

Checklist for Prospective Livestock Operations

- _____ Be sure your location is a "best" choice and have other options available. No operation is so small that no one will care. "Location, location, location." Be prepared to defend your selection of site other than just convenience.
- _____ Research local weather records to determine wind direction and micro climates.
- _____ Utilize trees as a screen for odor and aesthetics. Notify your neighbors of any changes you propose. Explain the change in detail. Never assume they "understand." This includes other farmers.
- _____ Design storage facilities and plan application equipment and spreading areas in such a way that neighbors can be notified before you spread manure so they can plan around it. It may also modify your plans.
- _____ Demonstrate the environmental safeguards you have in your operation. Recent spills have raised the awareness of what can happen. Plan for the worst.
- _____ Show by your actions that you are environmentally responsible.
- _____ Start your permit process well in advance (6-10 months in some areas) of anticipated construction. Begin your communication plan to neighbors and the community at the same time.
- _____ Discuss your plan with your state and county livestock associations. They may help you avoid problems. If you aren't active in your association, start now. Organize livestock producers before the opposition arises. A well-organized grassroots effort can create or stop a movement in its tracks. The key to building a successful livestock industry begins at the grassroots level.
- _____ Be prepared should your project require a public hearing. Decision makers and the public will question your ability to manage if you aren't prepared.
- _____ Be honest and up-front in all communications. Not being able to follow up on promises will hurt your future.
- _____ Expect that not everyone will be in favor of your project. Even the most sound plans won't satisfy everyone.

- _____ Arrange for tours of facilities that are similar to what you are planning. Strive to turn the fear of the unknown into the knowledge of the known. Invite representatives such as media, county officials, economic developers, livestock-related business representatives, chamber of commerce, etc. Choose and prepare a good spokesperson for the tour. Show how these operations meet or exceed expectations of environment and the public.
- _____ Do business locally when possible. Make local businesses spokesmen for your operation. Demonstrate the benefits of your business to the community.
- _____ Join the local Chamber of Commerce, local service organizations and advertise in the local newspaper's holiday and business editions just as other businesses do, if you want to be considered a business. Or, depending on your situation, you may wish to be perceived as a "family farm." If so, engage in activities that support that image and role. If you have employees, encourage them to be active in the community.
- _____ Keep your operation neat and clean. People also smell with their eyes.
- _____ Know your rights - but don't flaunt them. Cooperation and communication will go much further than confrontation in most situations.
- _____ Recognize that people don't forget. It takes years to overcome bad experiences. Some opposition to your project may have nothing to do with livestock, odor or the environment. Identify what the true challenges are and address them. Be ready to change if it will make a difference.
- _____ Keep the cooperation of regulators by complying with all regulations.
- _____ Check with your county NRCS for any assistance that may be available with EQIP funds.
- _____ Remember: actions speak louder than words.

**If you think these guidelines are only for large producers, you are mistaken. Although the larger units hit the regional press, there are many examples of small to medium size farms which are receiving scrutiny. Being a community-minded, environmentally responsible producer will help ensure your acceptance as an asset to the community.