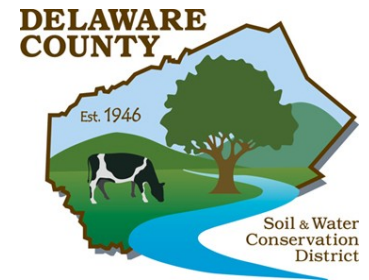


# TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATIONS



## DCSWCD & CCEDC Implement Innovative Manure Management Program through Federal Grant

*By Paul Cerosaletti*



A leadership partnership of the Delaware County Soil and Water Conservation (DCSWCD) and CCEDC are implementing a multi-year project to help farms in Delaware County and the West of Hudson NYC Watershed improve farm productivity and water quality protection through enhanced manure nutrient management. The project will accomplish this by building manure spreading capacity and implementing new manure application technologies through custom manure services. The project is made possible by a federal United States Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) for On-Farm Trials awarded to the DCSWCD. Through a shared services agreement between the DCSWCD and CCEDC, Paul Cerosaletti is serving as Project Coordinator.

The project is a collaboration of local conservation partner agencies with a long history of working together; the DCSWCD, CCEDC, and Watershed Agricultural Council (WAC), who worked over several years to develop the proposed project and collaborated with our federal funding partner, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. The local project team is also collaborating with Cornell University and Virginia Tech University to evaluate the project impacts. The CIG program is a competitive nationwide program that supports the development and adoption of new tools, approaches, practices, and technologies to further natural resource conservation on private lands. Our successful Delaware County application leverages nearly \$3 million of federal funds to support a project that will help farms with manure storage structures in Delaware County and the West of Hudson NYC Watershed reach the next level of nutrient conservation and water quality protection while also enhancing the efficiency and productivity of their farms.

Our project focuses on the development of a local custom manure application service and incentivizing the adoption of enhanced nutrient management strategies offered through this service including shallow disc manure injection, improved manure nutrient distribution, GPS-based variable rate control and geospatial record keeping. While none of these concepts and technologies are new to the agriculture and the conservation world, they have yet to be adopted in our region due to limitations of the size of our farms and their ability to invest in this technology and manure infrastructure, the geography of our region (small fields, hilly terrain), and lack of full-service custom manure services in the area. The primary goal of this project is to encourage our farmers to adopt these technologies and services with grant-funded incentives which will in turn support the building of a full-service local custom manure service which will be the means of deploying these technologies efficiently across the area.

Additionally, we seek to prove the effectiveness of these enhanced manure management strategies and the custom services model of deployment in order to facilitate continued support and adoption beyond the life of the grant. To support this goal, the project will quantify social-economic impacts of the custom services on participating farms, as well as model impacts on water quality through research partnerships with Virginia Tech and Cornell University.

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

Farm Credit East's recent report, *The Northeast Economic Engine*, finds agriculture, commercial fishing, forest products, food manufacturing and related processing businesses generate \$85.8 billion in economic activity and support 291,474 jobs, with dairy being the largest sector here in New York State.



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
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