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AFO PERMIT REQUIREMENTS FOR POULTRY OPERATIONS HANDLING DRY MANURE

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In August of 2003, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) approved new Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GaEPD) animal feeding operations (AFO) regulations for some dry manure poultry operations. These new State regulations were passed to meet revised federally mandated AFO rules that brought dry manure poultry operations under permitting requirements. A dry manure poultry operation is one that does not utilize a liquid manure handling system (i.e. flush or lagoon system).

Large AFO Definitions. Georgia's new AFO regulations require that large dry manure poultry operations be permitted and regulated by GaEPD. Large dry manure handling AFOs for poultry are defined as a facility that confines or maintains poultry for at least 45 days in any 12 month period in the following numbers:

1. 125,000 or more chickens or broilers (includes pullets and breeders)
2. 82,000 or more laying hens (includes table egg layers and pullets)
3. 30,000 or more ducks
4. 55,000 or more turkeys

Two or more AFOs under common ownership are considered to be a single operation and subject to permitting if they adjoin each other or if they use a common area or system for the disposal of the manure. Operations below the above indicated thresholds are not required to have NPDES permits unless they are deemed to be a non point source of pollution by EPD.

Requirements for Permitting. Requirements for AFO permitting by GaEPD for dry manure handling poultry operations that meet the above definitions are:

- a. Owners of existing dry manure AFOs meeting the above definitions must apply for a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit by October 31, 2005. Any person who proposes to commence operation of a new poultry AFO that handles dry manure or any person who proposes to expand an existing operation to exceed the minimum number of birds for a permitted AFO must obtain an NPDES permit. Permit applications should be submitted 180 days in prior to beginning operation of the AFO.
- b. For existing poultry AFOs, there shall be no discharge of process wastewater pollutants from the

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operation or manure storage area into surface waters of the State unless a catastrophic rainfall event (25-year, 24 hr storm) occurs. For new or expanded operations there shall be no discharge of process wastewater pollutants from the operation or manure storage areas into surface waters of the State except when a catastrophic rainfall event (100 year, 24 hr storm) occurs.

c. A comprehensive nutrient management plan (CNMP) must be prepared and implemented not later than October 31, 2006. The CNMP will be maintained on the farm and **shall not be submitted to GaEPD except upon written request by the Division.** The owner of a new AFO shall prepare and implement a CNMP concurrent with the beginning of operation of the AFO. **CNMPs for permitted AFOs require assessment of risks related to phosphorous application.** In Georgia, the use of a **P-Index** will be used to assess site-specific risks for phosphorous application and to identify changes in management practices for high risk sites. For non-permitted poultry operations participating in the State's industry-sponsored CNMP program, the use of the P-Index is strongly encouraged. **For dry manure poultry operations, the CNMP does not have to be prepared by a certified planner but may instead be developed by a person trained in the subject by an academic or trade organization.**

d. A setback of 100 feet between waste disposal areas and drainage ditches, surface water bodies or wetlands must be maintained. The owner may, however, substitute a 35 feet wide vegetative buffer as an alternative to the 100 feet setback.

e. Soil samples from the waste disposal fields will be collected and monitored for phosphorous content at a minimum of once every five years.

f. Poultry litter/manure analysis for nitrogen and phosphorous content will be required at a minimum on an annual basis.

g. Permitted operations must submit an annual report to GaEPD as specified in the permit.

h. For poultry operations which have been excluded from all permit requirements, GaEPD will collect information such as location and industry developed (voluntary) CNMP implementation from the Georgia Department of Agriculture and other organizations.

Complying with the new State regulations for AFO permitting for dry manure poultry operations should not be difficult for most poultry producers. Georgia poultry producers have been implementing nutrient management plans on a voluntary basis as part of the Georgia Poultry Federation and University of Georgia CNMP program since 1999. Those individuals implementing these programs should be in good position to meet State permitting requirements. Regardless of whether operations meet the requirements for State permitting, all poultry producers in Georgia should be operating from a comprehensive nutrient management plan. **EPD will be monitoring all poultry farms for the implementation of CNMPs.**

Your local County Extension Office, Natural Resource Conservation Service, or Soil and Water Conservation Commission can assist you with development of a CNMP for your farm.



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