

Part II: Nutrient Management Proposals Challenge Farming

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They are expected soon. According to a report in the Jan. 23 issue of the DEP UPDATE newsletter, "The new policy will require full environmental permits for large operations along with opportunities for public review and comment and a more simplified set of rules for smaller operations.

"Over the past few months, there has been confusion over how the environmental impacts of large livestock feeding operations are regulated in Pennsylvania," DEP Secretary James Seif stated in the newsletter. "We hope the policy we announced ... will clear up that confusion and help us put in place a longer range strategy for dealing with these facilities over the next few months."

What it means is that the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has adopted an interim policy, until a new policy is adopted, that would allow increased public awareness and participation in the awarding of environmental permits to those seeking to build or expand concentrated animal operations (CAOs) for a s).

A CAO is a Pennsylvania term for a large-density livestock production operation. The EPA refers to them as Concentrate Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) and Animal Feeding Operations

(AFOs).

A CAO is a high-density livestock operations sited on farmland with too little available cropland or land in vegetative state to assimilate the nutrients available in the manure produced by the operations.

Pennsylvania's law does not discourage such facilities, it merely requires the operators to think through their operation, consider all the environmental impacts, and make some plan for implementing practices that control the flow of nutrients so as to prevent them from becoming a source of excessive nutrients in water.

What the EPA has proposed in its draft strategy (available for complete review on the EPA internet homepage at <http://www.epa.gov/owm>) is to consider animal feeding operations as "point sources" or pollution, requiring NPDES permits.

DEP's Young said that while the revised permits for agriculture will not actually indicate that there is any discharge coming from the animal feeding operations, the permit is still being required.

She also said that Pennsylvania is negotiating with EPA to allow as much of the state's program to remain intact. For example, while the EPA has designated management requirements for farms that pose a threat of releasing polluting loads of nutrients into waterways, DEP has proposed that Pennsylvan-

nia considers only those farms that are defined by the state as CAOs to fall within that realm, thereby attempting to prevent a situation in which every farm would receive state and federal permitting oversight.

Under the interim policy, new concentrated animal feeding operations with 1,000 animal equivalent units of more will have to:

- Have a nutrient management plan required by the state Nutrient Management Act.

- Have a Chapter 102 erosion and sedimentation control plan.

- If the project involves and earth disturbance of five acres or more, an NPDES permit for storm-water discharge (during the construction phase).

- If a manure handling facility has a storage lagoon or other structure is built, a Part II water quality permit will be required and the facility will have to meet siting, design, monitoring and operational standards. A full NPDES water quality permit will also be required covering similar environmental concerns.

- The public will have the opportunity to be involved in reviewing both the Part II and the full NPDES water quality permit as well as opportunities for public hearings. Public notice of proposed facilities will go to local officials and be published in local newspapers and the Pennsylvania Bulletin.

While there is much more to the full story behind all of the changes, those interested in reading the details can learn more by visiting the EPA website or the Pennsylvania DEP Internet site at www.dep.state.pa.us.

Those wishing to comment on the EPA draft strategy on Animal Feeding Operations have until May 1, 1998 to submit comments to: Ruby Cooper-Ford, National AFO Program Manager, U.S. Environ-

mental Protection Agency, 401 M Street, S.W., Mail Code 4203, Washington DC 20460.

Or they can be sent via electronic mail at Ford.Ruby@epamail.epa.gov.

Lancaster County Conservancy Receives Funds

CONOY TOWNSHIP (Lancaster Co.) — On behalf of Gov. Tom Ridge, state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Deputy Secretary Karen Deklinski recently presented Lancaster County Conservancy members with a \$136,000 ceremonial check from the Land Trust Grant Program to acquire land in Conoy, Martic and Providence townships, Lancaster County.

"These grants are an important part of the Ridge Administration's work to preserve and conserve Pennsylvania's precious natural resources," Deklinski said. "Through these land-trust grants, we are helping the Lancaster County Conservancy to continue its commitment to protecting Pennsylvania's valuable natural areas and open spaces."

The Lancaster County Conservancy received a \$100,000 grant to acquire 83 acres in Martic and Providence townships to expand the Hauer-Trout Run Nature Preserve. They also received a \$36,000 grant for the acquisition of 40 woodland acres surrounding a boulder cave in Conoy Township.

These grants were part of \$3.7 million in funding for 27 state-wide grants through the Keystone Land Trust Grant Program, administered by DCNR. The program is part of the Ridge Administration's Community Conservation Partnership initiative, a four-year, \$75 million grant and technical assistance initiative that provides funding to help communities and non-profit organizations conserve natural and cultural resources, provide outdoor recreation, enhance tourism, and foster community and economic development.

Funded through the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund Act, the grant program provides up to 50 percent of the cost of the project. These 27 grants will acquire more than 9,200 acres of critical habitat and significant open-space areas. Since the program began in 1995, more than \$12.1 million in Keystone funding has been approved to assist with the acquisition of nearly 17,700 acres. An additional \$600,000 has been approved for open space and natural areas planning projects.

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