

Planning Criteria for Heavy Use Areas/Animal Concentration Areas

1. Applicability

This criteria applies to all existing and planned animal concentration areas (non-pasture) where technical or financial assistance will be provided. Assistance can only be provided where there is a documented water resource concern, and/or where the assistance will result in net environmental benefits. These benefits must include water quality, and may also include others such as air quality and soil quality.

2. Procedure

An inventory and evaluation (I&E) must be conducted to evaluate the resource concerns and develop feasible alternatives, including cost estimates. All reasonable practices and alternatives must be documented, including Heavy Use Area Protection (561), Constructed Wetland (656) and/or Filter Area (393) or Wastewater Treatment Strip (635), and Waste Storage Facility (313), Waste Stacking and Handling Pad (317A), Rotational Lots (570) and Barnyard Runoff Control (357) and all applicable component practices.

I&Es must be conducted with the landowner's involvement, and the reports prepared by someone with the appropriate Engineering job approval authority for the I&E. I&Es that have roof alternatives must include assistance from the Technical Center staff. The I&E should be completed with the conservation plan. If the I&E is not completed with the conservation plan, it must be completed before a program contract can be written.

3. Location

The environmental risk of an unimproved animal concentration area can be directly related to its proximity to surface water bodies. The alternatives to solve problems close to streams may include relocation of the animal concentration area to a less sensitive area. Care must be taken to identify and separate practices that address environmental concerns from production practices such as housing and the feeding and watering facilities that are part of it.

Proximity to groundwater, or location on poorly drained or excessively well drained soils may pose similar risk. Providing drainage and/or impervious base or surface material can usually address these problems.

4. Space

In planning animal concentration areas, it is important to provide appropriate space, depending on the type, age and size of livestock, the intended use of the space, the frequency and duration the livestock will be in the space, the availability of feed and water in the animal concentration area or accessibility to them in the barn or elsewhere, and the surface material on which the livestock will be confined. In addition, space must be provided for traffic flow, manure scraping maneuverability, and manure stacking areas where applicable.

ACA Exhibit 1 provides appropriate animal concentration area size ranges on paved and unpaved surfaces for three size ranges of dairy and beef cattle. These size ranges are intended as basic space needs which can be adjusted to account for the factors described above. These size ranges do not include animal housing, and are assumed to be in addition to appropriate housing or shelter, which are production practices. These size ranges do not supercede criteria that may appear in Section IV conservation practice standards.

A combination of surface materials and pro-rated sizes can be used within an animal concentration area to transition from more intensely used areas around feed and water sources to less intense exercise and loafing areas. Special use areas, such as winter feeding areas and stabilized lots in rotational lot systems, may need to be increased in size and/or durability of surface material due to the severe conditions under which they are used.

5. Roofs

If a roof is planned for anything other than an Agrichemical Handling Facility (596), Waste Storage Facility (313) for stackable manure, or a Mortality Composter (318), it must be compared to all other technically feasible alternatives. If there are no other technically feasible alternatives, there must be a clear explanation in the I&E report of the site specific conditions that prohibit all other alternatives.

6. Conditions

The technically feasible alternatives in the I&E are the only ones to be offered to the landowner or operator. The selected alternative (including all component practices) must be documented as the landowner's decision in the conservation plan as a condition for further assistance. The cost items in a program contract must be based on the selected alternative as described in the I&E report, or in the design cost estimate, unless otherwise limited to less than the cost estimate by program constraints.

Technical and financial assistance after the I&E can be provided only on the practices documented in the conservation plan. If the landowner's decision exceeds the scope of the practices in the selected alternative, NRCS technical assistance shall not exceed that necessary to implement the selected alternative, unless NRCS staff time and resources allow after meeting all other commitments. NRCS resources shall not be used to fund Technical Service Provider assistance beyond that necessary to implement the selected alternative.

The program contract must include a provision that no new barnyard or animal concentration area may be established outside the improved area included in the contract. Any expansion or relocation of the facility must be implemented to the same degree of environmental benefits. The intended use of the practices must be documented. If the constructed facility is used for an unintended purpose, there must be no conflict with the intended purpose.

A site specific O&M plan that explains the performance expectations and necessary actions to assure the longevity of the practices shall be reviewed with and signed by the landowner. The environmental benefits of the facility cannot be jeopardized.

ACA Exhibit 1

Dairy Lot Sizes per Head

Weight/size	<u>250-400 lb</u>	<u>600-800lb</u>	<u>1000-1400 lb</u>
Paved	30-40 SF	40-50 SF	60-75 SF
Unpaved	250-300	350-500	600-700

Beef Lot Sizes per Head

Weight/size=	<u>Cow/calf</u>	<u>600 lb.</u>	<u>1000 lb.</u>
Paved	60-75 SF	40-50 SF	50-60 SF
Unpaved	400-500	200-250	300-400
	(with mounds 20-45 SF/head)		
Unpaved	550-650	400-500	500-600
	(no mounds)		

Notes:

“Paved” means any hard surface that does not compress (leave a hoof print) when walked on when dry, & “unpaved” is everything softer

Allow additional area around:
 feed bunks & watering facilities – 6 feet
 traffic lanes – 10 to 12 feet

Winter feeding areas & other extended use lots should receive an improved surface, and be sized larger than the “paved” recommendation.

These size ranges do not supercede criteria that may appear in Section IV conservation practice standards.