

PROJECT FACT SHEETS

Project Title: Demonstrating Agricultural Producer Certification Option (APCO)

Project Lead: [Texas Institute for Applied Environmental Research \(TIAER\)](#) at Tarleton State University

Principal Funding Provided By: [USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service](#)

Project Partner(s): Environmental Management Solutions, LLC (EMS) and Iowa Soybean Association

Project Description: The project demonstrates the Agricultural Producer Certification Option (APCO), a new approach for addressing water quality issues in agricultural communities. APCO was developed by TIAER in conjunction with Environmental Management Solutions, LLC (EMS). APCO is based upon the implementation of technically sound, economically feasible, and site-specific comprehensive nutrient management plans (CNMPs). Project funding is being used to develop CNMPs at dairy operations in the Bosque River watershed. EMS is performing the CNMP development.

Project Benefits: CNMPs identify actions or priorities to meet clearly defined nutrient management goals. CNMPs address feed management, manure handling and storage, land application of manure, land management, and record keeping. CNMPs encourage and facilitate technical innovation, sustainable agricultural systems, and new approaches to manure and nutrient management. Ultimately, CNMPs will reduce the amount of nutrients entering the Bosque River.

Project Schedule: Demonstrating APCO is a two-year project that began in October 2002. In year one, work focused on developing CNMPs for 11 dairy operations. In year two, the producers will document implementation of their CNMPs. This work will include all of the necessary documentation associated with NPDES permit reporting and efforts to implement the action plans listed in CNMPs.

Project Status: The first CNMP was developed during a three-day workshop attended by representatives of the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) and other government agencies. The workshop concluded with a gathering at a local meeting facility where EMS briefed government agencies, dairy producers, and other interested parties. The process resulted in a series of procedures and protocols for developing future CNMPs, many of which were adopted by TSSWCB in a state guidance document.

By February 2004, four CNMPs have been completed and presented to producers for comment and evaluation. Seven others are in various stages of development. As the CNMPs are completed and approved, they will be presented to the Natural Resources Conservation Service and TSSWCB for certification.