

NATURE'S DEODORANT?

By Melissa Lehman, Agronomic Solutions, LLC

Phone 574-202-2608

In 2000, many farms in Delaware, Virginia and Maryland switched to new ventilation systems, causing much more dust and odors to waft out to the surrounding communities.

In an effort to cut the nuisance emissions of dust, ammonia, and odors and to reduce neighbor complaints, scientists embarked on a 6-year project to examine the ability of various tree species to filter the smells and particulates. They found that planting just three rows of trees reduced emissions of dust 53%, ammonia by 56% and helped kill 18% of the odors.

In addition to blocking out odors and emissions, the trees helped reduce noise and, more importantly, improved the area's water quality by filtering pollutants from soil and groundwater. *Sounds like a win-win-win strategy!*

One concern was that it takes years for trees to grow to become effective in filtering. However, some species of trees can grow as much as 8—10 feet in one year. Planting trees demonstrates that the animal grower is being proactive to address potential concerns of neighbors. He is giving the farm a landscaped appearance and increasing property values. The living filter system has other benefits. It conserves energy by increasing shade and cooling in the summer and acts as a buffer to reduce heating costs in the winter. Trees remove from view the cause of the odor. Often times, what people cannot see they cannot smell. Consider this when planning the placement of a new barn. Also keep in mind that in our area odors usually travel north to northeast. Trees need to be planted accordingly.

For more odor control strategies, contact me. I have a computer program for Odor Control. I would be glad to help you find some sort of solution to this problem that annoys so many people around you. NRCS provides cost share for establishing wind breaks, so contact your local NRCS DC today.

