

2019 CEAP Grantee Spotlight: L.F. Hurtubise and Sons Farm



The manure injector in action on a fall day in late October at L.F. Hurtubise & Sons land in Montgomery. The Hurtubises have found that their new equipment enables them to incorporate manure more effectively in both spring and fall, with a significant reduction of tillage.

By the Numbers

1 manure injector

400+ acres per year

\$52,774 awarded
(90% cost-share)

\$5,864 farm invested in
innovative equipment

Recipient

L. F. Hurtubise and Sons Farm, located on the border of Canada in Richford, VT, is a family farm founded in 1946 by Lyle F. Hurtubise. Lyle's sons and grandsons continue to farm and have grown this family operation to one of the largest farms in Vermont. They currently crop over 900 acres of grass and 600 acres of corn, much of which lies directly along the Missisquoi and Trout Rivers in the Lake Champlain basin. L.F. Hurtubise & Sons Farm applied for CEAP funding to upgrade their manure management twice, once in 2018 and once in 2019, and were funded on their second attempt.

Grant Award

\$53,000 for a manure injector toolbar

Funding Source

Capital Equipment Assistance Program (CEAP)

Intent

L.F. Hurtubise & Sons applied to CEAP to assist them to purchase a manure injection system to mount on their pre-existing manure spreaders. Manure injectors incorporate manure directly into the ground, a practice which drastically reduces runoff and nitrification, limits the need for extra tillage, and decreases compaction. The system the Hurtubise Farm implemented was intended to help them achieve the water quality reduction goals set out in their Nutrient Management Plan (NMP), reduce tillage on lower lying sections of their farm that were more prone to runoff, and to improve their relations with neighbors, who frequently complained about their manure spreading practices.

Impact

L.F. Hurtubise and Sons purchased their manure injector in the spring of 2019. They immediately used it on over 400 acres of corn and were able to see its benefits right off the bat. With the manure injector, the Hurtubises no longer need to incorporate manure into the ground with tillage. They have found that this decreases soil disturbance and reduces the number of truck passes over the field, minimizing compaction. The manure injector also enables them to get their manure into the ground faster, capturing nutrients and reducing runoff.

In addition, they Hurtubises have found that their new manure system speeds up their manure-spreading, enabling them to more take advantage of short windows of good weather and opening the opportunity for increased cover-cropping. The spring was unseasonably wet, and they were able to safely spread manure with the injection system a lot of days they would otherwise not have been able to get on the fields. It has also decreased the number of complaints from neighbors since injection reduces the smell of liquid manure spreading.

According to Wayne Hurtubise, a co-owner of L.F. Hurtubise and Sons, the farm hopes to use the manure injector on even more land in future years. They also foresee that their new manure injection system could be incorporated with a reduced tillage/cover-cropping system in the long-term, which would further reduce phosphorus runoff and improve their stewardship of the land and surrounding waters.

Manure injection systems are “a good investment for the environment, and the people you live near” Wayne concluded. He can see a time when every farmer in VT could use this type of system. Even so, he added, “it’s a hard investment to make without a grant,” since the high cost of innovative manure systems put them out of reach of the average farmer. Thankfully for L.F. Hurtubise and Sons, their neighbors, CEAP grants make this type of investment possible for farmers like Wayne.

“It’s a good investment for the environment and the people you live near... [but] it’s a hard investment to make without a grant.”

– Wayne Hurtubise, co-owner of L.F. Hurtubise & Sons Farm



The manure injection bar, ready to start another field. The silver wheels at the front of the equipment (left) dig a small trench, which liquid manure is then dropped into by a plastic tube (hidden in this photo). The wheels towards the rear (right, with the orange attachments) then push the disturbed dirt back over the trench to cover the manure. This technique dramatically reduces soil disturbance.