

A day for making the most of manure

By: Kurt Knebusch

JUNE 25, 2019

STRASBURG, Ohio—Expect plenty of fertile conversation at Manure Science Review.

Designed to share ways to put manure to good use, and to do it while protecting the environment and water quality, the annual event is on Aug. 7 at JIMITA Holsteins, a 400-plus-acre family dairy farm in Strasburg. Strasburg is about 20 miles south of Canton in northeast Ohio.

Manure offers nutrients that crops need to grow and can reduce a farmer's commercial fertilizer costs, said event co-organizer Chris Zoller, educator, agriculture and natural resources, [Tuscarawas County office of Ohio State University Extension](#).



Manure Science Review, co-presented by Ohio State, is set for Aug. 7 in Strasburg. (Photo: Getty Images.)

"That's especially important as the margins in agriculture, especially in the dairy economy, have been very tight," Zoller said.

OSU Extension is the outreach arm of The Ohio State University [College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences](#) (CFAES), one of the event's collaborators.

SESSIONS, DEMOS, TOUR

Manure Science Review, now in its 19th year, will offer expert-led educational sessions, field demonstrations, and a tour of commercial compost producer Bull Country Compost in nearby Dundee. The program is aimed at farmers, crop consultants, and soil conservation workers, among others. More than 100 people are expected to attend.

Ohio's recent record rainfall may be on many of the attendees' minds, Zoller said. (But hopefully it won't also be on their heads. The event will go on rain or shine.)

Because of wet conditions caused by all that rain, many of the state's corn and soybean fields haven't been planted yet, might not be planted at all this year, and "farmers are asking about alternatives," Zoller said.

Among those alternatives are cover crops, the focus of one of the event's sessions.

"Cover crops can provide long-term benefits in improving soil health and water quality," Zoller said, including by reducing erosion and retaining nutrients.

'TOO GOOD TO WASTE'

Other sessions will discuss manure nutrient uptake by crops; applying manure to emerging crops; reducing phosphorus runoff—phosphorus runoff from farm fields can fuel harmful algal blooms such as those in Lake Erie; manure-related rules and legal issues; and assessing the value of manure beyond its nutrients, including its impact on crop production and soil health.

Field demonstrations will look at calibrating manure spreaders; stockpiling solid manure; side-dressing crops with liquid manure; manure application using injection and shallow tillage; silage leachate and manure handling; and the intriguingly named "Soil Your Undies" soil health challenge, which aims to tell if a soil is healthy based on the decomposition rate of buried, yes, underwear.

Bull Country Compost composts manure to use to improve soils and sells it bagged and in bulk. The tour will feature how the company has grown its business, which was started in 1994.

Zoller said the bottom-line message of the event is that manure is too good to waste. One of the event's goals, he said, is to teach farmers and their advisors how manure can be a beneficial part of a crop nutrient program.

DETAILS

The event runs from 9:20 a.m. to 3 p.m. at JIMITA Holsteins, 9877 Strasburg Bolivar Road NW in Strasburg, and from 3:30–4:30 p.m. at Bull Country Compost, 10316 Kohr Road NW in Dundee.

Registration for the event is \$25 by July 30; \$30 after July 30; and includes lunch, coffee, doughnuts and the tour. Participants can earn credits for continuing education.

Full program details, including the speakers, topics, and a mailable registration form, are available at go.osu.edu/2019MSR or by calling 330-202-3533. Online registration is available through Aug. 1 at go.osu.edu/msr2019.

In addition to CFAES, the event's collaborators are the Tuscarawas Soil and Water Conservation District, Ohio Department of Agriculture, Cooper Farms, and Ohio Farm Bureau.

Manure Science Review's many sponsors include the Ohio Livestock Coalition and some of its partners: the Ohio Poultry Association, Ohio Pork Council, Ohio Dairy Producers Association, and Ohio Cattlemen's Association.

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