

Is That AFO a CAFO?

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Nebraska ...the bread basket of America. It's history and strength are built upon agriculture. Hundreds of communities throughout Nebraska are surrounded by agriculture and livestock operations. It's our way of life. Like everywhere else in the world, surrounding land and water activities have the potential to impact the quality of our water supply systems.

Feedlots over the years have become more region-specific and larger in size. Because of the industry shift, to keep up with present technology, as well as address public expectations, the EPA made major revisions to the Animal Feeding Operations portion of the Clean Water Act and has developed new licensing and permitting requirements for feedlots.

Animal Feeding Operations (AFO), confine animals in barns or open lots that do not support natural vegetation, row crops or forage crops during the normal season **AND** confine them for more than 45 days in a 12-month period. A **Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO)** is an AFO but contains animal numbers above a determined level or it has been determined the operation is a significant contributor of pollutants to waters of the United States.

Feedlots classified as CAFO's are point sources of pollution and must operate under a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination Permit issued through and regulated by the Nebraska DEQ.

In addition, all CAFO's are required to develop and implement a **Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP)**.

These changes in the size, permit requirements and regulation of CAFO's will prove to be a very good change for Nebraska Water Operators who are charged with the task of providing clean, safe water to consumers.

As of December 31, 2006, EPA/DEQ will require the following records from CAFO's:

- √ Results from manure, litter, and process water and soil sampling.
- √ Test methods used to sample and analyze soil and manure, litter, or process wastewater.
- √ Dates manure, litter, or process wastewater is applied to each field.
- √ Weather conditions at the time of application and 24 hours before and after application.
- √ Explanation of the basis for determining manure application rates.
- √ Calculations showing the total nitrogen (N) and phosphorous (P) to be applied to each field, including sources other than manure, litter, or process water.
- √ Total amount of N and P applied to each field, including documentation of calculations for the total amount applied.
- √ Methods used to apply the manure, litter or process water.
- √ Dates of manure application equipment inspection.

The CNMP is a USDA-defined plan that:

- * *minimizes nutrient excretion.*
- * *ensures proper storage of manure and manure-contaminated water.*
- * *specifies the application of manure rates at agronomic rates.*
- * *requires the maintaining of appropriate records (for a minimum of five years).*

