

# CUSTOM MANURE APPLICATOR TRAINING



50%  
reduction  
in pollution  
liability insurance  
for level 3 (\$1600)

This material is based upon work supported in part by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under Agreement No. 2008-51130-04751. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

## SITUATION:

Four major manure runoff events in March of 2002 galvanized the for-hire manure application industry in Wisconsin and Michigan. Independently, the industry approached Extension in each state to help develop a voluntary training and certification program. A three-state partnership (WI, IL, MI) formed to implement this training program funded in part by a Great Lakes Regional Water Quality Leadership Team 406 grant.

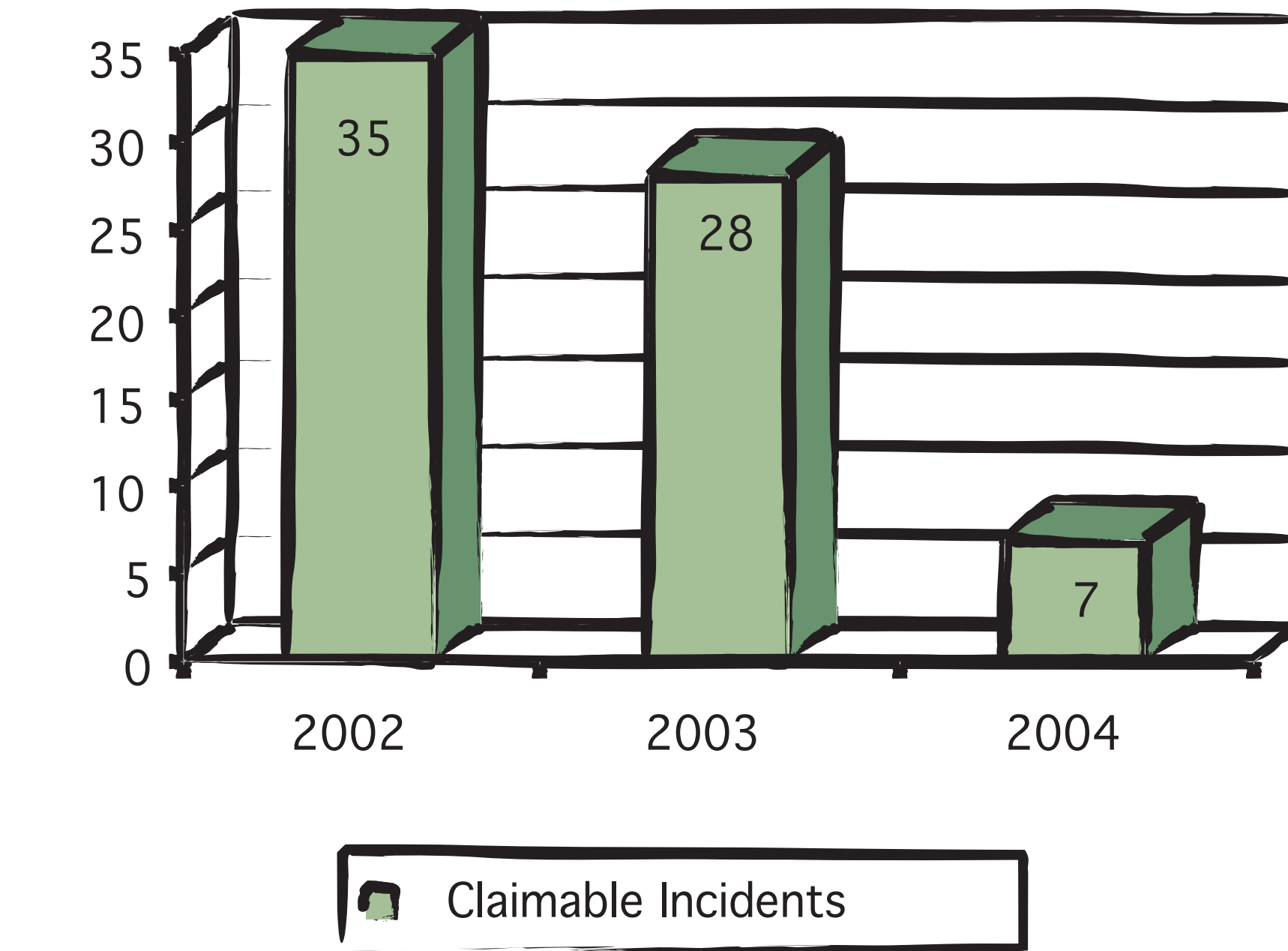
## OBJECTIVES:

- 1 Create a market-incentive based training and certification program
- 2 Increase the base level of knowledge of all employees
- 3 Prevent manure application problems before they occur
- 4 Increase nutrient management plan implementation



## IMPACT:

80% drop in claimable incidents by level 3 participants by 2nd year.



## RESULTS:

More than half of the application firms in each state have taken part in the training program, with Wisconsin reaching >70%. Within the 3 states, insurers report an 80% drop in claimable incidents for firms completing Level 3. Applicators in 5 non-participating states have completed Level 3 (in addition to their own state mandated certification) to gain the insurance savings and improve their businesses. Regulators in WI report an increase in reported incidents, as trained applicators are more likely to follow mandatory reporting requirements.

An offshoot of the training program is the North American Manure Expo, a manure-centric educational event that grew out of the training. The expo rotates around the upper midwest (Hosted by Extension in the Heartland, Great Lakes and Mid Atlantic Regions) and draws 700+ applicators and farmers to the event annually.

## METHODS:

Building on lessons learned from voluntary and mandatory programs in other states, the training has three levels:

**TRAINING PROGRAM LEVEL 1:** Basic knowledge for field staff on spill response and proper application techniques (3 hours of training plus an exam/testing annually); including a DVD by MSU Extension and fact sheets by Extension in each state.

**TRAINING PROGRAM LEVEL 2:** Advanced knowledge for crew supervisors (6 hours over 2 years); Modules include Odor Management, Calibration/Recordkeeping, GPS Tracking of Applications, Application in Wet Soils, Regulations, Ethics, Nutrient Management Plan Implementation. (Most developed by IL Extension)

**TRAINING PROGRAM LEVEL 3:** Implementation of an Environmental Management System by the firm. Assistance and annual reviews are conducted by participating insurance companies.

Classroom sessions are offered for Level 1 (train the trainer) and Level 2. Trained Level 2 staff are then authorized to train the other employees within their firm.

## PARTNERSHIPS:

The driving force behind the program is the applicator associations/groups within each state. They are consistently providing input and feedback as the training materials and exams are developed. In addition, Extension within each state is working closely with the regulatory community to develop these materials. Working relationships with underwriters at several insurance companies have been developed. Most participating companies are offering 10% premium discounts for level 1 and 10-40% discounts for Level 3 certification.

\$923 average savings  
for level 1  
implementation

18.5% average savings  
for level 3  
implementation  
(\$2800)

Support for this project has been provided by:



United States Department of Agriculture  
National Institute of Food and Agriculture

