
Free Environmental Management Guidebook

From the *Canadian Pork Council*



Direct seeding near Huxley, Alberta using a Flexicoil 5000 series Air Drill

Rick Tuillien, Alberta Reduced Tillage
LINKAGES

After seeing the flurry of activity that follows the spring thaw in Western Canada, during my three years at the University of Manitoba, I hope that seeding for most is all wrapped up. Maybe you are reading this piece on a rainy June day, or perhaps during some well-deserved relaxation time after a satisfying day of field work, either way, hope the season is shaping up well for you. Instead of passing on basic information about the Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Program, this article will focus on some of the challenges we face in the industry, and a new product from the Canadian Pork Council that will hopefully help you make decisions on how to overcome a few of them.

I have had the pleasure of meeting a great many Canadian pork producers during the past year, and greenhouse gases (GHG), have been a fairly easy topic to broach for discussion. Most producers are willing to discuss the topic, and many have indicated that they are considering the pros and cons of new technologies geared towards reducing on-farm GHG production.

However, my travels have also revealed an ongoing challenge faced by the farming community, with respect to obtaining information on

new products, technologies and management practices. There is no shortage of information out there for you to use in your decision making. Researchers are calling for letters of support, equipment manufacturers are pushing the new silver bullet for the latest issue facing the industry (real or perceived), and farm magazines and newspapers are continuing to pump out article after article. Despite all the information available, it is sometimes not well targeted or presented in a form that can be truly useful to producers.

During one of my recent farm visits, I talked nutrient management with a farrow-to-finish producer, and the conversation swung to phosphorus management. I am a soil scientist by training and can discuss soil phosphorus management at some length, but when this producer told me that including the phytase enzyme in his ration would cost him \$4.00 per hog, I had little with which to respond. All previous discussions had led me to believe that phytase was at least cost-neutral, if not cost-positive. Perhaps this cost was representative of the area and the local availability of ration products, perhaps a nutritionist had forgotten to carry the '2'. In either case, it didn't seem right, and the producer had more-or-less given up on phytase working on his operation.

If it was going to cost \$4.00 a hog, then we both needed to know, and be sure of the numbers. This experience again reinforced to me the importance of quality extension services in the agricultural industry. Without all the pertinent information, consultation on the merits of dicalcium phosphate versus phytase in hog rations, may lead a producer away from a cost effective option to

help lighten the farm phosphorus load.

I thought about the challenge of a producer talking phosphorus management with a salesperson, leaning on the hood of a farm truck. Trying to talk while forgetting about the state of the industry, and the money he/she tried to make on the pod of slaughter hogs that left the yard at 5:00AM that morning, makes for difficult conversation. The options exist to manage soil phosphorus, but does everyone have access to the best information? Have the majority of producers heard about all the options?

Unfortunately, we do not have all the answers on phosphorus, greenhouse gases, storage covers or anaerobic digesters, yet.

What we do have is a new information resource, free to each Canadian pork producer, set for release to the industry in June 2004. This 'Guidebook for Environmental Management in the Pork Industry' will outline the *scientific and economic* specifics of all the environmental management practices you have been hearing about. It will be *very* comprehensive, on all aspects of environmental management, and, it's **FREE**.

Contact the Canadian Pork Council for more information on receiving your free Environmental Management Guidebook.

