

Manure Management Credential Available for CCAs in California



In May 2007 CCAs were certified by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board to prepare and certify nutrient management plans required by law for dairy producers under their jurisdiction. The CCA Board is responding to the new dairy rules by offering a Specialty Certification in Manure

Management. This is being done for two reasons. First, to help CCAs build their dairy business by assuring potential clients that the CCA they hire is highly qualified to assist them in manure management. Secondly, this certification program demonstrates that CCAs can respond to challenges like these and should be recognized as experts by regulators, and others, as events change agriculture in the future.

Proper management of manure is significantly different than commercial fertilizers. While CCAs are highly qualified to manage plant nutrition, the current CCA Performance Objectives (POs) do not cover several unique aspects of manure management. For example, new POs address: 1) several requirements of the new dairy regulation, and 2) how to evaluate a producer's method of collecting, treating, and applying manure with regard to efficient use of the manure nutrients. Each type of manure has different characteristics that effect how and if it should be applied at a particular time of the year and at a particular rate. A CCA earning this Specialty Certification should be able to help a producer plan and implement a dairy specific plan for collection, treatment, and application of manure. Among other things, this includes:



- 1) Evaluating if the manure nutrients produced by the herd are excessive relative to the cropping pattern and acreage available. If so, help write a plan to balance them,
- 2) Evaluating the amount and type of manure nutrients available annually and plan a farm wide manure and commercial fertilizer application strategy that matches nutrient availability to crop needs, and considers crop uptake patterns and regulatory limits,
- 3) Evaluating the physical layout of the manure delivery system to determine if



- the producer can measure and control manure applications to each field,
- 4) Preparing a recordkeeping system that provides the producer with the information needed to make good decisions with regard to manure application,
 - 5) Preparing a soil, tissue, manure, and water sampling plan that meets regulatory requirements AND provides the information needed to successfully manage the cropping system.
 - 6) Be able to recognize when irrigation efficiency is limiting the ability of the producer to successfully implement the plan, and either provide or direct the producer to needed assistance.

The Manure Management certificate is an optional credential enhancement. It is the first enhancement of its kind offered through the Certified Crop Advisor program anywhere. CCAs in good standing will be eligible to take an exam on topics related to manure management. If they pass this exam their credential will include a specialist designation in manure management. Here is a list of the requirements:



- 1) Be a CCA in good standing, with CEUs and dues current.
- 2) Pass the exam.
- 3) Earn 5 units of Continuing Education Credit in Manure Management every two years. (This does not add to the 40 CEU required every two years for all CCAs.)
- 4) Pay the required dues.

There will be a fee for the exam (\$95) and an increase in annual dues (\$65) to offset the cost of managing the program.

A set of Performance Objectives has been prepared for this credential, and is available on the California CCA website: <http://www.cacca.org/> and follow the “Exams/Announcements” link. When available, a link to a website with reference material will be placed here as well. In the meantime, CCAs should: 1) review the Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Valley Region, Waste Discharge Requirements General Order for Existing Milk Cow Dairies (Order # R5-2007-0035), 2) review materials that were presented at the manure management workshops for CCAs last may in the Central Valley <https://apps.co.merced.ca.us/EnvironmentalHealthWM/documents/ProNMPworkshop.pdf> and, 3) visit the following sites: <http://www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/cnmp/index.html> <https://apps.co.merced.ca.us/EnvironmentalHealthWM/pages/help/Links.aspx> , both of which contain additional links.

If this is the type of service you would like to offer to dairy producers, or owners of other types of animal feeding operations, strongly consider taking this exam. It will be good for your business, and will help strengthen the CCA credential for all CCAs.