



URI Small Acreage Livestock Education Program

**Annual Program Summary
September 2008 – August 2009**

Situation

Throughout Rhode Island (RI) and New England, small acreage livestock and horse owners often “slip through the cracks” for receiving education and assistance that encourages the adoption of livestock Best Management Practices (BMPs). Properties usually consist of small parcels in residential areas that are close to neighbors and water resources, especially private drinking water wells. Small acreage livestock owners often have different goals and resources compared to larger scale livestock operations. All these factors pose challenges for managing manure, livestock yards and pastures.

Adoption-Outreach Education Program

The University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension (URI CE) Home*A*Syst and 4-H Programs, and the URI Departments of Fisheries, Animal and Veterinary Science and Communication Studies, are developing and conducting a train-the-trainer education program for small acreage livestock owners. We are working primarily with RI 4-H Program volunteers.

Year Three Accomplishments

Develop and Conduct Volunteer Training Program and Evaluation Plan.

Phase I – Train-the-Trainer. November 2008 – January 2009

- ◆ 25 4-H Program volunteers were recruited and pledged to participate.
- ◆ 15 4-H volunteers (9 adults and 6 teens) participated in the training program.
- ◆ Indoor Session: 2-hour slideshow, groundwater model demonstration and resource binder.
- ◆ Field Session: 1.5-hour site assessment of URI Peckham Farm using URI fact sheet series.
- ◆ Assigned independent site assessments.
- ◆ Administered Program Evaluations.
- ◆ Follow-up workshop: 1.5 hour workshop to review and evaluate independent site assessments / URI fact sheet series and initiate **Phase II - Volunteer Education**.
- ◆ 67% of adult and youth trained volunteers (6 adults, 4 teens) completed independent site assessments on 7 private farms as of January 2008. 100% of the adults completed a detailed written evaluation of the fact sheet and self-assessment series.
- ◆ Effective Presentations Training: 1.5 hour workshop for trained volunteers, May 2009.

Phase II – Volunteer Education. February 2009 – on-going.

- ◆ 4-H Volunteers have conducted over 46 hours of education and outreach activities.
- ◆ Direct educational programming conducted with nearly 50 4-H adults and youth, which included hands-on workshops using the groundwater model and “Build a Farm with Water Quality in Mind” activity.
- ◆ Attended 14 events throughout RI including 4-H fairs and clinics, livestock association annual meetings and events, and the RI Veterinary Technician Association Symposium.

- Outreach conducted through direct mailing and email / list serv to 35 4-H club leaders to share Program resources and events with 234 club member families.

Current Impacts

- 87% of trained volunteers (100% adults) gained knowledge about hydrology, the water cycle, and the interaction between watersheds and aquifers.
- 100% of trained volunteers and 89% of program participants (100% adults) gained knowledge about pollution & health risks associated with livestock.
- 93% of trained volunteers (100% adults) and 89% of program participants (100% adults) are capable of identifying pollution & health risks on their property.
- 93% of trained volunteers (100% adults) and 89% of program participants (100% adults) are capable of identifying BMPs to reduce pollution & health risks.
- 100% of trained volunteers and program participants are considering the adoption of at least one BMP to reduce pollution & health risks.
- A study of website usage indicates a high percentage of visits to the home page (54%) and fact sheet page (34%) from RI. About 25% of RI visits occurred through direct connection (typing in website address). Spikes in this activity occurred during key periods of public outreach.

Fact Sheet and Self-Assessment Series Evaluation Summary – Key Points

Of the adult trained volunteers (67%) that completed an independent site assessment and evaluation, 100% agree that:

- The series is easy to read, understand and complete.
- The series is effective in identifying some pollution risks associated with livestock and horses, in general, and on their farms.
- The series provides appropriate solutions (BMPs) for small acreage livestock owners, in general, and for their farms.
- They would recommend the series to other livestock and horse owners in Rhode Island.
- Livestock and horse owners in Rhode Island would adopt best management practices if they were aware of and used the series.

Project Video. September 2008 – on-going. An educational video is being developed to reach a larger segment of the RI population and increase awareness about livestock and horse ownership, Program resources and the need for appropriate BMPs.

- 3 families associated with the RI 4-H Program and 3 staff (URI and partner agency) have been filmed and interviewed along with background footage from several events.
- 5 additional interviews with URI staff and partner agencies are scheduled for early September 2009 before final editing begins.

Newsletter Articles. Two articles about the education program and available resources were featured in the February 2009 RI Sheep Cooperative Newsletter. An article was written and submitted to the RI Raised Livestock Association for the fall 2009 Newsletter.

Program website. Content development and updates are on-going. URI graduate students (MBA 576, Business Communication and the Internet) provided an evaluation of the website, July 2009.



USDA CSREES National Water Quality Program Conference, St. Louis, MO, February 2009. Attended conference with outreach materials and project poster highlighting the volunteer training program, methods, tools and current impacts. Poster can be viewed on the website, www.uri.edu/ce/healthylandscapes/livestock/livestock_updates.htm.

Conducted Education with 50 URI Animal Science Students (AVS 102), September 2008. Delivered 2-hour slideshow and conducted a tour of URI Peckham Farm to identify planned and existing BMPs.

Developed and distributed an annual program summary (September 2008) and a project update (February 2009) to the steering committee. Worked directly with 6 steering committee members to develop and evaluate Program tools and disseminate to partner agencies and organizations.

Additional Related Projects

The Northern Rhode Island Conservation District (NRICD) in partnership with the RI DEM Division of Agriculture and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service is conducting livestock inventories throughout the state. This includes the distribution of URI Healthy Landscapes Education Program fact sheets and post cards.

- 💧 400 livestock farm inventories throughout the towns of Burrillville, Scituate, Foster, Glocester, Tiverton and Little Compton have been conducted, September – June 2009.
- 💧 URI CE Water Quality Program staff conducted training with NRICD staff on the use of the fact sheet and self-assessment series and other Program resources, July 2009.
- 💧 Beginning August 2009, NRICD staff will use program materials and assist interested livestock owners with site assessments.

