

## Technical Guidance for Kentucky State Cost Share Program Practice 561 G – Heavy Use Area Protection (Fence Line Feeders)

This technical guide sheet, and the recommendations contained herein are taken from, and supported by the University of Kentucky publication AEN-134, NRCS Technical Guidance practice code 561 (Heavy Use Area), and NRCS Technical Guidance practice code 313 (Waste Storage Facility). You can learn more about U.K. AEN-134 at: <http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agcomm/pubs/AEN/AEN134/AEN134.pdf>

Recommendations for planning and designing this practice are as follows:

### **Planning:**

- If there is no current winter feeding related resource problem(s) identified on the farm then the applicant would not be eligible for this practice. This should be documented with the application and photos taken to verify current conditions or by using a CPA-52 for documentation.
- If the site meets the definition of an Animal Feeding Operation (AFO), according to Kentucky Division of Water definition<sup>1</sup>, then the applicant would not be eligible for a Fence Line Feeder(s) without first, an approved Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) and potentially a Waste Storage Facility (313) designed for the site.

<sup>1</sup>A lot or facility where animals have been stabled, are currently stabled or will be stabled or confined and fed or maintained for a total of 45 days or more in any 12-month period; and where crops, vegetation forage growth, or post-harvest residues are not sustained over any portion of the lot or facility in the normal growing season.

**Note:** When current land conditions make it difficult to determine if the site meets the definition of an Animal Feeding Operation (AFO); tools, such as KY Graze Excel Worksheet<sup>2</sup>, may be used to help support the planner's decision to move forward with a Winter Feeding Area or to recommend the development of a CNMP prior to any practice development. As a rule-of-thumb, stocking rates greater than 130% of the pastureland carrying capacity in KY Graze or livestock numbers greater than 1 Animal Unit<sup>3</sup> (AU)/ 2 acres of pastureland may be more indicative of site conditions that could meet the definition of an Animal Feeding Operation.

<sup>2</sup> The KY Graze Excel Worksheet is located on NRCS Sharepoint Website under Technology-Grazing Management- graze.

<sup>3</sup>Animal Unit (AU) is equivalent to 1,000 lbs. of live weight.

- The planner should consider alternatives with the applicant on methods to avoid meeting the definition of an AFO and/or to improve the existing livestock feeding methods before planning a Fence Line Feeder. It should also be stressed to the applicant that the Fence Line Feeder (without a designed manure storage structure) is only intended to be used during the winter feeding months when severe weather conditions limit pasture feeding of hay. This practice is not planned or designed to store large volumes of accumulated manure. In addition, it is not designed to be used throughout the year. Applicant discussions should be documented in the case file or with the cost share application.

- If the site is not considered an AFO and a manure storage structure is not needed, then a Kentucky Nutrient Management Plan (KYNMP)<sup>4</sup> would be the only nutrient plan needed prior to installing a Winter Feeding Area to confirm enough land area exists to properly dispose of any accumulated manure.

<sup>4</sup> A copy of a KYNMP can be found at:

<http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agcomm/pubs/ID/ID211/ID211.pdf>

**Design Criteria and Site Selection:**

- The Fence Line Feeder shall only be designed for a maximum of 12 cows or equivalent. To prevent excessive waste buildup, cows should only access the structure up to 4 hours per day.
- The Fence Line Feeder should service a minimum of two (2) pastures and include enough pastureland acres to reduce heavy livestock traffic damage to the land during the winter feeding months. It is preferred to have more than two pastures serviced by the Fence Line Feeders.
- Fence Line Feeders should be located on a ridgetop or elevated area with positive drainage away from the structure and good access with equipment (such as an existing gravel surfaced access road) for loading hay into the structure. Fence Line Feeders are designed for the purpose that a tractor should never enter the field to load hay bales into a structure.
- Fence Line Feeders create an excellent alternative for mobility limited or disabled producers in meeting the feeding needs within an operation. At the same time, they will create a safer option for all in feeding cattle in pastures comprised of steeper terrain.
- The structure will be sited to prevent contaminated runoff from draining onto neighboring properties, into streams, sinkholes, or other water bodies. NRCS Technical Guidance Practice Code 561 (Heavy Use Area) requires a minimum of 150 feet setback from all these sensitive areas. Also, follow the guidance of NRCS Technical Guidance Practice Code 313 (Waste Storage Structure) Table 1 for additional setback requirements.
- Siting should be away from existing watering facilities to encourage livestock to move off the feeding pad after eating and return to the pastureland area.
- The facility is only designed for hay feeding and is not designed for silage or grain feeding, without the addition of a Waste Storage Facility (313), due to the differences in the consistency of the manure produced when feeding these products.
- Fence Line Feeders will be installed according to NRCS specifications as provide in NRCS Winter Feeding Area design drawings.

I have followed the instructions in this guidance document to plan and design a Winter Feeding Area (Fence Line Feeder design) to meet the requirements of the Kentucky Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Program.

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Applicant

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Date

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Authorized Technical Representative

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Date