

## City Livestock Owners Adopt Many Practices for Water Quality

By Betsy Wieland, University of Minnesota Extension in Hennepin County

As you may recall, in February I sent a survey to most livestock owners in Medina (85 people) regarding best management practices for water quality. My support staff have collected and compiled the responses. Twenty three people returned the survey for a response rate of 28%. There were some widely adopted and less commonly adopted practices. A full report of results will be created but in the interim, this article will highlight some of the survey results as well as share an opportunity to make some changes on your property.

I was thrilled to see that almost all of the respondents are doing many things to reduce their impacts on our water. The most commonly adopted practice is controlling weeds through mowing. Twenty of 22 responses to this question indicated they mow weeds. Other common practices include resting paddocks after grazing, limiting number of animals based on available land, and disposing of manure at least once annually (19 yes responses of 22 surveys for each of these practices). The survey included 41 BMPs (Best Management Practices) that people could indicate they are currently doing.

Naturally, some BMPs will be adopted less than others. In this survey those BMPs are: a) composting manure (13 of 22 don't do it), b) diverting clean water around areas of exposed soil (8 of 22 don't), c) gutters on barns (11 of 22 don't have gutters), and lastly diverting dirty water around exposed areas to remove sediment (7 of 22 don't). I was glad to see that there are several people who are interested in making changes to their property to reduce impacts on our water resources. Top choices for desired changes include better manure storage facilities, testing soil for nutrients and seeding pastures. You can anticipate two meetings this summer on Medina farms to discuss how to make changes like these.

Please take note, if the cost of a project has kept you from starting it, Three Rivers Park District has funds available this year for livestock owners to implement water quality BMPs. These practices help improve water quality downstream, like in Lake Independence. The funds can go towards practices that reduce impacts of manure on our water resources. This includes manure compost bins, vegetative buffers to clean dirty water, install rain gutters on barns and other practices.

To me, this survey highlights that most livestock owners in the city are interested in reducing impacts on our water resources and are taking steps to do so. Of course there is always room for improvement. Thus, if you would like assistance getting started with a BMP, have questions about what to do, or are interested in accessing the Park District funds, please contact me at 612-596-1175 or [eliza003@umn.edu](mailto:eliza003@umn.edu).

Photo caption: Examples of BMPs in photo include rain gutters that flow into a settling basin to prevent erosion and accumulation of manure nutrients, excluding livestock from area to establish vegetation, and reseeding area with vegetation appropriate for the site.

