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Poultry Litter

Manure has long been a source of nutrients in our grain and forage production systems. The predominant products have come from beef, dairy, and swine systems, but from time to time, access to poultry manure is possible as well. If managed correctly, it is an excellent option.

Finding product, getting delivery, and determining pricing are the most typical ‘front end’ challenges, but storage site location, application uniformity, and odor are additional challenges to consider. Make sure storage locations are away from homes/public places and avoid potential runoff issues by staying back from drainage ditches and creeks/streams/etc.... Take time in advance of delivery to make sure your site is appropriate and won’t contribute to issues with neighbors or lead to water quality concerns.

Product analysis in Southeast Kansas a few years ago showed some variability across products (it’s always a good idea to confirm product analysis prior to purchase/pricing), with an ‘average’ value of around 56-53-46. Turkey and broiler products tend to be higher analysis. Layer, pullet, and breeder products trend a little lower. About half of the nitrogen will be available in year one (in cool season grass systems, it will be lower due to the reduced time for mineralization to occur). Potassium availability is close to 100 percent, with other secondary and micronutrients provided as well.

Phosphorous availability is based on soil test levels, but most of our soils would typically result in half of that P number available as well. Because phosphorous levels are a concern for surface water contamination, make sure you know soil test levels prior to application, then base application rates on crop P needs, rather than N requirements.

If considering poultry litter as a fertilizer source, check out this KSU Agronomy eUpdate for information: https://eupdate.agronomy.ksu.edu/article_new/nutrient-availability-in-poultry-manure-469-2 or request a copy from any of our District Offices.

Excluding Rabbits

As vegetation availability declines going into winter, rabbits and other wildlife need to eat. Often, that comes at the expense of small trees and shrubs. To avoid the frustration of having your hard work sacrificed to feed them, now is a great time to work on excluding rabbits and other pests from those new plantings.

One of the most effective exclusion solutions is one-inch mesh chicken wire or a similar barrier at least two feet tall. It can be removed come spring – or left for an extended period of time, so long as it’s monitored and will be removed before it constricts the tree’s trunk.

Don’t want to mess with physical barriers? Plastic tree wraps might be a possibility, though they won’t likely be as effective as the wire mesh and will need to be appropriately anchored. Repellants are also a possibility so long as they are reapplied after a rain.

Landscape and windbreak plantings take a lot of work to get started. Plan now to protect them so you aren’t replanting again next year.