

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
DIVISION OF WATER RESOURCES

FACT SHEET ON FARM DIGESTER ANIMAL WASTE
MANAGEMENT SYSTEM STATE GENERAL PERMITS

1. TYPES OF OPERATIONS COVERED

A. Activities Covered by this General Permit

On the basis of an advisory work group, thorough staff review and application of North Carolina Session Law 2021-78, North Carolina G.S. §143-215.10C et seq., and North Carolina Administrative Code Title 15A Subchapter 02T, and other lawful standards and regulations, the North Carolina Environmental Management Commission proposes to create and issue the Non-Discharge Farm Digester General Permits for animal waste operations. It is proposed that these Farm Digester General Permits be issued for the following operations:

General Permit AWG400000 – Swine Operations
General Permit AWG500000 – Cattle and Dairy Operations
General Permit AWG600000 – Poultry Operations with Liquid Waste Management Systems

B. Geographic Area(s) Covered by these General Permits

Animal waste operations covered by these General Permits are located within the political boundary of the State of North Carolina.

C. Types of Wastewater Produced

“Animal waste” will consist of livestock or poultry excreta or a mixture of excreta with feed, bedding, litter, or other materials from an animal operation. (GS 143-215.10B), (15A NCAC 2T .0103)

D. Description of Typical Treatment Facilities.

The animal waste management systems covered by these permits include some type of collection (flush, pit recharge, scraped lots, etc) with transmission ditches or pipes, digesters, lagoons and waste structures to collect, treat and store the waste, capture and use/transfer biogas, irrigation equipment and sufficient acreage for application of the animal waste at agronomic rates. Animal waste is usually applied by using permanent or mobile pumps and piping to traveling gun reel systems or center pivot/linear move systems, but could also use a hose-drag system, a solid set irrigation system, a transportation and application vehicle system such as a honey wagon, and other forms of application systems for the animal waste.

2. BASIS FOR ISSUANCE OF THE GENERAL PERMITS

North Carolina Session Law 2021-78 requires the development of a general permit for animal operations that includes the authorization for the permittee to construct and operate a farm digester system. S.L. 2021-78 further requires that the new farm digester general permits include the conditions as contained in the current (2019) State General Permits for animal operations and that the new permits be effective by July 2, 2022. NCAC 15A 2T .1300 authorizes the operation of the animal waste management systems in this State. The United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) has also developed a series of minimum standards and specifications for animal waste management practices. The NRCS Standards have been adopted by reference in 15A NCAC 2T .1304 (b)(1). The Draft Farm Digester General Permits contain the requirements currently contained in the existing state Non-Discharge General Permits for animal operations with a few additional requirements specific to digesters. Renewal of the Farm Digester General Permits will align with the existing state Non-Discharge General Permits for animal operations, as required by S.L. 2021-78.

The Division held two technical stakeholder workgroup sessions and one public stakeholder input session, that included farmers, representatives of the livestock industry, representatives of environmental protection and natural resources conservation groups, representatives of community-based groups, academia, and other interested parties. These online meetings were conducted to provide input into the development of the Draft Farm Digester General Permits. The information provided through the stakeholder process was a key factor in the development of the current Draft Farm Digester General Permits.

Individual Permits will be required when coverage under a General Permit is not appropriate.

3. THE ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD

The administrative record, including draft permits, fact sheet, and additional information is available for review and copying at the Division of Water Resources, Archdale Building – Room 640-X, 512 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh, North Carolina 27604 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Copies of the Draft Farm Digester General Permits (in English and Spanish), Fact Sheet, Press Releases, Public Notice, Stakeholder summaries and information for the Public Meetings can be found at:

deq.nc.gov/digesterpermits

A copy of the draft animal waste General Permits and fact sheets are also available by writing or calling:

**Ramesh Ravella
Animal Feeding Operations
NC Division of Water Resources
1636 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1636
Telephone number: (919) 707-3702**

4. PROPOSED SCHEDULE FOR ANIMAL WASTE GENERAL PERMITS

February 1, 2022 – Draft General Permits to public notice
April 5, 2022 – Public Meeting – James Sprunt Community College, Kenansville
April 7, 2022 – Public Meeting – Sampson County Exposition Center, Clinton
April 19, 2022 – Public Meeting – Statesville Civic Center, Statesville
April 21, 2022 – Online Public Meeting – WEBEX – deq.nc.gov/digesterpermits for link
July 1, 2022 – General Permits scheduled issuance date

5. EFFECTIVE DATE AND LENGTH OF THE GENERAL PERMIT

The general permits will have an effective date of July 1, 2022 and remain effective until September 30, 2024. Each facility will be covered under an animal waste general permit by issuance of a certificate of coverage.

Comment Period

The comment period for these draft General Permits will last until May 2, 2022. All comments received prior to that date will be considered in the formulation of final determinations with regard to these General Permits. Interested persons are invited to submit written comments on the proposed General Permits to the mailing address below or via email. All comments and requests regarding this matter should make reference to permit numbers AWG400000, AWG500000, and/or AWG600000.

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Or via email:
PublicCommentsDWR@ncdenr.gov