

Statement of Involvement

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Cooperation on the Implementation of the Clean Water Act Regulations for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations

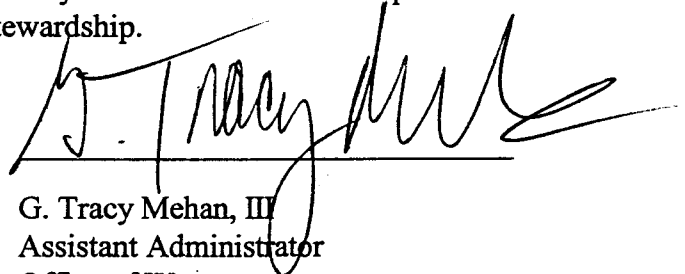
On December 15, 2002, EPA released revisions to its National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit Regulation and Effluent Limitations Guidelines and Standards for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations, 40 CFR Parts 122 and 412 (CAFO Rule). The new regulations, which became effective on April 14, 2003, expand the universe of CAFOs that are required to obtain National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits to address the discharge of pollutants to waters of the United States. A new key element of these permits will be the requirement that CAFOs develop and implement Nutrient Management Plans (NMPs) that address production area and land application area requirements.

It is the responsibility of EPA and State Permitting Authorities to implement and ensure compliance with the CAFO Rule. USDA will assist EPA and States to be aware of the needs of producers in meeting CAFO Rule requirements. USDA has substantial interest in the CAFO Rule implementation because of the Department's role in helping producers to develop and implement Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans (CNMPs) that promote natural resource management and protect water quality. To the extent practicable, USDA will make available technical information, tools and assistance to producers in the development and implementation of CNMPs. USDA and EPA also will cooperate on approaches to assess or measure the effectiveness of environmental improvements that result from implementation of voluntary and regulatory programs. Finally, both agencies share an interest in helping as many animal feeding operations as possible to develop and implement CNMPs voluntarily in order to avoid the operations having conditions that could result in their being defined or designated as a medium or small CAFO.

A joint USDA-EPA Workgroup will continue to work together to foster communication and cooperation between the two agencies as each develops its workplan relative to CAFO Rule implementation. The Workgroup will identify opportunities where each agency can cooperate with the other in carrying out specific workplan action items of mutual interest. The Workgroup also will identify opportunities for the agencies to jointly communicate their workplans to deliver a common message that promotes environmental stewardship.



Mack Gray
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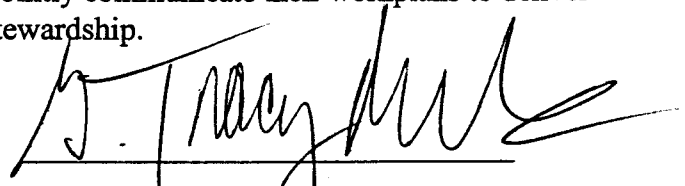
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