

## Someone You Should Get To Know Your Waste Management Professional

By Kris Ringwall  
Extension Beef Specialist  
NDSU Extension Service



Change in the world of livestock is not new and comes in many forms. Today, the most obvious is the little spots that are starting to show up on the hillsides as spring calving gets under way.

The spring sun certainly brings a new light to the operations and it doesn't take much time for the newborn calves to take advantage of the weather. These are good changes because the inventory is growing again. Along with inventory growth comes the opportunity for additional revenue. Great news for producers, but you quickly notice the term "revenue" was noted. Revenue was used for a reason.

Revenue and profit are two different things. The careful guidance of inputs and outputs ultimately will determine what side of the profit or loss column the numbers end up on after expenses are subtracted from revenue.

Expenses are something that all operations need to deal with. If one thing seems for certain, expenses (costs) seem to go up progressively. Not only do the same old things seem to cost more, there also seems to be more things on the list that need to be part of the operation. A good example is the ever-pressing need to better understand waste management concerns and the associated costs of dealing with impacts on the environment.

Unlike the welcomed change in inventory through new calves, managerial changes related to waste management and associated nutrient management programs seem to be set aside. However, spring is a good time of year to get a better handle on the operation's current impact on the environment and find out if there are some concerns that need to be addressed. For most operations, business as usual will be the more likely answer to the question, but putting off the question because of feared ramifications does not negate the need to ask the questions.

The basic question still begs an answer. Is the cattle or other type of livestock operation an animal feeding operation? Is the size of the operation large enough to be considered a confined animal feeding operation? Does the operation affect the waters of the state? Are there other impacts that could be negated with managerial chang-

es? Has the operation grown to the point that managerial practices now have more impact?

These questions are not unlike a pain in one's side. One could ignore the pain and hope life will go on. Perhaps it will, at least for a while. However, if the pain does not subside, eventually one needs to consult with professional, well-educated people to find an answer. Sometimes the answer is simple, such as cinching one's belt too tight. A simple mental adjustment that one does not fit into a size 32 waist anymore not only makes life more pleasant, but also brings a level of acceptance of where life is at today.

In a few cases, the answer is more difficult to accept. That pain in the side may be linked to some difficult issue that needs to be aggressively confronted in order to have some assurance of a future. There is no question that not finding an answer is inappropriate. In regard to the future of any livestock operation in North Dakota, or any state for that matter, do not delay, ask the question and call for some professional help.

In North Dakota, NDSU's Dickinson and Carrington Research Extension Centers have professionals ready to help your operation get a handle on environmental issues. Teresa Dvorak is available at the Dickinson Research Extension Center at (701) 483-2348, ext. 108. Ron Wiederholt, Carrington Research Extension Center, can be contacted at (701) 652-2951, ext. 112. Scott Ressler, North Dakota Stockmen's Association, is available at (701) 223-2522.

These professionals are there to serve you, so don't delay asking the question. Are you an animal feeding operation and what is it that I need to do? The stockmen's associations and university Extension Services in all states should be able to offer the same services as North Dakota.

May you find all your ear tags.

Your comments are always welcome at <http://www.BeefTalk.com>. For more information, contact the NDBCIA Office, 1041 State Ave., Dickinson, ND 58601 or go to <http://www.CHAPS2000.com> on the Internet.

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## **North Dakota Animal Waste Management Professionals**

### **Teresa Dvorak**

Nutrient Management Specialist  
NDSU Dickinson Research Extension Center  
(701) 483-2348, ext. 108

### **Ron Wiederholt**

Nutrient Management Specialist  
NDSU Carrington Research Extension Center  
(701) 652-2951, ext. 112

### **Scott Ressler**

Environmental Services Director  
North Dakota Stockmen's Association  
(701) 223-2522