

CIG Manure Manager Newsletter – Winter 2025

Words from DCSWCD Executive Director Larry Underwood:

For five years we have been looking forward to the day when we would change the manure game in Delaware County, and now that day is dawning. Thanks to the vision and tenacity of a great group of conservation professionals, a committed partnership of conservation organizations, farmers who understand the big picture, and a new partnership with Albanos Precision Application, the CIG project has gone from idea to reality in those five years. The DCSWCD is excited to help make this project a reality.



The CIG Project: What Comes Next?

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After a summer and fall focused on getting our custom manure services contractor recruited, selected and contracted and planning and beginning data collection for the project evaluation, the CIG project is poised over the next three months to implement the following:



1. Complete farmer program eligibility process.
2. Assist APA with selection of precision ag system and data management platform.
3. Facilitate contracts between the DCSWCD and the farmer participants.
4. Develop farm manure prescriptions with farmers and APA and get farm manure prescription uploaded to cloud-based data management platform for access by APA.
5. Facilitate the implementation of next steps in the project research and evaluation.

Albanos Precision Application Chosen as CIG Project Custom Manure Service Provider:

After a request for custom manure services proposal process that began in early August 2024, and a rigorous proposal review process that concluded at the end of October, **Albanos Precision Application Inc. (APA)** was selected as the custom manure services provider to serve the CIG project farms. The proposal review process required extensive written proposals reviewed by panel of nine individuals representing the DCSWCD, WAC, CCEDC, the Delaware County Departments of Planning and Economic Development, as well as Cornell Pro Dairy and a custom manure services owner from Vermont. Owners Frank and Marc Albano bring decades of custom farm service experience, knowledge of our farms and conservation programs and extensive working relationships with project staff to the project, all of which will serve the success of the project well.

Since receiving official notification of the awarding of the contract in early November, APA has been hard at work building their manure services fleet which includes:

- CaseIH 215, 315, & 340 Magnum 4WD tractors
- 2 – 6300 gallon GEA spreaders with Bazooka Farmstar injector bars capable of variable rate;
- 2 - triaxle Kenworth trucks with 6000-gallon Diller manure tanks w/transfer booms;
- 30,000 gal. DryHill manure frack tank with pump;
- Meyer 9524 CropMax 35 cu yd solid/semi-solid spreader with load cells and variable rate capable. Horizontal beater drop to spinner table;

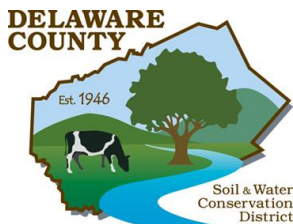


This work is supported by the Conservation Innovation Grants program at USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service.



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How the CIG Project Funding Works:

Many farmers are aware that there is a large amount of funding from USDA NRCS for the CIG. The total federal funding received for the project is \$2.99 million over the three-year life of the project.

Two-thirds of the funding for this project, \$1.99 million, will be for implementing manure spreading services on farms, most of which (95%; \$1.89 million) will come in the form of farmer contracting and spreading incentives to engage Albanos Precision Application Inc. *The only way APA earns this money is by annual contracting with farmers, and by completing manure spreading according to the farm's manure prescription.* The only up-front direct funding provided to APA through the CIG is \$100,000 of start-up seed money.

The only guarantee that APA has is a quantified and contracted body of work through the project farms. It's up to them to contract with the farms and get the manure spread to earn the incentive payments in a pass-through of Project funding through the participating farms.

This structure was designed intentionally to ensure that DCSWCD, the CIG farms and APA are all committed together to building a lasting manure management infrastructure with new technology that makes real, tangible differences in manure application on project farms. When that happens, everyone wins.

Future Opportunities to Participate in CIG!

Initial farm-sign up for the CIG project for 2025 yielded 25 farms to date. New farms may join the project in 2026 and 2027. Farms with manure storage structures are eligible to participate, even if the storage is built during the Project timeline.

Meet Helen Solecki – Our CIG Project Grad Student!

We are excited to have a great group of researchers from Cornell University and Virginia Tech supporting the CIG project by conducting evaluation of the impact of the project. Helen



Solecki, a master's student in the Cornell University Animal Science Department has the CIG project as her sole research focus, and has already begun to help us summarize data of a "pre

implementation" phase. As a project participant you may expect to meet and hear from Helen in the new year as she starts to work with project farms on field and whole farm nutrient balances. Helen is also conducting an analysis of manure spreading records on a select group of farms.

The research and evaluation component of the CIG is a critical part of the project that helped us receive the project award. The data the researchers will summarize will help us document project impact and demonstrate that the project was a good investment of federal funds. We need and appreciate your cooperation when asked to provide farm-level data.

The Future of Manure Application is Now:



Farm Manure Application Rate Map

Variable-rate application is possible, as is as-applied manure application rate mapping, as well as nutrient rate mapping.

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