

Taking Care Of Business—Literally

(NAPSA)—Here's a job you more than likely would not want: storing, pumping, handling, transporting and applying livestock manure to farm fields. Believe it or not, there are hundreds of thousands of farmers, ranchers and custom applicators who perform this important and essential task every year across the U.S.

Dairy, swine, beef and poultry producers must manage millions of tons of manure every year. This by-product of livestock production is actually a very rich resource. Manure serves as a natural fertilizer source packed with phosphorus and nitrogen—two elements essential to plant life. Put simply, without these elements to nourish crops, human civilization would cease to exist.

Dave Eisentraut makes a living managing livestock manure. His company, Eisentraut Ag Services in Waldo, Wisconsin, handled 4 million gallons of manure a year when he first started the business 16 years ago. Today, the firm handles 200 million gallons of mostly dairy manure and some municipal sludge every year. This is a growth trajectory that any business would envy.

Professional manure handling requires a huge investment in equipment, including drag hose systems, dredge trucks, pump and agitators, liquid flow meters and major-league, large tractors. Eisentraut often has several jobs simultaneously under way, with each project miles apart, pumping out and emptying dairy manure lagoons in one location while transporting and applying manure to fields in others. As lagoons fill up, it is a race against time to get rid of the manure in a full lagoon in order to increase capacity for future filling.

"This past spring in Wisconsin, it literally rained for six or eight straight weeks," Eisentraut says. "When it finally dried out, we had to hit the ground running, and we were still playing catch-up in late summer."

One technology that Eisentraut uses to keep things moving is More Than Manure® (MTM®) Nutrient Manager. When added to in-ground manure pits and lagoons, MTM helps break up crusts and solids, making the manure easier to pump, transport and apply. The product also signifi-



Manure from livestock containment facilities is a rich resource full of natural fertilizer nutrients that must be managed in an environmentally responsible manner.

cantly reduces ammonia levels in the manure, taking some of the "stink" out of the job.

"Manure must be agitated before it is pumped, and using MTM allows us to cut that agitation time by 50 percent to 70 percent, which saves operating expenses on fuel and equipment depreciation," Eisentraut observes.

Sam McKnight operates a 3,000-head hog facility and also custom applies more than 16 million gallons of manure annually to corn, soybeans, alfalfa and pastures in Afton, Iowa. He also uses MTM to make manure handling easier. "At some of our older hog facilities, you'll have two or three feet of manure sludge at the bottom of the pits, which is thick, hard to agitate and lessens your pit capacity," McKnight explains. "After the MTM treatment, the manure agitates better, and we're able to stir it up so the pits can be drawn down completely."

Besides making the manure easier to agitate and pump, More Than Manure also provides some significant agronomic benefits when treated manure is applied to fields. MTM protects against phosphorus fixation and reduces nitrogen loss to the environment. "There are more of these nutrients available for plant uptake, and we're able to get the best possible nutrient value out of the manure," the hog producer and custom applicator says. "Compared to those fields where we used untreated manure, we've had some fields of corn that yielded 30 bushels per acre more where MTM-treated manure was applied."

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