Wisconsin

Project Highlight: Evaluating the Value of Composted Manure

Wisconsin is home to more dairy farms than any other state. The milk they produce has a market value of $5 billion and is a huge contributor to the state’s economy. But the industry also generates a lot of manure, and there is only so much dairy farmers can spread on nearby fields before excess phosphorus begins to leach into and impair the region’s waterways.

This problem prompted three Wisconsin dairy farmers in the Yahara River watershed to collaborate on a SARE-funded project looking at composting as a means to deal with manure in a cost-effective, environmentally friendly manner. The idea was to experiment with the composting process on their farms and then analyze the final product’s moisture level and nutrient content. Comparing the cost to produce it with its market value would tell them whether it made economic sense to compost manure.

In the end, the farmers found that composting can be a viable alternative to directly applying manure on fields. They estimated the value of their compost at $24 to $37 per ton. Compost is beneficial for the soil and for water quality because it improves many soil characteristics that reduce the likelihood of nutrient leaching.

For more information on this project, see www.sare.org/projects, and search for project number FNC15-991.
SARE Grants in Wisconsin

SARE has awarded a total of 306 grants in Wisconsin since 1988.

- 69 Research & Education Grants
- 129 Farmer/Rancher Grants
- 29 Professional Development Grants
- 45 Graduate Student Grants
- 15 Youth Educator Grants
- 14 On-Farm Research Grants
- 5 Youth Grants
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- 5 Youth Grants

SARE's Impact:

- 53 percent of producers report using a new production technique after reading a SARE publication.
- 79 percent of producers said they improved soil quality through their SARE project.
- 64 percent of producers said their SARE project helped them achieve higher sales.

Contact Your SARE State Coordinator:

Diane Mayerfeld
Univ. of Wisconsin Madison
(608) 262-8188
dbmayerfeld@wisc.edu

For detailed information on SARE projects, go to www.SARE.org

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