

**West Fork Des Moines River Watershed  
Total Maximum Daily Load Implementation Project  
Semi-Annual Meeting  
Wednesday, July 29, 2015 – 10:05 am**

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Amanda Schultz, Heron Lake Watershed District (HLWD) opened the meeting at 10:05 am. In attendance were Al Langseth and Kathy Henderschiedt, Nobles County; Andy Geiger and Brooke Burmeister, Jackson County; Jared Morrill, Cottonwood County; Jon Bloemendaal, Murray County; Ryan Doorenbos, Department of Natural Resources; Ed Lenz, Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR); Katherine Pekarek-Scott, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA); and Amanda Schultz and Jan Voit, HLWD.

**2. West Fork Des Moines River (WFDMR) Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Implementation Project PowerPoint Presentation**

Amanda Schultz, WFDMR Watershed Coordinator, gave a PowerPoint presentation that provided a project update since the last Semi-Annual Meeting, grant background, update on the feedlot fixes, work left to complete before the grant is done, results from the feedlot inspections, watershed maps, and sought input on how to move forward after the grant is complete.

Through an amendment to the grant, feedlot improvements were funded. Five sites were selected for funding, totaling about \$38,600. Two of the projects are complete and the remaining three projects are in progress. They should be completed by early August. Four of the feedlot improvement sites are located in Murray County and one is located in Jackson County.

Although feedlot inspections have been completed, there is still work that needs to be completed before the end of the grant period. The final report needs to be submitted. An Executive Summary is also required. This document will be a research paper-style report that details the feedlot inspections and makes recommendations for how to reduce bacteria in surface waters in the future. A final newsletter will be mailed to producers to explain the results of the inventory.

When the grant was written there were 792 registered feedlots in the WFDMR watershed. The goal was to inspect 80% of them, which is 542 feedlots. 43 sites were inspected in Cottonwood County, 190 sites in Jackson County, 221 sites in Murray County, and 142 sites in Nobles County. This equals 596 feedlots that were inspected, surpassing the goal. A map of the watershed was displayed, showing where the inspected and not inspected feedlots lay throughout the watershed. It was discovered that many registered feedlots were not included on the master lists, and this was noted on the map as well.

Of the feedlots that were inspected 55% were open feedlots, 22% were zero discharge sites, 13% were deactivated, 10% had no open feedlots present, and 1% were registered for under 10 animal units. A map displaying this information was presented. The different types of feedlots were spread evenly throughout the watershed.

A total of 325 open feedlots were inspected. A Minnesota Feedlot Annualized Runoff Model (MinnFARM) was run for these sites to determine compliance. 134 sites were compliant and 191 sites were non-compliant. The average index for inspected open lots is 12.3. A graph was displayed that shows the range of indexes. A map of the watershed was displayed to illustrate where the high ranking indexes are located throughout the watershed. Each county had open lots with high MinnFARM indexes.

Two more watershed maps that displayed feedlots with a proximity to surface water and outlined impaired streams were displayed. These maps show that high ranking non-compliant sites are located along impaired surface waters. When working on improving water quality on a particular water body, these maps are useful to find feedlots that negatively impact the water quality. Non-compliant sites with a MinnFARM index over 20 within 1,000 feet of surface water are especially a concern.

A sixth watershed map was presented to show the size of the feedlots within the watershed. The majority of the feedlots are under 400 animal units. The sites with larger livestock populations are concentrated in headwater portions of the watershed in Murray County.

Although 80% of the feedlots in the watershed were inspected for this project, many feedlots remain that were not inspected. A map was displayed of open feedlots that have not yet been inspected. These are sites that should be inspected in the near future to complete the inventory.

### **3. Discussion**

Discussion was held on the future of the feedlot inventory and efforts to reduce bacteria loading in the WFDNR. Inspected sites that ranked high in MinnFARM should be targeted to implement improvements. Lists of inspected feedlots and MinnFARM scores will be compiled and distributed to the counties. CFOs will work with feedlot producers to encourage improvements and Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) staff will work to secure funding.

It was recommended that the County Feedlot Officers (CFOs) continue to inspect the rest of the feedlots in the watershed that have not been inspected as a part of this inventory. They will be supplied with a list of remaining feedlots. Clean

Water Fund dollars through the Accelerated Implementation Grant process could be secured to fund another Watershed Coordinator to assist with these additional feedlot inspections.

Manure application continues to be a concern in the watershed. Funding should be sought for manure application equipment or for installing flow meters on equipment. Incentive programs work well to encourage producers to purchase conservation equipment.

It is possible to encourage inactive feedlots in shoreland to deactivate. This would eliminate the possibility of livestock operations located in sensitive areas in the future. However, current state legislation allows for these sites to re-register. Some local zoning ordinances overrule the state legislation. In general, counties do not like to deactivate feedlots. Deactivating feedlots in shoreland should be considered on a county by county basis, based on their local zoning ordinances.

Grazing livestock along rivers is not a large concern. CFOs cannot regulate pastureland.

Producers with more animal units are doing a good job at keeping records. Most utilize commercial haulers, which keep application records for them. If a manure management plan (MMP) is required, they have one. The question was asked how many producers actually use their MMP or understand what it says. Currently CFOs do not have the time to make sure all MMPs are being followed.

It is the smaller livestock farmers with under 100 animal units that need more information. Some are still not aware of which records they should be keeping or if they even meet the animal unit thresholds. They do not know where the sensitive areas in their fields are and are not carefully applying manure. Crop consultants are a great resource to reach out to these producers.

#### **4. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 am.

Amanda Schultz  
Watershed Coordinator