled. Install 2-stage ditches where warranted. ^{A39,42}

Build the community manure handling facility (manure digester) planned for the Waunakee area. After it is evaluated, if evaluation warrants, build more facilities to meet needs in other watersheds. ^{A13,14}

Establish an easement purchase/relocation program for a limited number of livestock operations in locations that load large amounts of nutrients and sediment to the lakes. ^{A22}

Devote staff time to help farmers get necessary federal, state and local permits for projects that reduce nutrient & sediment loading to the lakes. ^{A5}