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AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERING
FACT SHEET No. 17—Revised 1982
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Feedlot Regulations for the Poultry and Livestock Industries

QUICK FACTS

A feedlot permit or certificate of compliance is required for any dairy, swine, beef, or poultry feeding and raising operation that fits any of the following categories:

- began operation after December 1979;
- expanded existing animal operation after December 1979;
- modified existing operation or constructed new facilities (but did not increase animal numbers) after December 1979; or
- changed ownership (but did not increase animal numbers) after December 1979.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

• **Is agriculture singled out as needing permits?**

No. Agriculture is only one of many industries and businesses that face pollution control regulations.

• **What regulations apply to animals raised in Minnesota?**

Rules for the control of pollution from animal feedlots were developed by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and went into effect in December 1979. These regulations protect against pollution from domesticated animals.

• **What is pollution?**

Pollution is the presence of certain types and quantities of substances in water, air, or soil that degrade the natural quality of this water, air, or soil by impairing its usefulness or making it offensive to sight, taste, or smell.

• **What are pollutants from agriculture?**

Animal manures, agricultural chemicals, and soil sediment are the most common agricultural pollutants.

• **Do animal manures necessarily cause pollution?**

No. Animal manures must get into surface or ground water to cause pollution. Used properly, animal manures supply valuable plant nutrients.

• **Why are animal manures a pollution hazard?**

Consider four primary reasons:

Nutrients—Animal manures contain nutrients that fertilize and enrich surface waters. This leads to a condition called eutrophication, which creates nuisance growths of aquatic plants.

Oxygen-consuming substances—The organic matter in animal manures is broken down by microorganisms in water. Microorganisms use oxygen from the water. They can deplete the available dissolved oxygen necessary for fish and aquatic life when they are provided with the additional food from manure.

Bacteriological quality—Excess bacteria can make surface waters unsafe for domestic use and for swimming and other bodily contact. Such contamination also can make water supplies unfit for domestic use.

Suspended solids—Organic solids can create excessive cloudiness, odor, and discoloration in water. The suspended matter may settle in lakes and streams. This can clog channels, making water shallow.

Nitrate nitrogen from manure may enter ground water, rendering a domestic water supply unsafe. Nitrate nitrogen levels greater than 10 milligrams per liter are unsafe for infants and for elderly adults in poor health. Young domestic animals may become ill from drinking such water.

• **What agency is responsible for Minnesota's environmental quality?**

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency is empowered to establish rules and regulations concerning the environment.

• **What is a livestock feedlot?**

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency feedlot regulations say that a "livestock feedlot shall mean the confined feeding, breeding, raising, or holding of livestock in enclosures specifically designed as confinement areas in which animal manure may accumulate." This includes dairy barns, beef feedlots, swine pens, chicken houses, turkey houses, and horse stables, but it does not include areas normally used for pasture or crops.

• **Is feedlot size a factor?**

There is no minimum size constituting a feedlot. However, permits are required only for facilities having more than 10 animal units.

• **Are turkeys on pasture included in the feedlot regulations?**

Yes. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency regulations say that a "poultry lot shall mean (a) the place of confined feeding, hatching, raising, or holding of poultry."

try in enclosures, yards, or pens where animal manure may be accumulated; or (b) range areas not normally used for pasture or crops, in which animal manure may accumulate and be carried directly or indirectly to waters of the state or constitute a potential pollution hazard."

- **What regulations are now in effect?**

Permits or certificates are required for changes in feedlots. New barns on existing feedlots are especially important. You should obtain feedlot permit or certificate of compliance before investing in feedlot changes or additions. Pollution control plans and facilities must be approved by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Permit application forms are available from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Water Quality Division, 1935 West County Road B-2, Roseville, MN 55113, or regional offices in Marshall, Rochester, Duluth, Fergus Falls, and Brainerd can provide information.

- **When will a certificate of compliance be issued?**

A certificate of compliance will be issued in lieu of a permit when the permit application reveals that no potential pollution hazard exists and the manure will be used as domestic fertilizer.

- **Does an existing feedlot need a permit?**

An existing feedlot that is polluting or has pollution potential requires a permit after the owner submits plans to control the pollution hazard.

- **Does this mean every farmer must immediately apply for a permit?**

No. Many operators can handle manure with no pollution hazard to rivers and streams. Farmers using proper recycling methods to fertilize crops are reducing pollution potential. When changes are made in the waste handling methods or facilities are modified, a permit should be obtained.

- **How much does a permit cost?**

There is no fee.

- **What information is required on the permit application?**

The application form asks you to state your plans for controlling pollution. You may wish to retain a consulting engineer to design a pollution control management program or facilities.

- **Will every farm be inspected?**

No. Inspections are made on request or after a complaint.

- **Do I have to pay all the costs of protecting the environment?**

Tax credits are available for pollution control facilities such as tanks, slats, lagoons, dikes, or liquid handling equipment. Real estate used for pollution control may be exempt from real estate taxes. Obtain *Tax Benefits for Animal Pollution Control*, Agricultural Engineering Fact Sheet 20, from the Bulletin Room, 3 Coffey Hall, University of Minnesota, 1420 Eckles Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108.

- **Can I get a permit locally?**

Some counties are participating in a program to help permit applicants. A county feedlot officer is designated to help fill out forms, give guidance, and process applications. Check your county offices for information.

- **Should I get the permit before I build or after I build?**

Get the permit before building. Changes can be made in plans much less expensively than in finished buildings.

- **What assistance is available to solve pollution problems?**

—Cooperators in soil conservation districts may receive technical assistance from the Soil Conservation Service (SCS). The SCS engineers have designed numerous pollution abatement structures in Minnesota.

—The Agricultural Extension Service has information on planning total facilities for handling livestock. This includes waste, feed, animals, labor, and management. Standard plans are available for different types and sizes of livestock facilities, and information is available concerning soils, costs, and zoning.

—The University of Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station has information from its research programs. The most direct and closest information source is your county extension office, which has the Midwest Plan Service catalog showing available waste management plans.

- **How can I get a complete copy of the rules that apply to animal-producing farms?**

Write to the Documents Section, Department of Administration, 117 University Ave., St. Paul, MN 55155. Ask for *Pollution Control Agency Rules on Animal Feedlots* — 6MCAR 4.8051. This is a single publication. A check or money order for \$2.10, payable to State of Minnesota, Documents Division, must accompany your order. Tax and the handling fee are included in the \$2.10 fee. You can call the Documents Section at (612) 297-3000 for more information.