



Conservation Conversation

A Demonstration Project to Convert Poultry Waste to Energy, Chemical Products

The Oklahoma Conservation Commission facilitated an agreement between Oklahoma and Arkansas to support a cooperative poultry litter demonstration project. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency approved a proposal for the project in December and finalized funding in January under the Clean Water Act, Section 319(h).

The project uses a patented process to convert poultry waste to products including concentrated liquid fertilizer and electricity. The waste is anaerobically digested to produce methane gas of sufficient quality for production of electricity. In the process principal nutrients, including phosphorus and nitrogen, are chemically separated from the litter and converted to liquid fertilizer.

Key to the project is the availability of \$800,000 in federal funds, with the major portion to be invested in the process demonstration. Last year the Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science and Technology (OCAST) made \$185,000 available for the project with the approval of four research and development centers. The money came through the Oklahoma Institute of Technology (OIT), a funding arm created last year by the Oklahoma Legislature. OIT funds pay for one-half of the research, which is matched from non-state appropriated funds from the benefiting companies. These one-year projects are expected to boost Oklahoma's economy by providing jobs as well as new manufacturing opportunities in Oklahoma.

Ken Stamper, of Production Specialties in Norman, will oversee much of the demonstration and development associated with the project. Stamper is the principal investigator under the OCAST award. Oversight for the demonstration project will be through the Cherokee Hills Resource, Conservation and Development Council located in Tahlequah.

The project will occur in two phases. The purpose of Phase I is to demonstrate that the poultry waste can be converted to methane gas and liquid fertilizer so that excess phosphorus can be economically shipped out of nutrient-sensitive watersheds. Two forms of fertilizer will be produced, one with high nitrogen content and one with high phosphorus content. The high-phosphorus fertilizer will be shipped to other parts of the state where it is needed. The high-nitrogen fertilizer will likely be purchased by local producers to help produce crops and forage for livestock. Phase I will also develop a test market for all of the process products and will demonstrate the economic feasibility of the process. A small process plant will be built to convert 10,000 tons of poultry waste to liquid fertilizer in six months of operation. This will remove approximately 6,200 pounds of phosphorus from the Illinois and Eucha/Spavinaw Watershed.

The cooperating entities anticipate completion of formal agreements within the coming month, after which site selection and construction can begin.

Funding for Phase I of the joint Arkansas/Oklahoma project totals \$1,385,000

Arkansas Funding- \$526,616

- \$300,000 FY2003 EPA Clean Water Act, Section 319(h), funds
- \$100,000 Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality state funds
- \$100,000 Poultry waste contributed and delivered by an integrator (10,000 tons at an estimated value of \$10 per ton)
- \$26,316 from poultry integrators

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Our vision:

Responsible care for Oklahoma's natural resources

Our mission:

To conserve, protect and restore Oklahoma's natural resources, working in collaboration with the conservation districts, on behalf of the citizens of Oklahoma.



Conservation Calendar

OACD Annual State Meeting
Feb. 22-24, Biltmore Hotel, Oklahoma City

GIS Day at the Capitol
March 3, Oklahoma City

Conservation Day at the Capitol
March 10, Oklahoma City

Southwestern States RC&D Conference
March 21-24, Westin Hotel, Oklahoma City

Agriculture Day at the Capitol
March 25, Oklahoma City

Oklahoma Farm Show
March 25-27, State Fairgrounds, Oklahoma City

Governor's Conference on
Agriculture & Economic Development
April 13-14, Oklahoma City

"Forestry on the Grow" 9th Annual Forest
Utilization Conference & Equipment Exposition
April 27-29, Wagoner OK

District Dateline

The family of the late Elmer Downey, 36-year Logan County CD director, donated \$400 to the district to purchase Out of the Dust - the History of Conservation in Oklahoma in the 20th Century books. An inscription stating the books are provided in Mr. Downey's memory will be placed in the books before they are donated to schools and libraries

Sequoyah County CD held a local land judging & survey contest Nov. 19 for 105 high school students and watershed rehab public outreach meeting Dec. 16 ..

All Conservation Districts: Please mail, email or fax one-line items about district activities to Mark Harrison/OCC for District Dateline. Thanks!

In Our Thoughts

Eddie Brown, Washita County CD secretary, lost her mother Jan. 13 after a long illness.

Rod Shaw, Blaine County CD NRCS district conservationist, lost his father Nov. 25.

Oren Slaughter, Lincoln County CD director 1992-1996, and his wife perished in a house fire Jan. 28.

Pawnee County CD director, has been diagnosed with a serious illness. Cards or letters may be sent to the district office, 500 Harrison St., Room 100, Pawnee, OK 74058-2568.

Congratulations!

Karen Potts, OCC/FMHR staff, is a grandmother! Her daughter Shellie Bosler and husband Bart had a baby girl, Parker McKenzie, on Jan. 27.

District Secretary Pat Fentress, Sequoyah County CD secretary, has a new granddaughter, Hannah Kayleen, born Dec. 16.

Please inform Mark Harrison at OCC of district directors or employees who have been ill, passed away or had babies. Please include dates!!!!!!!

Cotton County CD Opens New Building, Dedicates Room to Director

Cotton County CD held the grand opening of its new district office and USDA service center Dec. 19. The building's conference room was named after Jack Hudman. The other board members surprised Hudman with the plaque that will hang in the room, bearing his name. From left, in the photo at right, are Louise Peterson, director; Fredia Rice, secretary; Jack Hudman, director; and Kenneth Burton, director.



All Oklahoma Chapter SWCS Calls For Presentations

The 2004 All Oklahoma Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society Annual Meeting will be held June 16-18 at the Best Western Hotel in Stillwater. The theme of this year's meeting is "SWCS - For All Conservationists." The meeting planners hope to highlight the diversity of disciplines represented by SWCS.

The planning committee is inviting presentation proposals. No written papers will be necessary; however, poster presentations are welcome and will be displayed in the atrium of the hotel.

While any topic relating to conservation of natural resources will be considered, specific topics the planning committee would like to have discussed include Brush Management and Eastern Red Cedar Control*; Erosion Control on Grazinglands and Cropland*; Irrigation Water Management*; Streambank Erosion*; Wetland and Wildlife Management; Watershed Rehabilitation; Advances in Technology (GIS, GPS); Legislative Updates; Education; Professional Development. (*Statewide priorities as set by the NRCS State Technical Committee.)

If you would like to participate, contact J. Chris Stoner, 100 USDA, Suite 206, Stillwater, OK 74074, chris.stoner@ok.usda.gov, (405) 742-1260. The deadline for submissions is March 31.



Pontotoc County CD Student Among 12 Winners in National Conservation Poster Contest

Britni Parker, a student of Ada Jr. High, placed second in the grades 7-9 division of the National Conservation Poster Contest. Her poster was submitted by the Pontotoc County CD. The contest is cosponsored by the National Association of Conservation Districts and the NACD Auxiliary.

More than 120 posters competed in the thirteenth annual contest, which provided kindergarten through 12th grade students with an opportunity to share their thoughts about natural resources and related issues. There are five divisions for grades K-12, plus a category for digital art.

First and second place winners are selected in each category. First place winners receive a \$100 savings bond, while second place winners receive a \$75 savings bond. The savings bonds are provided by the NACD Auxiliary. Winning posters will be displayed at the NACD Annual Meeting, in Hawaii Feb. 1-5, and slides of the posters shown during the awards ceremony.

A Summary of the Monthly Meeting of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission

The Oklahoma Conservation Commission met Jan. 5, 2004, in the Agriculture Building Board Room, 2800 N. Lincoln Boulevard, Oklahoma City, beginning at 9:30 a.m.

District Director Appointments

Caney Valley - Janet Maloney

*Grady County - Paul Brown

Mayes County - Bud Osborne

Oklahoma County - Mark Moehle

South Caddo - Ronald L. Walzer

West Caddo - Wayne Spies

*New Director

Claims/Financial Statement

Commissioners accepted claims as presented by Steve Coffman, Financial Management and Human Resources director, who stated that a financial statement was not available due to the status of transition to the new CORE state accounting system.

Beaty Creek Priority Watershed Project

Commissioners approved a request from the Delaware County CD for a no-cost one-year extension of the Beaty Creek Priority Watershed Project, as presented by Mike Thralls, OCC executive director. Thralls stated that the extension would be at no expense to OCC and no additional Environmental Protection Agency monies would be requested. The extension would allow an additional 12 months for cooperators to access funds available.

Out-of-State Travel

Commissioners approved out-of-state travel requests for OCC staff, presented by Mike Thralls, as listed below.

1. National Nonpoint Source Meeting, Feb. 2-4, Austin, Texas.
2. Association of State and Interstate Water Pollution Control Administrators Mid-Winter Meeting, March 7-9, Washington, D.C.
3. National Water Quality Monitoring Council Bi-Annual Meeting, May 17-20, Chattanooga, Tenn.

Commissioners ratified the fourth request, previously approved by Commissioner Virginia Kidd due to time constraints.

4. Environmental Protection Agency Bioassessment for Tiered Aquatic Life, Dec. 9-11, 2003, Austin, Texas.

Out of the Dust - The History of Conservation in Oklahoma in the 20th Century

Ben Pollard, OCC assistant director, reported that 59 conservation districts had placed orders for the history book for a total of 913 books. He stated that staff proposes that the Commissioners authorize using \$7,500 from the information budget to purchase books and \$1,500 from the Abandoned Mine Land (AML) program to purchase books for AML districts. Mark Harrison, OCC information officer, provided new cost estimates. Commissioner Terry Wyatt questioned if OCC could apply for an Environmental Protection Agency grant to assist in purchasing these books. Staff agreed that OCC could make application for a grant, but due to time constraints it would not be possible before the first printing.

Commissioners approved the expenditure of OCC information budget and AML funds as submitted.

Commission Members Reports

Commissioner George Stunkard reported on attending the Cotton County CD building dedication.

Staff Reports

Administration: Mike Thralls, OCC executive director, reported that the NACD Spring Legislative Conference is scheduled for March 15-17, in Washington, D.C. Information on the meeting will be provided after the national

meeting. Thralls stated that the State Equalization Board certified FY2005 funding at the same level as FY2004 funding. Joint House and Senate committees are holding zero-based budget meetings with agencies. One-fourth of the agencies will go to zero-based budgeting each year beginning in FY2005, with OCC scheduled for the fourth year. Staff will meet with the House Appropriations Subcommittee to discuss OCC's budget. Thralls met with Oklahoma Farm Bureau staff to discuss the use of the state cost-share funds and also met with House legal and budget staff, along with assistant Attorney General Susan Krug, and found some conflicting language in the law regarding the use of this fund. Thralls commended Mark Harrison on the Tulsa Farm Show display, and Steve Coffman and his staff, Jana Chicoine, Karen Potts, and Sheryl Easton, on their efforts with the CORE accounting system. It has been a huge undertaking and staff has been diligent. Thralls provided copies of an article in the NACD Forestry Notes by Bill Wilson, NACD vice president and Haskell County CD director. Thralls reported that EPA formally approved the Stamper poultry litter project. He thanked Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry (ODAFF) staff Rick Maloney and Gary Bledsoe, and OCC Water Quality staff Larry Edmison and Shannon Phillips for their work on the project.

Ben Pollard, OCC assistant director, stated that requests were approved for emergency funding for Checotah, Okfuskee County, Cleveland County, McIntosh County, Kiowa County, Murray County, and Tillman County under the procedure approved by the Commissioners at the December meeting. Three requests were denied because of assets over \$3,000. Pollard stated that Sec. of Agriculture Terry Peach held a meeting in December with the FBI, OSBI and homeland security officials, along with several agricultural producer groups, to discuss the potential for terrorism in the agriculture community, particularly food supply and food production. OCC was involved to discuss upstream flood control structures. Staff members participated in a planning session for the OACD State Meeting.

Financial Management and Human Resources:

Steve Coffman, FM/HR director, reported on the new CORE accounting system and the difficulties encountered in getting vendors paid in a timely manner. The state will be moving the budgeting process to the new system. Coffman will serve on a committee formed to discuss the move. He reported that Russ Halstied, Human Resources Management specialist, will retire at the end of the month.

Conservation Programs: Tammy Sawatzky, CP acting director, submitted a written report.

Water Quality: Larry Edmison, WQ director, provided a summary of the Stamper project. Staff will revise the project and get the workplan resubmitted. The Oklahoma Water Resources Board will hold a water quality standards review hearing. Edmison stated he knows of no controversial issues to be considered at this time.

Abandoned Mine Land: Mike Kastl, AML director, highlighted the FY2001, FY2002 and FY2003 grants. Kastl stated that the AML program is continuing the selection process for firms to provide professional engineering services for four contracts. Kastl reported on the Emergency Watershed Protection Program, stating that a pre-bid meeting will be held Jan. 27 for the Garfield County project that includes 53 sites. He stated that the Washita County CD staff has submitted 40 sites for inclusion in the program. Kastl commended conservation district and NRCS employees on their assistance in areas where the county commissioners were

not closely involved in these projects.

Information Technology: Mike Sharp, IT director, stated that U.S. Sen. Jim Inhofe is making dramatic efforts to obtain funding for the Tar Creek project. The GIS Council Interim Study Committee met in December to look at the current duties and accomplishments and future needs of the council, and how the state could more effectively and efficiently coordinate GIS activities.

District Services: Lisa Knauf, DS director, reported districts on election publication issues. She reported the OACD State Meeting concurrent sessions will be led by conservation district, NRCS and OACD staff.

Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts

Don Bartolina, OACD executive director, provided attendance information for the 2003 OACD Area Meetings. He stated that the OACD State Meeting planning committee has developed a tentative agenda. He thanked Commissioner Wyatt for her assistance in asking Lt. Governor Mary Fallin to be the keynote speaker at the luncheon on Feb. 23. Bartolina provided a copy of a memo from OACD President Royce Casey to all conservation districts advising that OACD has contracted with Clem McSpadden to assist in the upcoming legislative session. Bill Jordan, OACD Area Director, has resigned from the board and the Garvin CD board due to the travel and time demands of his job.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Darrel Dominick, NRCS state conservationist, reported that NRCS was still without a budget. Preliminary estimates are that funding for the PL-566 watershed program is down by 23 percent. Dominick reported the NRCS State Technical Committee will meet to discuss the Conservation Security Program before the comment period closes in mid-February. He will ask members of the State Leadership Team to attend future Commission meetings to provide information on NRCS programs and activities. Dominick attended a State Conservationists' meeting in December where the meeting focused on grants and agreements. These grants and agreements will become more competitive and will require requests for proposals. He will keep OCC posted on this issue. Work on the annual report of Oklahoma's conservation partnership is continuing.

USDA Farm Service Agency

Rod Wanger, FSA Conservation Program chief, reported on the following program signups:

1. Oklahoma has received \$7.9 million for the ongoing Livestock Assistance Program.
2. The Crop Disaster signup runs through Jan. 30.
3. Due to dry conditions, there is an Emergency Conservation Program signup in southwestern Oklahoma.
4. No information has been released on the new Conservation Reserve Program signup coming this spring.
5. The Bottomland Hardwood signup continues.

Wanger reported that FSA Director Jim Reese sent a letter to the legislature advising of the benefits of the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program.

Additional Comments

Mike Kastl commended ODAFF for its immediate response to mad cow disease, stating the department provided very educational information to the press. Commissioner Wyatt commended Sec. of Agriculture Terry Peach for ODAFF efforts on the issue.

Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission will be Feb. 9, 2004, in the Agriculture Building Board Room, 2800 N. Lincoln Boulevard, Oklahoma City, beginning at 9:30 a.m.

Oklahoma Funding- \$858,684

- \$500,000 FY2002 Clean Water Act, Section 319(h), funds
- \$50,000 Oklahoma Legislature
- \$123,684 Poultry integrators
- \$185,000 OCAST through OIT

Expansion to Phase II will be privately funded by a cooperative of growers upon the successful demonstration of Phase I. Phase II will expand the processing capabilities of Phase I to approximately 100,000 tons of poultry waste per year and the removal of 62,000 pounds of phosphorus from the area. To buy in to the coop will require an initial capital investment and a contract to guarantee the delivery of specified quantities of litter to the plant annually. The Phase II expansion will also incorporate electrical power generation from the combustion of the methane gas. Coop owners will receive dividends and tax credits from the production and sale of the electricity and fertilizer.

The First-Ever “Governor’s Conference on Agriculture and Economic Growth”

Governor Brad Henry and U.S. Undersecretary of Agriculture Bill Hawks will be keynote speakers at the state’s first Governor’s Conference on Agriculture and Economic Growth in Oklahoma City, April 13-14. Oklahoma Secretary of Tourism and Commerce Kathy Taylor and Roy Peters of the Oklahoma Manufacturer’s Alliance, will also be featured speakers. Gov. Henry said the conference will focus on using the state’s natural resources to foster rural development and create new jobs.

“This unique conference will focus on finding ways to use Oklahoma’s abundant natural resources to develop economic opportunities in our rural areas,” Gov. Henry said. “This is an opportunity for rural leaders and entrepreneurs to learn how to build a future for their communities,” he said.

Panels on agricultural tourism and alternative energy projects such as wind farms and biomass fuels are on the agenda. Officials from successful value-added companies, cooperatives and similar enterprises will also share their experience and expertise. Gov. Henry has assigned Oklahoma Secretary of Agriculture Terry Peach the responsibility of organizing the conference.

“Secretary Peach understands the intricacies of agriculture and business, and he has the experience to bring in the experts that will make this conference a valuable learning experience,” Gov. Henry said.

Sec. Peach said input from farm organizations and rural leaders are helping identify some of the most promising means of using existing resources to fuel rural economic development.

“Resource-based economic development provides a security to the community that you don’t find elsewhere,” Peach said. “Our forests, farmland and rangeland can’t be relocated. Used in profitable ventures, these resources become long-term assets for local communities.

Preregistration for the conference is \$45. Registration after March 30 will be \$60. Registration forms are available online at www.oda.state.ok.us and at okcc.state.ok.us or by writing: Governor’s Conference on Agriculture, P.O. Box 18984, Oklahoma City, OK 73118, or by calling 405/522-5489. The conference will be held at the Cox Convention Center. Conference headquarters will be the Renaissance Hotel. For reservations call 1-800-Hotels1 (800/468-5489) and ask for the discounted Governor’s Conference on Agriculture group rate.

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