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NEWS

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Info for Snyder County Farmers, Agriculture & Livestock/Equine Operations

During this busy time of year, the Snyder County Conservation District wants to relay some pertinent information to our farmers and agricultural/livestock/equine operations.

1.) Since 2016, Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), with the urging of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), has asked conservation districts to assist DEP to inspect farms in their respective counties within the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

The Snyder County Conservation District Board of Directors (made up of one county commissioner, four farmers and two public members who are appointed by the county commissioners) voted that its staff conduct these inspections for an additional twelve months (July 2018 – June 2019).

During an inspection, Conservation District staff will be ensuring compliance with basic regulatory requirements such as:

- Properly handle, store and land apply animal manure and agricultural process wastewater on the farm consistent with the nutrient needs of growing crops [i.e., a manure management plan (MMP) or a nutrient management plan (NMP)]; and
- Properly manage risks of erosion and runoff from agricultural plowing or tilling operations and animal heavy use areas [i.e., an "agricultural erosion and sediment control plan" (Ag E&S Plan) or a conservation plan].

In the meantime, Conservation District staff asks that farmers work on seeking our guidance in getting their plans and operations in compliance. We may be able to assist in developing MMPs and Ag. E&S Plans. There may be a time in the future when a Conservation District staff member visits a farm and the plans are not in compliance. It's possible that we may not be able to help and would be forced to report the problem to DEP and/or the State Conservation Commission (SCC).

2.) Also, the SCC increased its average weights in 2017 for many agricultural animal species. This may redefine some farms from non-CAOs to CAOs (concentrated animal operations) or from non-CAFOs to CAFOs (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations).

New CAOs are required to have an approved nutrient management plan (NMP) instead of a regular manure management plan (MMP). New CAFOs are required to have an approved NMP and an approved permit from DEP.

The Conservation District staff is asking farmers and animal operations to meet with us to determine whether you will be a CAO and/or CAFO in the near future. If so, we will point you in the right direction towards compliance.

3.) If a farmer or an agricultural operation is thinking of building a new facility, manure storage or stacking structure, or other work that involves earth disturbance, please make an appointment with the Conservation District staff during the planning stages.

Depending on the situation, you may require an erosion & sedimentation control plan (E&S Plan), a federal excavation permit, an odor management plan (OMP), a P.E. (Professional Engineer) developed design and drawings for liquid manure storages, and proof of agricultural compliance plans (i.e., MMPs, NMPs, Ag. E&S Plans, conservation plans).

If you have any questions or want to meet with us, please feel free to contact anyone at the Snyder County Conservation District at 570-837-3000. We are located at 10541 Route 522, Middleburg. You can also visit our website at www.snyderconservaiton.org.

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