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Nutrient Management

Farm Pathogen & Nutrient Management Meeting.

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Dear Paul, Ken and Committee members,

I would like to congratulate you on the excellent meeting you sponsored on April the 3rd. It was extremely innovative of your committee to take the task of nutrient management on with such a well thought out symposium. I totally agree with the way you are approaching this, with a view to resolving the problems, to everyone's benefit, both rural resident and farmer, rather than allowing draconian views from any one side, to hold the right of way.

If I may, I have some thoughts that I would like to pass on to you for consideration: They are not in any order.

1. I believe this issue needs to be dealt with by management at the source.
 - This allows the most effective controls.
 - Problems are much easier dealt with at the source.
2. Education, open and honest communication are the keys.
3. It seems that farm water is the enemy; we must look at minimizing it leaving the farm.
 - Movement towards less than 12% moisture seems to be the right way to go.
 - Run off should be deterred wherever possible.
 - If not deterred, it must be controlled.
4. Composting.
 - Require Aerobic action to kill the bacteria.
 - No smell.
 - Will need to look at cheap temperature probes down the line, for monitoring the compost.
 - What temperature and for how long.
5. Set realistic goals.
 - We cannot solve all the problems in one go.
 - Adopt a phased approach, dealing with the high-risk problem areas first.
 - Look seriously at easy fixes; get some wins under your belt.
6. Effective monitoring.
 - See if it is possible to produce a simple comparator like that used by swimming pools, to test for problems in watercourses.
 - Teach farmers or owners of land with watercourses to take samples and test them weekly or monthly. This would allow you mapping of any

- problems and be able to provide some traceability of the contaminant entering the watercourse.
- Set up landowners at branches of watercourses, gets more bang for your buck in tracing it back.
 - Easy to understand instructions and what to do, if and when you find something.
7. Give the farmers and rural citizens a forum to resolve problems.
 - Ensure it revolves around resolution, do not allow hi-jacking of it.
 8. Allow the peer review committees to be arbitrators in problems.
 - Maybe even allow them to have enforcement authority, although I am hesitant to go there.
 - Enforcement is the last barrier and the least effective.
 9. The Municipality in my opinion, should:
 - Assist in providing the forums.
 - Allow access to information through written and through a good web site.
 - Help with access to programs and point out new ones as they come active.
 - Provide guidance to local citizenry on these issues.
 - Have the procedures available, in clear easy to read format.
 - Provide guidelines to the committee.
 - Back the committee's recommendations 100% or it's a waste of time.
 - Have emergency plans to deal with a large release of contaminants.
 10. Committee needs to have a set of terms of reference drawn up.
 11. Reward good management of any problem areas by recognizing it somehow to the peer group.
 12. Offer free advice.
 13. Eventually we will need to look at rural septic systems.
 14. Set up self-reporting lines, and ensure that penalties are substantially less if a person self reports a problem.
 - Get buy in from the ministry.
 15. Proper application and storage methods.
 - Just what are they.
 - Who is right
 - When and how can I do it?
 - Get these questions answered broadly, they may set up your first set of guidelines.
 16. Feed Efficiency
 - Can we make the animals produce less waste, I don't know, but maybe worth looking at.
 17. Enforcement is the last vestige; you have lost, if you are down doing this.
 - Takes huge resources.
 - Difficult to quantify problem.
 - Difficult to definitively state who did what when.
 - Open to reverse litigation.

I hope this is of some help to you in your very difficult quest. If I can be of help, please let me know.

Yours Faithfully,

Sandy Donald