

Exporting Your Manure Slurry

Creating a climate for successful exporting of your manure.



Dairies, Feedlots, and all manure producers at some time or another may desire to export their dry and liquid manure slurries to neighboring farmland that is not part of their MMP - Manure Management Plan. To successfully export your manure slurries and get some financial participation from your neighboring farmers you need to think about these five considerations:

Consideration #1 – *Supply and Demand*

It is all about supply and demand; as a producer you have an excess supply of manure; but what is the demand for it from your neighbors?

Yes, all crops need fertility to reach the expected yield goals; but, do the farmers need or want to buy your manure? If a producer is giving away their dry lot manure, why would a farmer want to pay anything for your manure slurry?

As a manure producer, you need to have a long-range plan so farmers receiving your manure are providing you with some benefit as well. This benefit may be cash, commodity credits, goodwill, promise to purchase slurry at some point in the future, trade value. or other tangible value to the producer.

Consideration #2 – *Become a Good Neighbor*

In a farming or rural community *Good Will, Trust and Honesty* is the benchmark of all business. If a farmer feels overlooked, taken advantage of, ignored, under paid for commodities purchased, or late paid for commodities purchased they often become indifferent to any desire to cooperate with a manure producer.

Get to know your neighbors personally. Meet them for coffee, invite them to your open houses, employee appreciation days, company picnics or BBQ's, company Christmas Parties, etc. If you give your employees a ham, turkey or other gift for the holidays include your neighbors as well. A little goes a long way to building good will and trust.

If your neighbor needs a favor, help them in any way you can. If the neighbor has some equipment breakdown, volunteer to help them. These favors speak volumes and make the neighbor feel indebted to your kindness and they will try to reciprocate in ways they can.

If your neighbors' children or grandchildren are in boy scouts, girl scouts, in some sports at school or involved in some school fundraiser; then help them out. Maybe buy their fund-raising cookies, sponsorship ad, or sponsorship toward their uniforms.

If your neighbor is complaining about noise, smell or flies ask them what suggestions they would have to help you alleviate the issue. Then try to accommodate them as much as practical. Let the neighbor know what you did and ask them if it is helping.

Get your neighbors to feel they are part of your business family.

Consideration #3 – *Purchase Some of Your Commodities From Your Neighbor*

If you are buying commodities on the open market hoping to save a few dollars; then maybe those few dollars you are saving could be better invested in generating goodwill with your neighbors.

Consider buying your neighbors commodities at a fair market value. Even give them a little extra if the commodity is of higher quality or of higher protein content. Becoming part of your neighbor's crop market will make them feel like you are part of their team.

Make the transaction a win-win and be very prompt with your payments to them. If you are having cash flow issues, be up front with your neighbor and let them know when you will be paying them. Asking permission for the extra time BEFORE you take possession of the commodity.

Buying local make everyone feel you are supporting their community. No one likes it when they have an equal or better product and you buy it from someone else far away.

Consideration #4 – *Pump Your Lagoons Before it Becomes a Problem*

If you wait to pump your lagoon when you have a solids or capacity problem, you have lost much of your negotiating power. Farmers who sense you have a problem often feel you should pay for the problem to be solved.

However, if you have enough capacity to wait a year or two, then you are in the driver's seat when it comes to negotiating with the farmers. Then your conversation with the farmers becomes, *"I will need to pump my lagoon in a year or two and wanted to know if you might be interested in getting some of the manure slurry as nutrients for your crops."* Posing your lagoon pumping consideration as a question to the farmers lets them know you are interested in selling, not just giving the product away.

Consideration #5 – *Be Willing to Let the Farmer get a Deal*

When starting your negotiating with the farmers ask them how many pounds of which fertility, they normally buy each year. Then indicate to them, *"If I could provide you that fertility, would you be willing to pay me rather than the co-op?"* Then sell them the first-year fertility they normally buy at the price they would normally pay; then give them all the rest of the extra nutrient in the slurry as a bonus.

Most farmers pay for their fertility in the spring when they work out the bank loan for their seed, fertilizers and other expenses for their spring planting. Deferring their paying for the nutrients until they normally have to pay allows the farmer to feel comfortable with the transaction.