

Natural Resources

CAFOs must apply for discharge permit

By NATALIE RECTOR



LARGE concentrated animal feeding operations need to apply for the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit by July 1. All large CAFOs in the

state have already been required to comply under one of the initial permits, and a few have individual permits that will expire on their specific five-year timetable. But for the majority, it is time to apply for the next permit.

Most Large CAFOs were under the permit number MIG44000, which ran from Jan. 1, 2003, to Dec. 31, 2007. With this permit expiring at the end of the year, July 1 is the deadline to apply for the next one as administered through the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality.

The permit that large CAFOs may apply for has actually been in existence since 2005. Therefore, producers signing up for this one will join it in midstream, as it will expire on April 1, 2010.

Large CAFOs have the option to apply for an individual permit, which would expire five years from the time of issuance. One reason for considering an individual permit is that the general permit requires six months of storage for all manure and polluted waters, and this needs to be in place within three years. An individual permit would allow

Key Points

- CAFOs need to apply for a discharge permit by July 1.
- Large CAFOs have the option to apply for an individual permit.
- Manure or polluted runoff from livestock operations cannot reach state waters.

for producers to ask for a less-storage requirement if they can demonstrate they can do so without the risk of a discharge.

Confused yet? The actual permit can be found at the DEQ Web site at www.michigan.gov/deq. It can also be found a little easier via the www.maeap.org site; select "Regulations" from the Quick Links area.

What's 'large' for a CAFO?

A large CAFO, which is required to apply for either the general or individual permit, is any animal feeding operation that stables or confines animals for 45 days in any 12-month period and vegetation doesn't normally grow in the confinement area.

A CAFO is considered "large" if it has one of the following number of animals:

- 700 mature dairy cattle, including milking and dry
- 1,000 veal calves
- 1,000 cattle other than mature dairy cows or veal calves (This includes heifers, steers, bulls and cow-calf pairs.)

- 2,500 swine, each weighing 55 pounds or more
- 10,000 swine each weighing less than 55 pounds
- 500 horses
- 10,000 sheep or lambs
- 55,000 turkeys
- 125,000 chickens, not laying hens, with a nonliquid manure system
- 82,000 laying hens with a non-liquid manure system

If a farm has the number listed above, or more, in any one category, they are classified as a large CAFO and required to apply for the permit. In previous permits, the categories were added. Hog and beef operations were added together, and the manure dairy and young stock were added together.

However, that is not how numbers are counted in the MIGO19000 permit. Under the current system, if a dairy farm has 699 milking and dry cows and 999 young stock, it is not a large CAFO. If there are 701 milking and dry cows, that 701, by itself, puts them into the large-CAFO status.

What constitutes one facility?

All the livestock in one of the above categories from one facility need to be counted. So the next question is: What constitutes "one" facility? Two or more livestock facilities that are under common ownership are considered to be one facility if they adjoin each other, or they use a common area or system for land applications of waste.

If the production area where the livestock are confined are across the road from one another, they would still be considered one facility because an easement, such as the road, is not considered a separation between production areas.

Another way a farm is considered one facility, even when at two sites, is if it uses the same land base for land application.

Impact on smaller farms

The Clean Water Act states the bottom line is all farms of all species of all sizes are not to allow manure or any type of polluted runoff to reach waters of the state.

Stated specifically: A small- or medium-sized livestock operation can be designated a significant contributor and required to apply for a permit if pollutants are discharged into waters of the state through a man-made ditch, flushing system or other similar man-made device, or pollutants are discharged directly into water of the U.S., which originate outside of and pass over, across or through the facility, or come into contact with confined animals. It is important for any facility to not have a discharge.

Information for this column is based on DEQ material distributed at the CAFO meeting in Lansing on March 14.

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Springtime pleasures and reflecting on the past

By NOVAJEAN



THE April showers brought out the May flowers, and they are a welcome sight.

The Dutch bulbs that have naturalized here were absolutely gorgeous.

Moving my gardens — including tulips, daffodils, narcissus and hyacinth, but not my beautiful lilacs — here from my former home has been a challenge, but the terrain provides a fantastic canvas for creating a natural looking, but well-planned, landscape.

My focus is on the area's historical plants along with heirloom herbs, edible flowers, fruits and vegetables. I also am selecting plants that attract birds. With the creek, the flowing well and the neighbor's beautiful ponds, it should be a bird paradise. Once it is done, I look forward to serving lunches to my groups of ladies again, as well as my retreat guests. It is not a farm, and I will always have a love of farming, but I can still teach and demonstrate home-steading from a woman's perspective.

Skipper, my new dog, is finally settling down, and at least learning to trust me and tolerate the cat. They are great buddies when sleeping together, but not yet ready to play together.

Skipper does not handle being left alone and has become overly protective of me. When you watch him, you can see the same behavior issues as seen in

Life & Times of Grandma Noe'

humans who have been abused. I hope he reaches a point of trusting all who come here. His understanding of his commands is phenomenal, but he hides his treats until I sit down for the evening and then he will get them to eat.

The editor for this publication is probably as appreciative of my new computer and me being back online as I am. Deciphering my handwriting to transcribe it into something legible for you to read had to be a challenge for her. It amazes me how much we have all become so dependent upon this technology even if we do not want to be.

While visiting with a granddaughter this week, we were discussing some of the changes she has seen in her short life. Reviewing the changes in my lifetime were amazing to her, and I must say to myself when reflecting on it aloud.

As a girl in grade school it was rare and exciting to see a jet's contrail. Now it is almost eerie if you were to look at the sky and not see many crisscrossing the skyline.

And the number of highways and cars! When expressways like U.S. 127 were opened, we thought travel was too fast with too many autos. Now, they are talking six- and 12-lane highways to

keep up with it all! Trains were still a big form of transportation, but they are also going by the wayside.

When I reminisced about going to the Upper Peninsula by ferryboat, my granddaughter wanted to know why we didn't go across the bridge. When I told her it was before it was built, I think she thought I lived in the time of the mast-odons by the way she looked at me and had to ponder that concept. I had

always thought about all the changes my grandparents had seen; now mine look at me like that. Guess I really am getting old. That means the best is yet to be, right?

Life can only be understood by looking backward, but must be lived looking forward.

Nova Jean writes from Ionia. Her new address is Morning Glory Farm, 964 Bellamy Road, Ionia, MI 48846.

Shutter Stopper



Farming the Amish way

Faye Elle Jarman of Farwell took this photo of her Amish neighbor, Morval Swarey, planting. She says, "It was a beautiful day, and the horses were quite a sight to see!" Do you have a rural photo to share? Michigan Farmer would like to feature your favorite "rural life" photo on this page. It can be people, places or things. Send photos to Michigan Farmer, 710 W. Park St., St. Johns, MI 48879. Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want the photo returned. You also can send them electronically to jvincent@farmprogress.com. Tell us who took the picture and briefly explain the subject matter and where and when it was taken. We look forward to sharing your photos with readers.