



Public Meetings
Farm Digester General Permits
April 2022

Department of Environmental Quality
Division of Water Resources



Background – General Permits

What is a General Permit?

- Examples: Air, Coastal, Stormwater

Animal Feeding Operation General Permits:

- G.S. 143-215.10C “intent of the General Assembly that most animal waste management systems be permitted under a general permit.”
- Three: Swine, Cattle, and Poultry with liquid waste management system
- Utilizes non-discharge methods of waste disposal
- General Permit Requires:
 - Develop and maintain a Certified Animal Waste Management Plan
 - Siting requirements and buffer requirements
 - Testing, inspections and reporting requirements



Background – Farm Digester System

What is a Farm Digester System?

- System, including equipment, digesters, and lagoon covers that collect and process gases
- For the digestion of animal waste “for use as a renewable energy resource.”



2021 NC Farm Act Overview

SB 605 Session Law 2021-78, Section 11

- “The Commission shall develop a general permit for animal operations that includes authorization for the permittee to construct and operate a farm digester system.”
 - Division of Water Resources – Non-Discharge Permits
- Will include current State General Permit conditions – *Section 11.(d)*
- New Digester General Permits effective within 12 months of Session Law effective date
- Renewals will align with current State General Permits – *Section 11.(d)*
 - Both General Permit types will expire Sept 30, 2024



NC Farm Act Overview

Limitations on New Digester General Permits

- Not allowed in the 100-year floodplain
- For swine farms:
 - Applies to existing permitted facilities – not new swine farms
 - Does not result in an increase in permitted capacity for swine farms – no increase in Steady State Live Weight
 - Complies with the Swine Farm Siting Act requirements



2021 NC Farm Act Overview

- Preserves public process for the Digester General Permits development
 - Stakeholder Public Input
 - Public Notice and Meetings – *15A NCAC 02T .0111*
- DWR can require an individual permit when necessary
- Requires final permitting action within 90 days of completed notice of intent (application)



General Permit Development Process

General Permit development has multiple opportunities for public input

Stakeholder Process

- Technical Workgroup Sessions, online – Nov 19 and Dec 7
- Public Input Session, online – Dec 14
- Accepted written comments through Dec 17

Draft Digester General Permits online for public review – Feb 1, 2022

Public Comment Period – Feb 1, 2022 – May 2, 2022

- Four public meetings – 3 in person, 1 online
- Accept oral, written, and electronic comments

General Permit completed by July 1, 2022



General Permit Development Process

AWG400000 – Swine Animal Feeding Operation utilizing a Farm Digester System

AWG500000 – Cattle Animal Feeding Operation utilizing a Farm Digester System

AWG600000 – Poultry Animal Feeding Operation with liquid waste management utilizing a Farm Digester System

Base Documents – 2019 State General Permits

- Include statutory updates – definitions, etc.
- Consider court rulings



General Permit Development

Organize Permit Conditions into following Sections

New Permit Conditions at end of each section

- I. Performance Standards
- II. Operation and Maintenance
- III. Monitoring and Reporting
- IV. Inspection and Entry
- V. General Conditions
- VI. Penalties
- VII. Definitions



Important Dates

- **February 1, 2022** – Public Notice of Draft Permits Comment Period Opens
- **April 5, 2022** – Public Meeting, Kenansville
- **April 7, 2022** – Public Meeting, Clinton
- **April 19, 2022** – Public Meeting, Statesville
- **April 21, 2022** – Online Public Meeting via WEBEX
- **May 2, 2022** – Public Comment Period closes
- **July 1, 2022** – New General Permits go into effect

Submittal of Public Comments

Comment period closes: May 2, 2022

Email: PublicCommentsDWR@ncdenr.gov

Mail: Animal Feeding Operations
NC Division of Water Resources
1636 Mail Service Center
Raleigh NC, 27699-1636

More information at:

deq.nc.gov/digesterpermits