

# In Balance

A Newsletter for the Whatcom County Livestock Industry



## EQIP: Environmental Quality Incentive Program Cost-Share Sign-up Deadline is January 13<sup>th</sup>

January 13<sup>th</sup> is the final day to sign up for 2006 EQIP funds. EQIP is the federal incentive program that provides agricultural and forestry producers with financial (cost-share) assistance to implement practices beneficial to the environment. Last year in Whatcom County 15 producers were awarded EQIP contracts worth nearly 1.1 million dollars. While most of last year's contract recipients were dairy producers, the group also included berry, beef and forestry producers. EQIP funds are largely directed at practices that will improve the quality and quantity of local water, but practices benefiting soil, air, wildlife and livestock also received financial support.



EQIP cost-share could have been used to help fund at least four of the practices shown here (pit, pump, separator, drystack).

Whatcom County EQIP applicants must compete for funds with producers from four other northwest Washington counties. A Local Working Group developed the criteria by which each producer's application is ranked. The ranking process is intended to determine which application will produce the most environmental benefits. One new feature of this year's program is that forestry producers will have their own pool of funds (approximately 20% of the total) and will not be competing directly with livestock and crop producers. For more information or to submit an application, please contact the USDA Agricultural Service Center.

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*Whatcom*  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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### WCD Livestock Team Staff

George Boggs, Chris Clark,  
Chuck Timblin

**Don't forget to vote!  
District Board of Supervisor  
election March 7th.**

Our Mission Statement:  
*The Whatcom Conservation  
District promotes conservation  
education and provides  
technical assistance to foster a  
healthy relationship between  
the environment and people.*



We'll all miss Bill's smiling face and good advice!

## OPEN HOUSE - BILL BONSEN RETIRES - OPEN HOUSE

Bill Bonsen retires on January 3<sup>rd</sup> after providing 47 years of dedicated service to the agricultural industry! You're invited to stop by the Ag Service Center and wish him well before he leaves. Refreshments will be served.

**Date: January 3, 2006**

**Time: 1 - 4 PM**

**Place: Agricultural Service Center - 6975 Hannegan Road**

## Liquid Manure Application Method Influences Fate of Ammonia

Ammonia generally accounts for about half the nitrogen in liquid dairy manure. But whether this nitrogen eventually ends up in the crop (as a nutrient), or in the air (as a potential pollutant) depends a lot on how manure is applied. Extensive research (particularly in Denmark) has improved our understanding about whether ammonia is likely to be used or lost, even after a number of different environmental conditions are factored in, such as air temperature, wind speed, soil moisture, slurry type and slurry dry matter content. An easy-to-access and easy-to-use program on Environment Canada's website "farmwest.com" (look under *Climate* on the home page) now enables producers to predict the ammonia losses they might expect after providing information about 10 different factors relating to an application. The table below: **Ammonia Loss from Applied Slurry Manure** illustrates the wide variation in ammonia losses predicted by changing application method. The take home lesson from the table is: In order to make the best use of ammonia in manure, choose surface banding or injection as an application method.

**Table: Ammonia Loss from Applied Slurry Manure**

Application Method	% Total Ammonia N Loss	Loss - lb N/Ac
Broadcast spread	48%	35 #
Surface band	28%	20 #
Shallow injection	26 %	19 #
Deep injection	13 %	9.5 #

**Weather conditions:** Temp. 75 F; wind speed 7 MPH

**Nutrient analysis:** 8.3 #/1000 gal NH<sub>3</sub>

**Volume applied:** 9,000 gal./ac



Manure Injection is an application method that makes the best use of ammonia in manure, while minimizing ammonia loss to the air.



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**Conservation District Plant Sale – March 17th & 18th**

**Windbreaks \* Privacy \* Noise Reduction \* Odor Control \* Beautification\* Wildlife Habitat Enhancement\*** These are a few reasons to think about buying plants at the Conservation District’s upcoming plant sale this spring. If you don’t receive an order form from the District by late January, then stop by the District office and pick one up. Our prices and selection are better than ever!

**Agricultural Plastics Recycling Comes to Whatcom County: January 19<sup>th</sup> Informational Meeting Scheduled**

Find out more about recycling baling twine, feed bags, “Ag-Bags”, barrels, and buckets at an informational and planning meeting at 10:30 a.m. Thursday Jan. 19 at the Lynden Public Library (216 Fourth Street).

RSVP to [recycle@re-resources.org](mailto:recycle@re-resources.org) in order to insure enough coffee, tea and pastries. You can also call the Whatcom County-sponsored Recycling Hotline at 676-5723 to RSVP or if you have questions about the new recycling opportunities.



“Ag-Bags” such as those pictured here can be recycled in Whatcom County.

**Use T-Sum 200 to Time First Nutrient Applications to Grassland**

In the spring the accumulation of 200 heat units (T-Sum 200) from January 1, not the calendar, signals the best time to begin applying nutrients to grass. Dairy producers in many Whatcom County locations can normally expect favorable conditions to begin applying liquid manure by sometime in mid-February or early March. The main exceptions are fields that are poorly drained and/or prone to frequent flooding. Contact the District dairy technicians (Chris Clark or Chuck Timblin) starting in February to find out if T-Sum 200 has arrived, or consult the District’s website at <http://whatcomcd.org>.

**RULES REVISED FOR WINTER MANURE APPLICATIONS**

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) issued in September 2005 a Technical Note (Agronomy 14) that describes conditions in which winter manure applications are acceptable. The **Winter Period Application of Manure in Washington State** was prepared by NRCS’s State Agronomist, Joel Poore, and provides guidance on a practice that has generated a fair amount of controversy over the years. Some Whatcom County producers that were previously barred from applying manure during the winter may now have the opportunity to do so on select fields, on a year-to-year basis, but only if they are able to satisfy Technical Note 14’s fairly stringent application criteria. The main factors that previously restricted applications during the winter in Whatcom County won’t change as a result of this new guidance. Fields that are subject to flooding and/or have high seasonal water tables and slow infiltration rates are still off limits during the winter. Fields on which applications can be made during the winter must be well drained (though some fields can be too well drained), and the residual soil nitrogen level (from a current year’s soil test) must fall well below the range most soils generally test at locally. Producers interested in learning more about Technical Note 14’s guidance for winter period manure applications should contact NRCS.

**Two Reasons Cited for Rise in Beaver Population**



Whatcom County’s beaver population is definitely on the rise and so are complaints about flooding and impeded drainage caused by their dams. The following two factors are cited as the main causes for why they have increased:

- Market conditions changed: In the late 1980s the international fur market crashed. Before then trappers competed for trapping areas and kept populations at historic low levels dating back to the 1960s. Commercial trapping quickly became insignificant, leaving only nuisance trapping to control populations.
- Laws changed: In 2000 voters in Washington State passed Initiative 713 which placed limits on the use of body-gripping traps, and also made it illegal to buy, sell or trade mammals or raw furs of

mammals taken in Washington with body-gripping traps. In the 10 years prior to the passage of Initiative 713 a yearly average of nearly 5,300 beavers were trapped. In the first 3 years following Initiative 713 the annual average dropped to just over 1000.