

Relocate Feeding Areas Affected by Flooding

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The flooding events in North Dakota have caused a number of concerns for livestock operations. Winter feeding areas along creeks may have been underwater and perhaps cattle were stranded. Ice jams tore through fences, reminding us that these feeding areas are too close to water. With the quick thaw, water was seen running through many feeding areas taking with it manure to deposit farther downstream.

“If your livestock feeding area was negatively affected by recent weather events, chances are that you may qualify for cost-sharing assistance to relocate and modify your current operation,” says Teresa Dvorak, North Dakota State University Extension Service livestock nutrient management specialist. “Most operations have two choices to look at. Your first choice may be relocating the existing facility. The second choice is building a containment system, along with dikes, to keep clean water out of the livestock area and contain water that has come in contact with manure.”

One source of cost-sharing assistance is the 319 program implemented by the Soil Conservation District, North Dakota Stockmen’s Association and North Dakota Department of Agriculture Livestock Pollution Prevention Program. Cost sharing may be available for fencing, watering systems, run-off ponds, clean-water diversions and other construction costs associated with the development of a containment system.

“If we can help these livestock producers with some of the cost they will incur to rebuild and provide a benefit to the environment, it’s a positive for everyone involved,” says Dennis Fewless, North Dakota Department of Health’s Division of Water Quality director.

The benefits of installing an agricultural waste system may include cleaner, drier lots, fence line feeding, heavy-use cement cattle aprons and environmental compliance. Floodwaters in your cattle feeding area means that you did have an impact on the environment because manure was washed away with the water. The installation of a containment system may mitigate future problems associated with flooding.

“This might be a good time for you to consider taking advantage of the cost-share programs to implement an agricultural waste system and get some help to cover those costs,” Dvorak says.

The process starts with a farm visit by any one of several agencies.

For more information about cost-sharing programs and environmental compliance issues, contact the North Dakota Department of Health at (701) 328-5210 or Dvorak at (701) 483-2348 or e-mail teresa.dvorak@ndsu.edu.

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