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Commentary

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Scope of environmental management systems and pollution control

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INTRODUCTION

Environmental Management Systems (EMS) is a technique for enhancing a company's environmental and economic performance. They're widely used in a variety of industries, and they're becoming more common in agriculture. An Environmental Management System (EMS) is a method for incorporating environmental considerations and requirements into a farm's day-to-day operations and long-term planning.

This management method looks at a production system from beginning to end, from inputs to outputs. With an EMS, the owner/operator and employees create a plan of action that is tailored to their specific needs and resources, builds on their stewardship principles, complies with legal requirements, and strives to improve the operation on a continuous basis.

An EMS does not replace regulations; however, it can assist in achieving compliance or realising other benefits such as reduced environmental liability and improved management. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) encourages the use of EMSs as a way to improve regulatory compliance, encourage environmental performance, and possibly reduce regulatory burden.

The term 'adaptive management' refers to a new concept that is very similar to an EMS. Check out a recorded symposium presentation on opportunities for adaptive grazing management in drought-stricken areas, as well as an archived webinar on Adaptive Nutrient Management.

The EMS process was created for industry and is now widely used in manufacturing around the world. ISO 14001 is the most well-known system, which includes third-party certification and formal auditing. The farmer needs a systematic method of managing his or her operation as farms become larger and more complex, relying on more employees and outsourcing more services. Although formal certification is not required, the EMS process and principles can assist farmers in improving their environmental and economic performance. Ag EMS Publications are designed specifically for agriculture and are easy to implement on the farm.

The EMS model follows a proven successful management process of Plan, Implement, Check and Correct, and Review. The planning process begins with the establishment of a farm/ environmental ranch's policy, which outlines the farmer's commitment to environmental stewardship, regulatory compliance, and continuous improvement.

Environmental policy statement

An EMS policy statement identifies the environmental principles that are important to you and sets out your management objectives. Everyone who works on your farm should be aware of the policy statement and share a commitment to it. You can display this statement in public to show your commitment to the environment. At the very least, an EMS policy statement should state your commitment to:

- •Pollution prevention
- •Continual improvement
- •Compliance with environmental regulation

Pollution control

There is widespread agreement that pollution of our air, water, and land must be controlled, but there is considerable disagreement about how controls should be designed and how much control is sufficient. In the United States, pollution control mechanisms have tended toward detailed REGULATION of technology, giving polluters little choice in how to meet environmental goals. This "command-and-control" strategy raises pollution control costs unnecessarily and may even stifle progress toward a cleaner environment.

In 1970, public concern about environmental degradation coalesced into a major political force, resulting in President Richard Nixon's establishment of the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the passage of the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1970, the first of several major federal attempts to

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regulate pollution directly. Since then, the federal government's role in pollution regulation has expanded dramatically, giving the EPA a slew of new regulatory responsibilities as well as a slew of new regulations to local governments and businesses. However, as environmentalists have increasingly realised, markets can work to efficiently allocate pollution reduction responsibilities among firms and across industries, this has begun to change. Although command-and-control approaches to pollution control are still the norm, environmental lobbyists and legislators have considered market-based approaches on occasion. For example, most proposals for limiting GLOBAL WARMING explicitly include market-based approaches to carbon dioxide emissions control.