

# CONSERVATION Showcase

## Dad Had the Paperwork Everywhere

What is positive about comprehensive nutrient management plans (CNMPs)? Listen to Linda Armstrong from Dona Ana County who is a true believer.

Armstrong is the daughter of a local dairyman, and environmental consultant for five dairies that are owned by or affiliated with the family. In addition she has developed the CNMP for yet another dairy in the county.

“CNMPs are a good way to keep track of all the paperwork,” Armstrong said. “It helps to keep us in compliance.”

Armstrong is referring to the detailed records of operations that are required by the New Mexico Environmental Department and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Being a true daughter, she reports that her dad had the paperwork scattered everywhere and that the CNMP is helpful in keeping this material organized and in one place. As a result she likes the format of the CNMP. She also likes the map component.

“Maps are helpful for planning,” she said.

According to Armstrong the maps help keep track of planning for different areas of the dairy, and she develops a new map with each new plan.

Armstrong received her CNMP training in Albuquerque in January 2005. She reports it takes approximately 15 to 16 hours of her workweek to develop a new CNMP, and on average she spends eight hours a week on CNMPs that are already developed and only need managing and maintenance.



“CNMPs really break down the irrigation limits of wastewater on fields in relation to soils and crops, and make determinations much more understandable,” Armstrong said.

Her dairies test both the wastewater and soils for nutrient levels. The job sheet helps her determine the irrigation limits. Two of the dairies she works with have sprinkler systems on alfalfa, oats, and barley. Each time they replant they do Job Sheet 590 and determine how much wastewater can safely be applied to each field. This allows them to track the amount of nutrients being placed on the soil. They take daily meter readings so they know exactly how much they have applied.

“It tells us how many gallons of wastewater we can apply to that crop,” said Armstrong.

The advantage to her approach according to Armstrong is that the dairyman can focus on the dairy, while she keeps up with all the paperwork that is in one easy format.