Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations
Clean Water Act Requirements

What Are the Federal Requirements for Chicken and Turkey CAFOs?

In December 2002, EPA revised the Clean Water Act regulation for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations, or CAFOs. If you own or operate a chicken or turkey CAFO, you must apply for a permit. This pamphlet gives general information about what your permitting authority might require in your CAFO’s permit.

Information Series Pamphlet

Clean Water Act Requirements

Will My Operation Be Regulated?
EPA 833-F-02-006

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How do I contact my permitting authority?
Visit www.epa.gov/npdes/afo/statecontacts for contact information on your permitting authority.

Where can I get copies of these brochures and more information?
Call the Office of Water Resource Center, (202) 566-1729 to request copies of these pamphlets and other documents. Call the CAFO Phone Line at (202) 564-0766 with questions or visit the following EPA or USDA web sites.

EPA:
www.epa.gov/npdes/caforule
www.epa.gov/agriculture

USDA:
www.usda.gov

Photos courtesy of USDA and USEPA OECA
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Is my chicken or turkey operation a CAFO?
Your operation is a CAFO if it is an animal feeding operation (AFO) and it meets one of the following conditions:

- Large CAFOs
  Your chicken or turkey AFO is a Large CAFO if it has at least
  - 55,000 turkeys
  - 30,000 chickens (liquid manure handling systems)
  - 82,000 laying hens (other than liquid manure handling systems)
  - 125,000 chickens except laying hens (other than liquid manure handling systems)

- Medium CAFOs
  Your chicken or turkey AFO is a Medium CAFO if it has at least
  - 16,500 turkeys
  - 9,000 chickens (liquid manure handling systems)
  - 25,000 laying hens (other than liquid manure handling systems)
  - 37,500 chickens except laying hens (other than liquid manure handling systems)
  - a man-made ditch or pipe carries manure or wastewater from your operation or
  - your animals come into contact with surface water running through the area where they’re confined

- Designated CAFOs
  No matter what size your operation is, if it is an AFO, it can be designated a CAFO. If your permitting authority inspects your operation and finds that it’s adding pollutants to surface waters, your operation might need a CAFO permit.

My operation is a CAFO. What do I have to do?
You must apply to your permitting authority for a permit. Most states have the authority to manage CAFO programs and issue permits. State CAFO programs are based on the revised national CAFO regulation. You can use this pamphlet to help you learn about the minimum requirements for a permit. You should contact your permitting authority to find out what your state-specific requirements are and how to apply for a permit. Check the insert to this pamphlet for your permitting authority’s contact information.

What will my operation’s permit require?
Your CAFO permit will require you to meet certain conditions for your production and land application areas. The specific requirements of your permit will depend on whether your operation is a Large, Medium, or designated CAFO.

Requirements for all chicken or turkey CAFOs
You can expect your permit to require you to:
- Implement a nutrient management plan
- Submit annual reports to your permitting authority
- Keep your permit current until you completely close your operation and remove all manure
- Keep records of your nutrient management practices for at least 5 years (See the pamphlet What Are the Federal Record-Keeping and Reporting Requirements?)

Nutrient management plans for all chicken and turkey CAFOs must include provisions for:
- Assuring adequate manure storage capacity
- Proper handling of dead animals and chemicals
- Diverting clean water from the production area
- Keeping animals out of surface water
- Using site-specific conservation practices
- Developing ways to test manure and soil
- Assuring appropriate use of nutrients when you spread manure
- Keeping records of your nutrient management practices
- Your permitting authority might set more requirements for any size CAFO.

Requirements for medium and designated chicken or turkey CAFOs
Your permitting authority might set more requirements for your nutrient management plan. These requirements will depend on the permit writer’s best professional judgment and could be like the requirements for Large chicken or turkey CAFOs.

Requirements for large chicken or turkey CAFOs
Nutrient management plans for Large chicken and turkey CAFOs have more requirements for production and land application areas.

Production area
- Design your production area to contain all of your CAFO’s manure plus the runoff from a 25-year, 24-hour rainfall event (large storms). (Overflows from large storms are allowed only if your operation is designed and operated to meet these specifications.)
- Install depth markers in liquid manure storage structures
- Inspect your production area weekly and all water lines daily
- Correct any problems you find as soon as possible
- Properly handle dead animals

Land application area
- Apply manure at rates that meet your permitting authority’s standards
- Analyze manure for nutrient content at least once a year
- Analyze the soil from your land application fields for phosphorus amounts every 5 years
- Avoid applying manure to any land within 100 feet of surface water
- From time to time, inspect your land application equipment for leaks

Transferring manure to other persons
- Keep records for at least 5 years on the date, recipient, amount, and nutrient content of the manure you transferred
- Information about the nutrient content of your manure must be given to the recipient

New Large chicken CAFOs
Must design your production area to completely contain all manure plus the runoff from all storm events, or to contain manure and runoff from a very large storm. (Overflows are allowed if your operation is designed and operated to meet these specifications.)

Some Large chicken CAFOs may qualify for equivalent discharge allowances. If you use innovative technologies, like treating wastewater in your production area, ask your permitting authority about your options.