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New Extension Project Will Aid Horse Owners in Manure Hauling

University of Illinois Extension has developed a new project that will provide horse owners in Lake, McHenry and northern Cook counties with an alternative to the traditional hauling service. Together with Wisconsin Extension, U of I Extension has received funding from the Great Lakes Regional Water Quality Program to establish “pilot” routes that will enable garbage haulers to pick up horse manure and bedding and take it to a compost facility, not a landfill.

“Manure is a fact of life that every horse owner has to deal with,” said Ellen Phillips, U of I Extension Educator. “For many horse and stable owners, putting their horse manure in dumpsters and paying to have it hauled to the landfill with their regular household garbage has been the only solution.

“The project is called *Changing Manure Streams*,” Phillips continued, “and it will assist waste haulers in establishing a pilot route between stables and larger composters, such as commercial composters, nurseries, and park districts. Each stable will have two dumpsters, one for garbage and one for manure and bedding only. On the pilot route, the hauler will pick up the manure dumpster on a regular basis and take it to the designated composter. It’s possible that the tipping fee at the composter will be less than the landfill fee, so costs will be less or the same. Additionally, stable owners should be able to reduce regular garbage pick-up.”

Phillips said there are several reasons to establish an alternative to dumping manure in a landfill. “There’s always an environmental cost when we place horse manure and bedding in landfills,” she noted. “Manure and bedding can be a valuable resource for composting. Why dump it in a landfill and contribute to water quality problems?

“In addition,” she said, “tipping fees at a landfill can be expensive, and every time a landfill closes, the next one is farther away, and the cost goes up. So this project hopes to alleviate some or all of these problems.”

University of Illinois Extension provides a number of online resources for manure management:

Manure Share (<http://web.extension.illinois.edu/manureshare>) is a manure exchange program that brings gardeners and landscapers searching for organic materials for use in composting or field applications in contact with livestock owners who have excess manure.

Composting Central (<http://web.extension.illinois.edu/compostingcentral/>) gives an excellent in-depth discussion of the science of composting.

Manure Talk Blog (<http://web.extension.illinois.edu/compostingcentral/>) provides updates and happenings related to solid manure management and composting manure.

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