

Size your manure storage to meet your needs

A lack of storage is one of the main reasons farmers might apply manure and other nutrients when field and weather conditions are not ideal. Planning for the opportunities when manure can be applied during the best possible conditions and sizing your storage to ensure you have enough to take advantage of these times is important.

Storage facilities with a full year of capacity provide the most flexibility in timing of manure application, but only if it is managed properly and the storage is emptied at appropriate opportunities during the cropping season. This will ensure that the storage is not full during winter or other times when conditions for application are not ideal. Planning manure application for multiple opportunities during the growing season should be the goal (i.e. applying to corn on sandy soils in spring or after winter wheat harvest with cover crops). A year's worth of manure shouldn't be applied all at the same time, except when the land base is large enough and conditions for application are suitable.

Planning manure application opportunities during the growing season helps you to make better use of the nutrients in manure. Planning can also help you make the most economic use of your storage capacity, equipment and labour.



Consider temporary field storage

If you have excess stackable manure, no additional space in your permanent storage and conditions are not good for spreading, one option is to pile your manure in a properly managed temporary field storage (TFS) site, while you wait for a better opportunity.

It is important to choose a site that is easily accessible, close to where the manure will be later spread and located in an area that prevents environmental impacts or potential issues for neighbours.

Specific siting considerations include maintaining separation distances to watercourses or tile inlets (at least 50 metres or 150 feet) and to houses (at least 125 metres, which is generally a 2-3 minute walk). Avoid sites with high slopes, shallow soils, a high water table, on floodplains or locations near private or municipal wells.

If your farm is subject to a Nutrient Management Strategy (NMS), your TFS sites must be identified in the NMS and must follow regulated siting standards. The regulation permits storage of manure in a TFS site for up to 300 days, depending on several factors. Even if your farm is not subject to an NMS, following these standards as a best practice will help to minimize risks to surface and ground water.

Note: The information above is good practice for all manure stacked in a pile, including manure that is composting.