Cleaning Overwinter Sites for Cattle

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Some dairy cattle are overwintered outside. After several months of congregating around bale and supplement feeders, both manure and wasted feed accumulate. Both have nutrients that are better utilized for crop production than leaving them vulnerable to spring runoff.

Despite the break in the weather, it is assured that there will still be more snow, and even more certain that there will be spring rainfalls. Taking time to gather up and haul wasted feed and manure from outside wintering lots will reduce the risks of spring weather washing these nutrients to any nearby surface waters.

Other options include moving feeders on a frequent basis, thereby letting the cattle move the manure around the field for you.

Reseeding these areas this spring will maintain vegetation for livestock, take up left over nutrients, outcompete weeds and reduce soil erosion.

Location of over wintering areas is the first guard against surface protection.

No one wants lots in a low area, but when selecting a small grade to put them on be sure that there is either a good distance of vegetation prior to reaching any surface water, berms that divert runoff from the waters or better yet, there is no surface water down grade of the lot areas.

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