

Local farmers, government agencies: Collaborate on fall manure application

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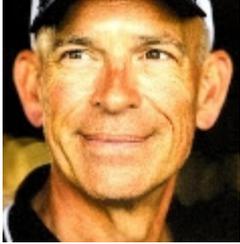
Goal: Meet 'expectations of our neighbors and regulators'

KEWAUNEE, Wis. — It seems there has always been this notion that government agencies and farmers do not see eye-to-eye or work together. This is clearly not the case in Kewaunee and southern Door counties.

During a Sept. 11 meeting, attendees discussed best practices for the annual fall manure hauling season. The aim: Do what is best for the land and water.

During the one-hour meeting, local farmers sat down with representatives from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Kewaunee County Land and Water Conservation Department, and Door County Soil and Water Conservation Department to review regulations and practices. The farmers are members of Peninsula Pride Farms (PPF), a nonprofit farmer-led watershed conservation group committed to protecting and improving water quality through innovative farming practices. PPF organized the meeting, the second in as many years.

“The safety of our neighborhood and our environment is taken very, very seriously by farmers,” PPF President Don Niles said. “With the technology and the tools we have available, like the detailed weather reports and maps, we can do a better job in our fields and be more conscious of the land and water.



“It is important for each farmer in the fall before manure is spread to work together with other farmers and the regulatory agencies to make sure we are all on the same page. We all need to make sure our plans are consistent with the expectations of our neighbors and regulators.”

Peninsula Pride Farms is a nonprofit organization of dairy and crop farmers and corporate members committed to protecting and improving ground and surface water in Kewaunee and southern Door counties in Wisconsin.

The use of no-till and cover crops were talked about extensively at the meeting. The practices, which limit disturbance of the soil and keep a growing crop on the fields year-round, improve soil structure, reduce erosion and can extend the time farmers need for fieldwork. Those efforts make a difference in the short-term as well as for next year’s crop.

“Last year was an extremely wet year and a very challenging time for farmers,” Niles said. “We asked the regulators to meet with us ahead of the hauling season to review their concerns and ideas, and our plans. We wanted to make sure we had the best plans and practices in place. Even though this is a dryer year with more opportunities, there are still concerns. This meeting is just a pregame warmup, so to speak, to the hours of fieldwork ahead.”

The meeting was important because everybody in the community cares about the land and water, said Davina Bonness, Kewaunee County Land and Water Conservation director.



“Farmers are the ones that are taking care of our land and water and managing it in the fields. So, if we are not all working together — the public, farmers, government agencies and our entire community — we will not have clean water,” she said. “If we work together with farmers to implement the best management practices to safely distribute manure during the fall, it will lead to cleaner waterways. It is really about the communication between all entities. We all must work together because it is not just one person watching over the land, it is all of us.”

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[@PeninsulaFarmer](#) members and local and state government agencies work together in advance of fall manure hauling. STORY: <https://bit.ly/2RH5b9g> #conservation #sustainability #waterquality

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