Public Meetings

Farm Digester General Permits

April 2022

Department of Environmental Quality
Division of Water Resources
What is a General Permit?
• Examples: Air, Coastal, Stormwater

Animal Feeding Operation General Permits:
• G.S. 143-215.10C “intent of the General Assembly that most animal waste management systems be permitted under a general permit.”
• Three: Swine, Cattle, and Poultry with liquid waste management system
• Utilizes non-discharge methods of waste disposal

• General Permit Requires:
  • Develop and maintain a Certified Animal Waste Management Plan
  • Siting requirements and buffer requirements
  • Testing, inspections and reporting requirements
What is a Farm Digester System?

- System, including equipment, digesters, and lagoon covers that collects and processes gases
- For the digestion of animal waste “for use as a renewable energy resource.”
SB 605  Session Law 2021-78, Section 11

- “The Commission shall develop a general permit for animal operations that includes authorization for the permittee to construct and operate a farm digester system.”
  - Division of Water Resources – Non-Discharge Permits
- Will include current State General Permit conditions – Section 11.(d)
- New Digester General Permits effective within 12 months of Session Law effective date
- Renewals will align with current State General Permits – Section 11.(d)
  - Both General Permit types will expire Sept 30, 2024
NC Farm Act Overview
Limitations on New Digester General Permits

• Not allowed in the 100-year floodplain

• For swine farms:
  • Applies to existing permitted facilities – **not new swine farms**
  • Does not result in an increase in permitted capacity for swine farms – no increase in Steady State Live Weight
  • Complies with the Swine Farm Siting Act requirements
2021 NC Farm Act Overview

• Preserves public process for the Digester General Permits development
  • Stakeholder Public Input
  • Public Notice and Meetings – 15A NCAC 02T .0111
• DWR can require an individual permit when necessary
• Requires final permitting action within 90 days of completed notice of intent (application)
General Permit Development Process

General Permit development has multiple opportunities for public input

Stakeholder Process

• Technical Workgroup Sessions, online – Nov 19 and Dec 7
• Public Input Session, online – Dec 14
• Accepted written comments through Dec 17

Draft Digester General Permits online for public review – Feb 1, 2022

Public Comment Period – Feb 1, 2022 – May 2, 2022

• Four public meetings – 3 in person, 1 online
• Accept oral, written, and electronic comments

General Permit completed by July 1, 2022
General Permit Development Process

**AWG400000** – Swine Animal Feeding Operation utilizing a Farm Digester System
**AWG500000** – Cattle Animal Feeding Operation utilizing a Farm Digester System
**AWG600000** – Poultry Animal Feeding Operation with liquid waste management utilizing a Farm Digester System

Base Documents – 2019 State General Permits
- Include statutory updates – definitions, etc.
- Consider court rulings
General Permit Development

Organize Permit Conditions into following Sections
New Permit Conditions at end of each section

I. Performance Standards
II. Operation and Maintenance
III. Monitoring and Reporting
IV. Inspection and Entry
V. General Conditions
VI. Penalties
VII. Definitions
Important Dates

• February 1, 2022 – Public Notice of Draft Permits Comment Period Opens
• April 5, 2022 – Public Meeting, Kenansville
• April 7, 2022 – Public Meeting, Clinton
• April 19, 2022 – Public Meeting, Statesville
• April 21, 2022 – Online Public Meeting via WEBEX
• May 2, 2022 – Public Comment Period closes
• July 1, 2022 – New General Permits go into effect
Submittal of Public Comments

**Comment period closes: May 2, 2022**

Email: PublicCommentsDWR@ncdenr.gov

Mail: Animal Feeding Operations
NC Division of Water Resources
1636 Mail Service Center
Raleigh NC, 27699-1636

*More information at:*

deq.nc.gov/digesterpermits