

Crop Production

Manage manure relative to your farm

By NATALIE RECTOR



YOU need a plan. You need a systems approach. One size doesn't fit all. When it comes to manure management, we've heard them all, and they are all right.

It is difficult to suggest a manure management system that will work across two farms, let alone across many farms. With virtually all manure being land-applied, producers need to continually educate themselves on manure nutrient management and select the components that fit into their farm and address the concerns relevant to their operation.

The 2006 Great Lakes Manure Handling Expo was held in July in the Fowler area with the theme of "Keep It in the Root Zone." Some of the following topics were covered:

■ *If you no-till, can manure be incorporated?*

Key Points

- Only a certain percent of the total N in manure is in the ammonium form.
- Ask for both the total N and ammonium N tests to be run on manure samples.
- Evaluate the costs of hauling manure relative to the nutrient value.

Incorporation or injection of manure is desirable for odor control and to lock in the nitrogen, but what about no-till? Often, no-till is not done continuously, so working manure into the rotation during the season that tillage is planned is feasible.

There are injection shanks that create less disturbance than others. There also are low-disturbance, aeration tillage tools on the market that fracture without inverting the soil and cause little disruption to residue.

■ *If you surface-apply manure, is all*

the nitrogen lost?

What time of year are you applying? What is the percent of ammonium N in the manure? How hot is the air temperature, and how moist is the soil? How quickly was it incorporated?

Answer these questions before you assume all the N is lost from manure applications. Generally, only a certain percent of the total N in manure is in the ammonium form and vulnerable to volatilization losses. Hog manure tends to have a higher percentage in the ammonium form than dairy or beef manure.

Applying manure during the summer onto dry soil without incorporation can result in the majority of ammonium N being volatilized but the organic N will not be lost.

Surface-applied manure in early spring onto damp soil with precipitation in the future may create a situation where the majority of the ammonium is

actually bound to the soil and not lost.

Be sure to ask for both the total N and ammonium N tests to be run on all manure samples, and learn to evaluate the difference in these forms with regard to weather and soil conditions.

■ *Can I afford to haul manure down the road?*

One producer will hire a custom applicator to efficiently move nutrients where they are agronomically needed. Another person will inject due to neighbors, field slopes or nitrogen retention. Another will purchase a new injection tank. Yet another will build storage to avoid winter applications. Remember the goal: to place and retain manure nutrients in the root zone for crop production. Let this guide you to a system that works on your farm.

Rector is a Michigan State University Extension nutrient/manure management agent.

New wineries win top recognition

THE 29th annual Michigan Wine & Spirits Competition on Aug. 1 brought 20 wine experts to East Lansing. Judges sniffed, sipped and discussed their way through a record 340 wines, all of which were grown and made in Michigan. At the end of the day, seven wines had received top awards from a group of 33 gold-medal and 10 double-gold-medal winners. Altogether, 33 wineries received medals.

Judges included all three of the state's Master Sommeliers, a well-known California winemaker, several internationally known wine writers, and knowledgeable retailers and restaurateurs. "The number of wineries receiving recognition shows that it isn't just a few wines or wineries that are the stars," said Linda Jones, executive director of the Michigan Grape and Wine Industry Council, which organizes the competition.

"We haven't had a single bad wine," added judge and wine industry veteran Steve Scheffel.

Michigan's newest winery, which

Key Points

- A record 340 wines were judged by 20 wine experts.
- Judges were very impressed with the Michigan reds.
- The new Longview Winery in Cedar won top honors for its cherry wine.

opened this year, won two top honors. Longview Winery in Cedar on the Leelanau Peninsula won "Double Gold" and "Best of Class — Fruit Wine" for its cherry wine and also received the optional Judges' Special Award for its 2005 Cabernet Franc. Another new winery, Mackinaw Trail in Manistique, received a gold medal for its 2005 Cabernet Franc. The six "Best of Class" winners all came from Michigan's major grape-growing areas.

The best

Here are the best in the state:

■ *Best dry white:* Peninsula Cellars' 2005 Gewurztraminer, Manigold

Vineyard

■ *Best dry red:* Brys Estate's 2005 Pinot Noir

■ *Best sparkling:* Chateau Grand Traverse's 2001 Blanc de Blanc Extra Brut

■ *Best semi-dry white:* Shady Lane Cellars' 2005 Semi-Dry Riesling

■ *Best Fruit Wine:* Longview's 2005 Cherry Wine

■ *Best dessert wine:* Karma Vista Vineyards' Razz M'Tazz

Master Sommelier Madeline Triffon and wine writer Eleanor Heald were especially impressed with the red wines. "For dry reds in particular, the lineup was exemplary," said Triffon. Heald added, "Pinot Noir and Cabernet Franc have really come of age."

The Michigan Wine & Spirits Competition is sponsored by the Michigan Grape and Wine Industry Council, which is administered by the Michigan Department of Agriculture.

For more information on the winners and state wine, visit www.michiganwines.com or call (517) 241-4468.



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