

Report to the North Carolina General Assembly

Submitted to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources, the Fiscal Research Division, and the Environmental Review Commission



Animal Waste Management Annual Report

October 1, 2025

**Division of Water Resources
NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**

Pursuant to G.S. 143-215.10M

Department of Environmental Quality
Annual Report on Animal Waste Management Permitting, Inspection and Compliance
Activities

July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025

Per the requirements of General Statute (G.S.) 143-215.10M, the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NC DEQ) submits this annual report to the Environmental Review Commission and the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources, Fiscal Research Division. This report covers statewide permitting, inspection and compliance activities of Animal Feeding Operation facilities for the period from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025. This report also addresses the requirements of General Statute (G.S.) 143-215.10F and Session Law (S.L.) 1997-443 (and subsequent amendments).

G. S. 143-215.10F requires that the NC Division of Water Resources (DWR) inspect every permitted animal operation facility annually. As a result of S.L. 1997-443, the Division of Soil and Water Conservation (DSWC) began conducting operations reviews and routine compliance inspections¹ at animal operation facilities in Brunswick, Columbus, Jones and Pender counties under a pilot program. S.L. 2011-145 eliminated the requirement for DSWC to perform annual operations reviews. DSWC continues to perform routine compliance inspections in the four pilot counties under S.L. 2013-131 and S.L. 1997-443 and operations reviews and technical assistance and upon request. DWR conducts compliance inspections at all other permitted animal operation facilities located outside of the pilot counties.

The tables in this report summarize the number and type of inspections performed by DWR and DSWC, the number of violations identified during inspections, the number of enforcement actions initiated, and the number of permits issued from July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025 (reporting period).

Statewide, DWR and DSWC conducted 2,370 compliance inspections and operation reviews at animal operation facilities during this reporting period. DWR conducts inspections on a calendar year basis, and therefore this summary - done by fiscal year - may not represent all inspections performed in a calendar year. In addition, some animal operation facilities were inspected multiple times. Routine compliance inspections were conducted at more than 91 percent of all permitted animal operation facilities during this reporting period.

¹ *Operations reviews* and *compliance inspections* are both conducted for the purpose of determining whether the animal operation system is causing a violation of water quality standards and whether the system is in compliance with its animal waste management plan or any other condition of the permit. *Operations reviews* are conducted by the Division of Soil and Water Conservation exclusively.

Acronyms/Abbreviations

NCDEQ	North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality
DWR	Division of Water Resources
DSWC	Division of Soil and Water Conservation
FY	Fiscal Year
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
OAH	Office of Administrative Hearings
AGO	Attorney's General Office
ARO	Asheville Regional Office Region
FRO	Fayetteville Regional Office Region
MRO	Mooresville Regional Office Region
RRO	Raleigh Regional Office Region
WARO	Washington Regional Office Region
WIRO	Wilmington Regional Office Region
WSRO	Winston-Salem Regional Office Region

For a full list of counties covered by each regional office please visit NC DEQ's website.

Table 1. Inspection activities of DWR and DSWC staff during July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025

INSPECTIONS		ARO	FRO	MRO	RRO	WARO	WIRO	WSRO	State Totals
DWR	Total number of inspections completed	34	813	64	228	433	581	69	2222
	Routine DWR annual compliance inspections	20	778	63	222	419	556	64	2122
	Inspections conducted due to complaints	14	6	0	0	3	2	0	25
	Follow-up of previous review or inspection	0	17	1	0	3	5	0	26
	Emergency Notification	0	7	0	0	1	1	0	9
	Lagoon Evaluations	0	2	0	6	5	14	4	31
	Other inspections	0	3	0	0	2	3	1	9
DSWC	Total number of compliance inspections completed*					36	111		147
	Routine DSWC annual compliance inspections					36	108		144
	Inspections conducted due to complaints					0	1		1
	Follow-up of previous review or inspection					0	0		0
	Emergency Notification					0	0		0
	Response to DWR referral					0	2		2
	Other inspections					0	0		0
DSWC	Total number of operation reviews completed	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Routine operation reviews	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Technical Assistance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Follow-up of previous review or inspection	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Emergency Notification	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Other inspections	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals		34	814	64	228	469	692	69	2370
Total number of Permitted Animal Facilities		15	717	53	184	485	646	63	2163
Average time for Compliance inspection (Minutes) **		124	90	91	58	77	76	59	82
Average time for other inspections (Minutes)		N/A	57	N/A	55	38	39	43	39

*Pilot Project per S.L. 1997-443.

**The reported average excludes other relevant work conducted for the compliance inspection. Desktop work (i.e. records review, database updates, etc.) and travel to site are not included in the reported numbers.

Table 2 presents the number of animal permits issued by DWR in FY 2024-25 arranged by regional office. This number includes new projects, as well as any modifications made to existing permits including renewal of Individual Permits. Approximately 2,163 farms are covered under State General, State Digester General, and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits. All permits for animal operations must be renewed every five years. Farm Act (SB 355, Section 5.1) has made provisions extending the expiration date of 3 State General Permits (AWG100000; AWG200000; AWG300000) and 3 State Digester General Permits (AWG400000; AWG500000; AWG600000) and the Certificates of Coverage (COC) until September 30, 2026. The renewal for the NPDES general permit took place in 2022 with an expiration date of June,

2027.

Table 2. Permits issued by DWR for animal operations in each Regional Office during July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025*

ANIMAL OPERATIONS PERMITS ISSUED		ARO	FRO	MRO	RRO	WARO	WIRO	WSRO	State Totals
	Swine	0	46	0	5	18	61	0	130
	Cattle	0	1	3	2	0	0	2	8
	Poultry	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Horses	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Manure Hauler	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	6
Totals		1	53	3	7	18	61	2	145

* Includes modifications, renewals, and new projects

Tables 3 and 5 provide a summary by regional office of numbers and types of deficiencies and violations found during DWR and DSWC inspections during the past fiscal year. Some violations were self-reported and are included in the table to provide a complete picture of the number of deficiency or violation letters issued.

Table 3. Regional office deficiencies and violations found during DWR and DSWC inspections during FY 2024-25.

DEFICIENCIES AND VIOLATIONS IDENTIFIED	ARO	FRO	MRO	RRO	WARO	WIRO	WSRO	State Totals
Deficiencies and Violations found during DWR and DSWC inspections*	2	54	6	11	36	43	22	174
Number of facilities receiving notice deficiency**	1	8	5	13	49	22	8	106
Number of facilities receiving notice violation**	0	4	1	10	19	11	3	48
Enforcement actions initiated for violations noted during this year***	0	3	1	2	3	1	0	10

*Violation totals include violations noted during both operation reviews and compliance inspections and may include multiple violations at a single facility.

**Some violation letters were sent due to violations that were self-reported and not discovered during an inspection.

***Some enforcement actions being developed by the regional staff are normally not shown as actions initiated during that year. These actions will be included in the next annual report.

There were 174 violations identified in FY 2024-2025 which counts for approximately 7.3 percent of the 2,370 inspections identified violations (Table 4). Inadequate freeboard, unpermitted discharges from the systems and evidence of over application were the most common violations and deficiencies (Tables 4 – 6). Cattle and swine facilities had the highest number of violations and deficiencies among the types of animal

operations (Table 6).

**Table 4. Deficiencies and Violation Types documented during DWR and DSWC inspections
July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025**

DEFICIENCIES AND VIOLATIONS IDENTIFIED		Total number of inspections with identified problem	Percent of total problems identified	Percent of total inspections completed 2,370
Discharges from Animal Waste Management System		34	19.5%	1.4%
	Of the total discharges identified, the number of discharges that reached surface waters of the state	22	12.6%	0.9%
Inadequate Freeboard (Permitted Farms)		103	59.2%	4.3%
	Of the total inspections identified with inadequate freeboard, the number of inspections with freeboard noted at less than 1 foot	50	28.7%	2.1%
Evidence of over application		30	17.2%	1.3%
	Crop differs from that stated in Certified Animal Waste Management Plan	7	4.0%	0.3%
Totals*		174	100.0%	7.3%

**Table 5. Deficiencies and Violation Types documented during DWR and DSWC inspection by region
July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025**

DEFICIENCIES AND VIOLATIONS IDENTIFIED		ARO	FRO	MRO	RRO	WARO	WIRO	WSRO	State Totals
Discharges from Animal Waste Management System		2	8	4	0	13	5	2	34
	Of the total discharges identified, the number of discharges that reached surface waters of the state	2	5	4	0	7	2	2	22
Inadequate Freeboard (Permitted Farms)		0	37	2	8	7	29	20	103
	Of the total inspections identified with inadequate freeboard, the number of inspections with freeboard noted at less than 1 foot	0	21	0	1	1	16	11	50
Evidence of over application		0	9	0	3	14	4	0	30
	Crop differs from that stated in Certified Animal Waste Management Plan	0	0	0	0	2	5	0	7
Totals		2	54	6	11	36	43	22	174

Table 6. Deficiencies and Violation Types documented during DWR and DSWC inspection by facility type. July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025

DEFICIENCIES AND VIOLATIONS IDENTIFIED		Swine	Cattle	Poultry	Other	State Totals
	Discharges from Animal Waste Management System	26	8	0	0	34
	Of the total discharges identified, the number of discharges that reached surface waters of the state	14	12	0	0	26
	Inadequate Freeboard (Permitted Farms)	76	25	2	0	103
	Of the total inspections identified with inadequate freeboard, the number of inspections with freeboard noted at less than 1 foot	38	12	0	0	50
	Evidence of over application	27	0	3	0	30
	Crop differs from that stated in Certified Animal Waste Management Plan	7	0	0	0	7
Totals		136	33	5	0	174
Total Number of Animal Operations		2019	123	16	5	2163

Table 7. Civil penalty assessment by type and region July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025

Civil Penalty Assessments	ARO	FRO	MRO	RRO	WARO	WIRO	WSRO	TOTALS
Stipulated Penalties (SP)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Limit/Monitoring Violation (LM)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Limit Violations (LV)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Monitoring Violations (MV)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fish Kills (FK)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Operator Violations (OV)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Renewal Violations (RV)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Construction Violations (CV)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Discharge Violations (DV)	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	3
Operating Without Permits (OP)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Late Annual Reports (LA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Late Monthly Reports (LR)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Permit Conditions Violations (PC)	0	2	1	2	1	1	0	7
Stream Standard Violations (SS)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Water Quality Violations (WQ)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Groundwater Standard Violations (GW)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Civil Penalty Assessments	0	3	1	2	3	1	0	10

Table 8. Summary of enforcement actions July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025.

Civil Penalty Case Summary	ARO	FRO	MRO	RRO	WARO	WIRO	WSRO	Totals
Amount of Penalties assessed includes enforcement costs	\$0.00	\$15,305.27	\$18,486.91	\$5,358.28	\$8,736.67	\$3,933.96	\$0.00	\$51,821.09
Amount of Penalties reduced via settlement	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Penalties Amount collected	\$3,443	\$23,306.69	\$18,486.91	\$0.00	\$21,708.55	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$66,945.15
Remissions Amount	\$0.00	\$3,810.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$3,810.00
Number of Remitted cases	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
OAH cases	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
AGO cases (collection)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0