

**Best Education Practices (BEPs) for Water Outreach Professionals
Defining BEPs, Refining New Resources and Recommending Future Actions**

RESEARCH PAPER PRESENTATION

(Alternate)

Presenter(s): Elizabeth Bird, Farm and Home Environmental Management Programs, Environmental Resources Center, University of Wisconsin

Title: Livestock EMS Pilots: Lessons About Education Strategies

Abstract: Globally, industries seek to meet the International Standard for Environmental Management Systems (ISO 14001). Increasingly, U.S. governmental agencies are promoting this standard to encourage firms to go beyond regulatory compliance. Are formal Environmental Management Systems (EMSs) useful to farmers and helpful to farm environmental protection? If so, This presentation aims to answer these questions for natural resource educators.

Partnerships for Livestock Environmental Management Systems (LEMS project), has been exploring what sorts of educational strategies will most effectively assist farmers with implementation of continuous improvement environmental management systems? The project has established a learning community of extension educators led by Farm and Home Environmental Management Programs at UW-Madison and collaborators at the University of Nebraska and the University of Georgia. Objectives are to determine the following: 1. How can the EMS framework best fit diverse livestock producers' needs and constraints, and integrate with business management? The project includes three state pilot projects each for dairy, beef and poultry producers, each led by an extension professional. 2. What sort of educational interventions are most productive and amenable to livestock producers to induce EMS adoption? 3. What are the barriers to successful EMS implementation, and what incentives might be required? 4. What conditions do the EMSs need to meet to satisfy diverse stakeholder agendas?

Collaborators in each pilot include state agencies, commodity groups, stakeholder groups and other resource conservation professionals. The LEMS project evaluation, conducted with an evaluation professional from the UW-Madison LEAD Center, compares the pilot states' approaches to assisting farmers with EMSs. The evaluation, which includes surveys and interviews with both participating producers and pilot states' project staff, will identify best education practices for engaging livestock producers in committing to and implementing continuous improvements in their environmental management systems. The intentions are to inform policy makers regarding appropriate uses of the EMS approach in agriculture and potential value for achieving environmental protection, and to inform educators about barriers and the most effective strategies to encourage and assist farmers with EMS implementation.

Target Audience(s): Farmers

Educational Purpose: Education;
Capacity-Building

Contact Information:
1545 Observatory Dr RM 303
Madison, WI 53706
608-265-3727
eabird@wisc.edu

