

News Release

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Today, the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality is announcing its final permitting action to not renew the statewide general permit for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs). The ADEQ permit decision is rendered in accordance with Arkansas state law that directs the ADEQ to reach a final decision at least 180 days prior to the general permit expiration term of October 31, 2016.

Following the release of the proposed permit renewal, the ADEQ facilitated public comment beginning on March 15, 2016, and a public hearing that took place on April 14, 2016. After extensive review of all comments received, the ADEQ has determined that a renewal of this CAFO general-permit option is not warranted based on the limited use of this particular permitting option. Over the five-year period that this CAFO permit has been available throughout Arkansas, the ADEQ has received only one application.

To maintain an entire permitting program with such minimal use is inconsistent with recent commitments by the ADEQ to increase efficiencies in permit processes and to assure efficient resource allocation. This decision does not affect other environmental permitting programs where general permits have proven to streamline permitting processes based on demonstrated use by multiple facilities with similar operations.

Arkansas statutes provide that facilities that currently operate under the current CAFO general permit will continue to be authorized under the terms of the general permit until such time as a final permitting decision is reached for an individual permit. On April 7, 2016, the only current CAFO general-permit holder, C&H

Hog Farm, filed an individual permit application. The permitting staff at the ADEQ will initiate review of this application once it is determined to be administratively complete.

In other permitting actions related to CAFOs, the public-comment period has closed on a request for modification to EC Farms individual permit. Before any decision is rendered on this application, the ADEQ has requested an impact study to determine what impact, if any, the granting of such a permit would have on the Big Creek Research and Extension Team (BCRET) study that is currently underway.