

MPCA Feedlot Program update: Online services, 2021-26 general permit, 20th anniversary 'new' feedlot rule

Online registration service for feedlots

Registration of livestock feedlots and manure storage areas with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) is now available through a new online registration service. Paper forms, forms submitted via U.S. mail, and e-mail submittals have been discontinued.



Anyone may use the new service, including feedlot owners, operators, consultants, and county and state inspectors. The online registration service offers several benefits:

- It will be quick and easy to use.
- It can be accessed 24/7 using a computer or smart phone.
- Registrants will receive a confirmation email upon submittal.
- The confirmation email will serve as the registration receipt.

Access to the on-line registration service and instructions is located on the [MPCA e-services webpage](#). Registration includes basic feedlot information such as location, type of operation and number of livestock including poultry. Some counties delegated to administer the feedlot rule may continue to register feedlots and manure storage areas with paper forms.

For more information about feedlot registration, see the MPCA feedlot registration factsheet on the [registration webpage](#), or call your MPCA area office or delegated county feedlot officer listed on these webpages: www.pca.state.mn.us/water/mpca-feedlot-staff-contacts, www.pca.state.mn.us/water/county-feedlot-program.

2021-26 NPDES general permit

The MPCA has made significant progress on responses to the more than 140 comments received during the public notice period for the 2021-26 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) general permit for feedlots. The final proposed permit and response to comments will be posted on the MPCA feedlot permit webpage toward the end of November. The current five-year NPDES general permit expires Jan. 31, 2021. However, it will continue to provide coverage until the new permit is available, providing that current permit holders submit an application before then.

Development is progressing with the online service to apply for the NPDES general permit; however, it is not expected to be available until the spring of 2021. Due to the expected significant improvements in efficiency with the online service, the MPCA will not be taking full applications for coverage under the 2021 general NPDES permit until the online application service is available. However, to ensure coverage under the existing general NPDES extends over this period, the MPCA will ask current permit holders to submit a short and simple pre-application sometime before the end of the year. The MPCA currently is developing the pre-application form and expects to have it available by Dec. 1. Check the MPCA [feedlot program permit page](#) for progress and updates.

'New' feedlot rule 20 years later

This fall marks the 20th anniversary of a major overhaul of Minnesota's rule regulating feedlots. Starting from the first "agricultural waste" rule in 1971, [Chapter 7020](#) evolved in step with major changes in the livestock industry, from most livestock being on thousands of small farms, to a majority now housed at large, concentrated operations.

Over the past 20 years MPCA feedlot program staff have strived to work with livestock producers, providing assistance, inspections and



information, about the rule, permits and environmental practices. Since the early 2000s they have attended livestock conventions and other events to build working relationships, which today are manifest in a livestock industry that overall thrives along with environmental stewardship.

In the wake of the so-called 'hog wars' of the 1990s, an [in-depth study](#) of the state's livestock industry led to a major 7020 rule revision effective in October 2000. Since then, Minnesota's total swine inventory grew from 5.8 million head, to 9.5 million head in 2019. The total beef, dairy, and turkey inventories declined slightly during that time.

As the swine industry grew, so did public opposition to odor and gases emanating from open manure basins. In response, the state Legislature enacted a law banning open swine manure basins. Today, swine barns are built over concrete storage pits, which help contain the air emissions.

With the 2000 rule update, most feedlots were no longer required to have an operating permit, but all are required to register. Permits are required only for those needing work to correct a pollution issue, building or expanding a feedlot to 300 [animal units](#) or more, or with 1,000 animal units or more.