



URI Small Acreage Livestock Education Program

Annual Program Summary September 2006 – August 2007

Situation

Throughout Rhode Island and New England, small acreage livestock owners often “slip through the cracks” for receiving education and assistance that encourages the adoption of Best Management Practices (BMPs) that protect water quality. Properties usually consist of small residential lots that are close to water resources creating challenges with manure management and animal stocking rates. Furthermore, this target audience often has different goals, conditions and resources compared to large scale livestock operations.

Adoption-Outreach Education Program

The University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension (URI CE) Home*A*Syst and 4-H Programs, and URI Department of Fisheries, Animal and Veterinary Science along with assistance from the URI Department of Communication Studies, are developing an education program for small acreage livestock owners.

A needs assessment of the target audience will identify barriers and incentives for encouraging the adoption of livestock BMPs. A train-the-trainer education program, primarily working with 4-H volunteers, will be developed to increase knowledge about livestock pollution risks, adapt and transfer livestock BMPs at a scale that is appropriate, and increase the adoption of livestock BMPs by this target audience.

An existing small acreage livestock fact sheet and self-assessment series was developed in April 2005 as part of the Healthy Landscapes Education Program (2002 – 2006). The series will be utilized and refined based on

the needs assessment and program evaluation plan.

Accomplishments:

- Established Program steering committee (21 members from URI, state and federal agencies and related organizations) and conducted first meeting, 1/5/07.
- Conducted needs assessment with target audience. Conducted three focus group meetings (18 participants) and 2 mail surveys (63 adult and 28 youth participants), February-June 2007. Summarized needs assessment data, February-August 2007. A final report can be viewed on the Program website.
- Piloted existing fact sheet and self-assessment series with 50 URI Freshman Animal and Veterinary Science students (AVS 102). Developed and conducted a 3 hour class exercise including a student site assessment of URI Peckham Farm, October 2006.
- Development of Program website: **www.uri.edu/ce/healthylandscapes**. Developed a new index page, a small acreage livestock template, and new content pages. Website updates and maintenance are on-going.

Education and Outreach Activities

The development of a train-the-trainer education program will begin during year two (Sept. 2007 – August 2008) based on the results of the needs assessment. The following education and outreach activities occurred during this past year.



- Developed and conducted a hands-on, ½ hour workshop on the water cycle and land use impacts to water quality (Build A Farm—With Water Quality In Mind) for the URI State 4-H Junior Conference (ages 9-12), 8/1/07. The workshop was conducted four times for 52 youth and volunteers.
 - Attended URI College of Environment and Life Sciences East Farm Festival (attracting over 3,000 people) with a Program poster and hand-outs, May 2007.
 - Wrote three articles about the education program for the *RI Sheep Cooperative Newsletter*, the *Northern RI Cooperative Extension Newsletter*, and the *Foster Home Journal*, a free, monthly publication mailed to approximately 11,500 rural households in northwestern RI, April and May 2007.
 - Developed a Program poster and attended the National Water Quality Program Conference in Savannah, GA, January 2007.
 - Attended a pasture walk at the Watson Farm in Jamestown, RI, September 2006 and distributed the fact sheet and self-assessment series.
 - The fact sheet and self-assessment series is being distributed to livestock owners in two targeted watersheds by the Southern Rhode Island Conservation District as part of a livestock inventory project.
 - Program hand-outs are distributed with the URI Home*A*Syst Program's Private Well and Sustainable Landscaping Education Programs.
- incorporate the innovative composting system and provide education and outreach.
- The URI Dept. of Natural Resources Science Watershed Hydrology Lab (partnering with the University of Connecticut Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials Program) received a USDA NRCS CIG to adapt and examine low-impact development technology (bio-retention filters) for treating runoff from small acreage livestock farms. Program staff will incorporate appropriate technologies and provide education and outreach.
 - The URI Small Acreage Livestock Education Program is part of the New England Region Water Quality Program's Animal Waste Management Focus Area and is collaborating with the University of Massachusetts (UMASS) Equine Education Program. Attended three UMASS seminars on manure and pasture management in Franklin, MA, March 2007 and advertised the seminars through the Program website and other RI channels.
 - URI participates on the small farm animal waste management team with the National Livestock and Poultry Environmental Learning Center (USDA CSREES National Facilitation Grant). The team is currently working on developing a small farm animal waste management Community of Practice for eXtension.

Other related projects:

- The URI Dept. of Fisheries, Animal and Veterinary Science received a USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Conservation Innovation Grant (NRCS CIG) to install an innovative composting system at the URI Peckham Farm. Program staff will participate on an advisory board for this project and

