Weather Provides Opportunity to Clean Outdoor Lots

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The break in the weather may provide an opportunity to scrape and clean manure from outside lots. If it is not dry enough to haul to the fields, cleaning the area and stacking in the lot may provide a cleaner area for the livestock and will hold nutrients until spring.

Outside lots collect a lot of manure in a small area over the winter. Spilled feed also adds nutrients, and bedding may hold those nutrients. Regardless of the situation, it is better to hold and recycle those nutrients to crop fields than risk them being washed off site.

Any time a lot is within proximity of surface waters, it is important to keep the lot scraped and cleaned as frequently as possible. Also, creating any berms, vegetation or other barriers to filter or divert runoff is important to protecting surface waters. Nutrients from manure can become soluble and travel with surface water even when you do not see the manure moving. Stronger rains and rapid snow melt may carry the manure as well.

The break in the weather may be providing opportunities to scrape and haul these nutrients to fields, distributing the manure nutrients where they can contribute to the 2012 crop season. Anticipating that we will still get some snow, select fields that have little or no risk of runoff to surface waters, apply at agronomic rates and incorporate the nutrients if conditions allow. Assuming we will still get more snowfall, and assured that there will be spring rains, moving nutrients to the field now may head off concerns when real spring finally arrives.

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