



# A Stepwise Approach to Environmental Assurance

## Livestock System Progressive Planning Fact Sheet

The Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) provides an excellent opportunity for Michigan farmers to proactively and voluntarily manage their farms for the protection and enhancement of soil and water. For livestock producers, the pinnacle of accomplishment in MAEAP is farm verification, which results from an independent farm inspection following the implementation of a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP). Some producers may elect to immediately pursue the completion of a CNMP and verification. However, many producers find that smaller, more progressive steps in environmental improvement are more economical and practical.

### **Progressive Approach**

The MAEAP Livestock System Progressive Planning approach to environmental assurance is designed to meet the needs of those producers who are not yet ready or able to implement a CNMP and receive verification. The Progressive Planning approach offers seven options reflecting components of a CNMP. Producers can work on these options at their own pace. One-on-one, confidential guidance and assistance from the non-regulatory MAEAP partnering organizations is also available. As progress is made, recognition is provided as an incentive as evidence of producer effort to be a good environmental steward.

### **Planning Options**

There are seven different Progressive Planning options available for producers. The order and priority of each option is determined by the farmer to match farm-specific environmental, business, and production goals. Each option has its own one-page fact sheet that outlines what it entails. The options are:

- Confidential Site Review & Completed Action Plan
- Whole Farm Nutrient Balance
- Manure Spreading Plan
- Conservation Practices on Fields Used for Manure Application
- Emergency & Employee Training Plans
- Mortality & Veterinary Medical Waste Disposal
- Odor Management Plan

### **Confidential Assistance**

Participating farmers are offered confidential, one-on-one guidance through the Progressive Planning process. These "Local Coordinators" are members of MAEAP's non-regulatory partner organizations including Michigan Farm Bureau, Local Conservation

Districts, Michigan State University Extension, and Michigan Milk Producers Association. Producers may indicate with which organization he/she would prefer to work.

Local Coordinators are available to assist producers in a variety of ways including:

- Understanding MAEAP and other environmental expectations.
- Identifying farm specific areas of concern and opportunity related to environmental stewardship.
- Setting farm-specific goals, timelines, and plans for improving and sustaining good environmental stewardship.
- Identifying the appropriate resource persons for assisting in the completion of specific steps in the progressive planning process.

### **Recognition**

MAEAP wants to recognize farmers who make notable progress in environmental stewardship. All points of recognition require participation in an approved MAEAP Phase I educational session and the following:

- **Level I Recognition (certificate)**  
Completion of a *Confidential Site Review & Completed Action Plan* plus any two of the other six Progressive Planning options
- **Level II Recognition (certificate)**  
Completion of all seven Progressive Planning options
- **MAEAP Verification (certificate & yard sign eligibility)**  
Implementation of a CNMP and completion of an on-farm verification

### **Sign Up**

Producers can sign-up for MAEAP Progressive Planning at any time by submitting a sign up form to the Michigan Department of Agriculture. Forms are available from MAEAP partnering organizations or the MAEAP website [www.maeap.org](http://www.maeap.org)

### **No Obligation**

Signing up does not obligate the farmer to specific changes and the farmer has the prerogative to progress as far as he/she feels comfortable or are within farm goals. Note that some circumstances (e.g. CAFOs, EQIP, and Michigan Department of Environmental Quality enforcement action) require farms to implement a CNMP and/or other farm practice changes in a more prompt manner than Progressive Planning was intended to facilitate.