# Your Dairy And The New CAFO Regulations

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In mid-December 2002, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released its court mandated revisions to the Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) rule. These are the first major changes to the CAFO regulations since the Federal Clean Water Act was passed in the 1970's. The rules include changes to the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitting regulations and technology requirements. EPA estimates the new rules apply to approximately 15,500 livestock operations (dairy, swine, chicken, turkey, beef, veal, horse, sheep, duck) across the country. Nationwide, approximately 3,500 mature dairy and 250 heifer-raising operations are affected.

Similar to the existing CAFO program, any Animal Feeding Operation (AFO) that meets certain criteria will be classified as a CAFO. A mature dairy cow or heifer-raising operation is an AFO if animals are confined for at least 45 days in a 12-month period and there's no grass or other vegetation in the confinement area during the normal growing season. EPA is continuing to focus on large CAFOs (approximately 700-plus mature dairy cows or 1,000-plus heifers) and medium CAFOs (approximately 200-plus mature cows or 300-plus heifers). Permitting authorities also retain the power to designate any size AFO a CAFO if the operation significantly contributes to water quality impairment.

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is responsible for enforcing CAFO regulations in Pennsylvania. DEP will be working with EPA to determine what changes will be made to the existing Pennsylvania CAFO regulations to comply with the new federal rules. The new rules will affect existing permitted CAFOs once the permit expires a new permit is applied for and issued. CAFOs applying for a permit for the first time should contact DEP for more information.

Pennsylvania will likely have approximately one