

Meeting Agenda/Brief Recap & Updates
8pm Monday February 4, 2013



Marion Township Library -Chickasaw, OH

1. **Jim Keller - Welcome, brief Introductions, meeting purpose.** Commented about the super bowl commercial featuring the “And God Made a Farmer” portion of Paul Harvey’s address to the 1978 FFA Conference. If you can’t find the address out on the web you can contact me and I’ll send it to you.

Introduced John Smith from the Auglaize County Extension Office. John informed the group about a small dairy farm in Pennsylvania which has installed a digester. John’s enthusiasm for this installation stems from the fact that the digester was installed on a small, 100 cow dairy and appears to be operating successfully generating heat and electricity. The farm does import manure via underground pipe from a couple of nearby farms owned by relatives. The owners want to “digest” a variety of feed stocks including, dairy, swine and poultry manure as well as expired super market produce for which they will earn tipping fees. Might be well to follow this story to see if they make this concoction digest successfully.

The article about this installation was originally published in Farmshine, a weekly Pennsylvania Dairy newsletter and written by Marilyn Hershey. Farmshine does not archive its articles for web users so I cannot provide a link. To get more info contact John at (419) 739-6580 or email: smith.132@osu.edu or contact me direct.

2. **Terry Mescher – Introduce Mike Ontrop and others who will discuss some ideas for solids and phosphorous separation in swine manure.** Terry introduced Mike Ontrop, Paul Miguel and Kenny (not sure of last name). I’m also not sure exactly what company they are working with but they have a traveling, self contained swine manure separator unit that holds some possibilities to addressing excess manure issues. They’ve performed a trial at a county farm with positive results. The unit uses mechanical separation with the aid of a polymer to separate phosphorus laden solids from the liquid. Around 80% of total initial P & K are isolated in the solids. Mike has enlisted the help of Kyle VanTilburg to pursue approaches such as composting to lower the current 75% solids’ moisture content. If the moisture can be lowered economically, the manure will be valuable enough to transport out of the watershed since the P & K values are similar to poultry manure. Another issue to be addressed, at least on

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many swine farms is what to do with the separated fluid. The best approach is to pump it into a small lagoon. The N levels of this effluent are still good so it would make an ideal liquid to use for growing crop irrigation.

The approach holds much promise in that it has been used successfully in Denmark, is completely self contained with a simple low maintenance design, appears to have adequate capabilities to address local volumes and can be transported from farm to farm. The optimum time to use it would be right after a hog house is emptied. The group is looking for additional local swine producers to try the unit. The farmer need only pay for the polymer which is estimated to be around a penny per gallon of manure. If you have an interest please call Terry Mescher at (419) 586-3289 or email: terry.mescher@dnr.state.oh.us He'll get you scheduled.

3. **Jared Ebbing – General Update** – Jared shared his enthusiasm for the separator technology noting that it held promise in addressing a problematic current issue while providing an approach for the livestock segment of our Ag economy to safely grow.
4. **Terry Mescher – Ideas for new/renewed focus.** I'll attach Terry's restructuring proposal to the email accompanying this recap. His proposal lists primary areas of concentration and suggests that we form a steering committee to focus on them. We discussed Terry's proposal including optimum frequency of large group meetings. Terry will begin to form a steering committee and a regular meeting will be held on March 4 to further discuss these ideas. Ag Solutions member Dave Eyink provided a document he had prepared which outlined ideas for structure and development going forward. Terry and I have copies and will incorporate workable ideas from it as we endeavor to make us a more effective organization.
5. **Jim Keller – Geno Kennedy Agriment Services** will make a presentation at the Marion Township Building at 10am on February 14. Geno's company has had excellent success dealing with manure issues in the Carolinas. The presentation is free and all are encouraged to attend. No reservations required.
6. **Jim Keller – Any news about Organic Pond and its ideas concerning *“porous ceramic media, that use iron nanoparticles, to more efficiently remove larger amounts of phosphorous from water”*.** Terry Mescher will contact Organic Pond to learn about any recent developments
7. **Updates, ideas, suggestions from the floor.** Lou Brown provided updates, some of which his son Dan was kind enough to send via email. Dan's email will follow this recap to keep you all directly informed. Lou mentioned some articles he encouraged us to read. Click on the link following and read how gypsum can help retain phosphorous in the soil. <http://ocj.com/2013/01/gypsum-could-fight-lake-erie-algae> Lou also commented about an article on *“Building Better Soils”* in The Furrow magazine a publication of John Deere, Inc. Dan comments about

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it in his email. Any approach which allows soil to retain phosphorous, or that promotes plants to utilize a greater percentage of available nutrients removing them, especially phosphorous, from the soil deserves our utmost attention. I would hope that we have some energetic, courageous, visionary farmers in our watershed who will try some of these suggested ideas to increased soil health and nutrient uptake. You can experiment on a small plot to start with and see firsthand what advantages some of these ideas offer. If you want additional info I have the contact info for a number of individuals and companies who have offered suggestions for dramatically improved soil health.

Lou also informed the group that Ohio State University continues to take soil samples from his farm. They have not shared any results with him. He noted that phosphorous sampling will be done on water entering Lake Loramie in 2013 to compare with findings at Grand Lake St. Marys.

8. Next meeting:

Monday March 4, 2013
8:00 pm
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Chickasaw, OH 45826

Jim Keller