



TEXAS STATE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION BOARD

WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLANS

FOR

POULTRY OPERATIONS

What Are Water Quality Management Plans (WQMPs)?

Water Quality Management Plans (WQMPs) are site-specific conservation plans designed to assist landowners in protecting the environment by remaining in compliance with water quality laws. These plans, in the case of dry-litter poultry operations, include litter management, mortality management, and other soil and water best management practices. These plans are developed by local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs), the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB), or a Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Field Office. Your SWCD and the NRCS approve the WQMP locally, and the TSSWCB certifies that it meets state water quality standards.

Do I Need To Have A WQMP?

Yes. Since 2001, state law has required poultry operations to obtain a TSSWCB-certified WQMP. All poultry farms must now have a WQMP before birds can be placed on the farm.

Do I Need To Have A Permit?

No. The CAFO rules allow dry-litter poultry facilities to operate without a permit if you obtain and follow a Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP) certified by TSSWCB, and do not discharge or propose to discharge pollutants to water in the state of Texas. If you have 125,000 or more broilers or pullets; or 82,000 breeders or laying hens; or 55,000 turkeys, your operation is still defined as a Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO), and as such, you could be required to obtain permit coverage from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). Also, if you confine 37,500 or more broilers or pullets; or 25,000 breeders or laying hens; or 16,500 turkeys in Erath, Bosque, Hamilton, Comanche, Johnson, Hopkins, Wood, or Rains counties you could be required to obtain permit coverage from TCEQ. **Because the larger farms are still defined as CAFOs, you may still be subject to permitting if you do not obtain or follow the WQMP and the Supplemental Guidance for Dry-Litter Poultry Operations. If you do not have a permit and are found to have a discharge to water in the state, you may be subject to enforcement and financial penalties by TCEQ as well as having to obtain a permit to operate. Improper management of animal mortality, applying wastes in improper locations or at improper rates, or failure to obtain appropriate annual soil and litter tests could also result in enforcement and requirement to obtain a permit to operate. To avoid these circumstances, follow closely the guidance in your Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP) and Supplemental Guidance for Dry-Litter Poultry Operations.**

What Is Considered A Discharge?

Any pollutant from a "point source" that leaves your property or enters water in the state. For example, when rainwater comes in contact with a point source such as a litter storage pile, and runoff water from that pile flows onto your neighbor's property or enters water in the state; that would be a discharge and subject to enforcement. Runoff from litter that is applied to a hay field or pasture or other crop in accordance with the Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP) is non-point source runoff and would **NOT** be considered a discharge. Call or write us if you have questions. Contact information is on the reverse side.

What Is "Water In The State"?

According to the CAFO rules in 30 Texas Administrative Code §321.32(58), water in the state includes all surface and groundwater within the boundaries of the state of Texas, including ponds, creeks, streams, lakes, etc. on your property.

(MORE ON REVERSE SIDE)

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Mortality Management

Regardless of whether a poultry operation is required to obtain permit coverage, or is only required to obtain and follow a TSSWCB-certified WQMP, there are poultry mortality requirements under state law that must be followed. All poultry operations **MUST** follow the measures that are prescribed in law for routine dead bird disposal. **Burial and dumping of routine mortality is not legal.** Legal measures for routine die-off include placement in a landfill permitted by the TCEQ to receive municipal or industrial solid waste, composting, cremation or incineration, extrusion, on-farm freezing or refrigeration, rendering, or any other method the TCEQ determines to be appropriate. Catastrophic die-off mortality (0.3% or more of total inventory per day), may be buried, but must be buried in accordance with guidance in your certified WQMP.

Site Assessment of New Poultry Construction or Expansion

Prior to certifying or re-certifying the WQMP, state law requires TSSWCB to assess proposed sites of any new construction or expansion of poultry facilities commenced after September 1, 2009 to determine if the presence of the facility is likely to create a persistent odor nuisance. Contact TSSWCB for more information.

How Do I Request A WQMP?

Contact your local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and request planning assistance for a WQMP. The process for obtaining a WQMP starts with the SWCD. The SWCD arranges for technical assistance for the producer to develop a suitable WQMP. After a WQMP is developed through the SWCD, it will be submitted to the TSSWCB to undergo the review and certification process.

How Do I Contact My Local SWCD?

SWCD boundaries usually match either county or watershed boundaries and are most often co-located with a USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) field office in the local county. If you are unable to locate your SWCD office, you may contact the nearest TSSWCB office for assistance. Additional contact information as well as a map of all Texas SWCDs can be found at the TSSWCB Website at www.tsswcb.texas.gov.

To ask questions or request information, write to us by email at :

poultry@tsswcb.texas.gov

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