



FACT SHEET 2.2

HOW CAN HOBBY FARMERS PROTECT WATER RESOURCES?

Hobby farmers can plan how they use their property and then conduct their farming activities in ways that protect water resources. This involves preventing the release of the pollutants, as well as capturing and treating contaminants that may find their way into stormwater.

Protecting water resources from stormwater pollution on a hobby farm should follow this three-step process common to all forms of environmental protection:

Step 1: Avoid Impacts

The best way to address pollution is to avoid it in the first place. If the hobby farmer can avoid generating a pollutant or keep it from coming into contact with stormwater, then there is no need to do anything further.

An example of “avoidance” is to store all fertilizers in a secure, enclosed area to avoid contact with rainfall or stormwater and contain any spills. Another would be to use compost or planting techniques that may not require the use of traditional fertilizers. Both of these methods would help avoid impacts to nearby surface waters.

Step 2: Minimize Impacts

If potential impacts cannot be completely avoided, the second step is to keep the potential impacts to a minimum.

An example of “minimization” is to complete a soil test to determine exactly what nutrients your soil and crops need and to tightly control the type, method, rate, and timing of fertilizer application. This will help avoid overfertilization and reduce the amount of chemicals conveyed in stormwater.

Step 3: Mitigate Remaining Impacts

Some impacts might still be expected after taking Steps 1 and 2. In this case, the hobby farmer can correct for (or mitigate) stormwater pollution that results from farm activities. This generally requires a specific management practice to treat stormwater or otherwise address the potential impact.

An example of “mitigation” is to intercept stormwater runoff from a disturbed area, such as a garden, using a vegetated buffer strip. This measure involves planting and maintaining a permanent strip of vegetation next to the garden to help filter out sediment and contaminants and intercept erosion before ultimately discharging into a nearby stream.

DID YOU KNOW?

Agricultural activities that cause Nonpoint Source Pollution most generally occur in the absence of a conservation plan - EPA



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THIS HANDBOOK PROVIDES GUIDANCE TO YOU, THE HOBBY FARMER, ON HOW TO INCORPORATE THESE THREE STEPS INTO THE PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF YOUR FARM IN A WAY THAT AVOIDS, MINIMIZES, AND CORRECTS STORMWATER IMPACTS. TO DO THIS, WE RECOMMEND DOING THE FOLLOWING STEPS:

Understand your site and how to work with it

This includes deciding which hobby farm activities you wish to pursue, learning about any local and state regulations that may affect your plan, and compiling some information about existing conditions on your farm property.

Plan your “Stormwater Friendly” Hobby Farm

In Section 3, we offer a series of Fact Sheets for planning your farm. Using the information you learn in this section, we offer guidance on developing a site plan for your hobby farm, including how you operate your farm to minimize stormwater and surface water impacts. This farming plan will depend on practices you choose from the “tool box” included in subsequent sections and will be comprised of the associated fact sheets and worksheets.

Employ Best Management Practices (BMPs) to minimize impacts

The remainder of the handbook describes “Best Management Practices” that Hobby Farmers will use to “avoid-minimize-mitigate” potential stormwater impacts depending on the type of activity you are performing, as well as practices that can be applied to any site to minimize stormwater runoff and prevent pollutants from entering nearby surface waters.

