

## Executive Director Report, by Rick Martens



The MNCAA Board met on July 14. We brought ideas for possible topics for the training in February. Topics discussed were: emergency response to spills, emergency response and protocol for medical emergencies, nutrient management and how can we extend our season (spring vs. fall) creating a bigger application window, and record

keeping requirements. It was discussed to try to have

more topics with less time to keep people engaged. We also discussed moving the annual meeting and training to the last week of February (21-23) to avoid the National Farm Machinery Show. Also, the board has made up post cards to promote the organization. They will be distributed at shows and placed at businesses supporting our industry. The goal is to increase membership. If you know an applicator that is not a member, send them to our web site [www.mncaamanure.com](http://www.mncaamanure.com) and encourage them to join.

## Wilson takes on manure management role for U of M

Melissa Wilson may not have grown up on a farm, but living in an agricultural area instilled in her a passion for the environment and water quality. That interest, along with her desire to learn, has brought Wilson to Minnesota and the University of Minnesota where she is the new assistant professor and Extension specialist in the Department of Soil, Water and Climate. Wilson started her new position on Aug. 28.



“I am looking forward to working with people on concerns in manure management,” Wilson said about her new role. “I hope people approach me with questions.”

Wilson earned a bachelor’s degree in environmental science from Juniata College in Pennsylvania and master’s and doctorate degrees in water resources science from the University of Minnesota. Following her PhD, Wilson spent four years as an assistant professor at the Community College of Baltimore County teaching introduction to environmental science.

“I had the opportunity to talk with people without the same background which gave me a lot of experience and helped me be comfortable in that setting,” Wilson said.

But she missed working with agriculture so Wilson took a position at the University of Maryland where she was a nutrient management specialist in the Agricultural Nutrient Management Program. There, she worked with the Maryland Department of Ag to train people in writing certified water nutrient management plans.

Last spring, when the manure management position became available in the Department of Soil, Water and Climate, the University of Minnesota contacted Wilson to interview and then hired her. She will be spending 60 percent of her time on extension education and developing curriculum and 40 percent conducting research.

“My first goal is to explore alternative times for spreading manure,” Wilson said. “I’d like to move away from fall and winter spreading for best management practices and to maximize resources. But I realize there are times when manure application during certain times of the year are unavoidable.”

Wilson’s past research includes work in cover crops and fall manure application. Wilson is currently initiating a study on the practice of side dressing manure.

“I’ve had several farmers interested in this method of application,” Wilson said. “It gives farmers and custom applicators more of a window to apply manure.”

Wilson said she is looking forward to working with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency in providing science-based information to help make policy decisions.

“I’ve also been contacted to help with the Certified Animal Waste Technician education program as well as other education outreach opportunities,” Wilson said.

Wilson said she is looking forward to working in the state of Minnesota and the variety of livestock the state has.

“I’d like to get some surveys out to people to find out how people manage manure and receive more information on the application differences between private and custom applicators,” Wilson said.

From a passion for the environment and water quality that was instilled many years ago, Wilson’s path has brought her back to a position to benefit the environment as well as agriculture in all of Minnesota.

Wilson welcomes any feedback or input. Please contact her at 612-625-4276.

*Story by Andrea Borgerding*