Managing Manure from Open Feedlots in Dry Weather

This extended period of dry weather has caused low water flow in many Iowa streams. Low flow coupled with high temperatures has put a strain on aquatic life in these streams and causes the stream to be highly vulnerable to any nutrients and other pollutants that may reach the stream.

Open feedlot producers should take advantage of the dry weather conditions to scrape manure from feedlots so if we do receive any rain there are less nutrients on the feedlot to move through the settling basin. This helps reduce potential impact on water sources and provides a nutrient source that can be used for crop production next year. Producers should also consider removing manure from settling basins. Dry conditions offer opportunity for thorough settling basin cleaning and maintenance. All open feedlots, regardless of size are required to settle solids from manure runoff.

Finally, open feedlots with permits are required to dewater basins according to the terms of the operating permit. Make sure that all equipment is in good operating shape and keep an eye on irrigation or sprinkler equipment to make sure that effluent is not running off the field or pooling in places in the field. If you are worried about dry soils with cracks, apply effluent in smaller volumes over a period of days to reduce the potential of macropore flow to tile lines. Generally, due to the nature of our soils, this is not a problem. All producers should follow the regulations for stockpiling solids removed from the feedlot and land application requirements.

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http://www.agronext.iastate.edu/immag/