



INTRODUCTION

In February of 2016 the Cayuga County Legislature voted to adopt a plan titled *Improving Manure Management: A Fourteen-Point Countywide Agenda for Action*. The plan outlines actions the County can take to foster improvement of manure management practices and minimize the potential negative environmental impacts of manure runoff. While County officials are aware that it is necessary to examine all of the many possible sources of nutrient pollution, the adoption of the plan underscored the Legislature's desire to focus attention on matters relating to manure as an important immediate step in reaffirming its commitment to water quality.

One of the tasks discussed in the *Agenda for Action* involves developing a set of specific manure management guidelines for the County to promote. The task of developing the guidelines was assigned to the County's Water Quality Management Agency (WQMA). This document presents the results of the efforts of a working group of the WQMA to formulate guidelines intended to encourage progress through expanded voluntary use of proven, cost-effective methods, technologies, and techniques rather than force changes through legislation or rule-making. Several preliminary drafts of the guidelines were distributed to ten farmers selected to serve as advisors to the working group, and numerous significant revisions were made in response to the advisors' comments and suggestions.

Most importantly, this document emphasizes the WQMA's position that all farms that utilize manure should adopt and implement their own Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans prepared with the assistance of qualified professionals. Since there are no one-size-fits-all management solutions, it is essential that custom plans featuring integrated practices be tailored to the unique circumstances of each farm. Although some of the text on the following pages might appear to specify minimum numerical standards, any numbers mentioned are intended to be regarded only as approximate starting points in the process of evaluating what would be appropriate in each situation.

For updates on the County's efforts to promote the use of these guidelines and produce similar material addressing other potential causes of nutrient pollution, visit the Water Quality Management Agency's website at www.cayugacounty.us/wqma.