

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION VII

901 NORTH 5th STREET
KANSAS CITY, KANSAS 66101

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
AGENCY-REGION VII
REGIONAL HEARING CLERK

BEFORE THE ADMINISTRATOR

HARLAN VAN VOORST FEEDLOT)

)

Docket No. CWA-7-2007-0050

)

SIoux COUNTY, IOWA)

)

Respondent)

)

FINDING OF VIOLATION
ORDER FOR COMPLIANCE

)

)

Proceedings under)

Sections 308(a) and 309(a)(3))

of the Clean Water Act,)

33 U.S.C. §§ 1318(a) and 1319(a)(3))

)

Preliminary Statement

1. The following Findings of Violation are made and Order for Compliance (“Order”) issued pursuant to the authority of Section 308(a) and Section 309(a)(3) of the Clean Water Act (“CWA” or “Act”), 33 U.S.C. §§ 1318 and 1319(a)(3). This authority has been delegated by the Administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) to the Regional Administrator, EPA, Region VII, and redelegated to the Director of Region VII’s Water, Wetlands and Pesticides Division.
2. The Respondent Harlan VanVoorst Feedlot (“Respondent”), owns and/or operates an animal feeding operation located in Section 22 of Township 96 North, Range 45 West, in Sioux County, Iowa.

Statutory and Regulatory Authority

3. Section 301(a) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1311(a), prohibits the discharge of pollutants except in compliance with, *inter alia*, Section 402 of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1342.
4. Section 402 of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1342, provides that pollutants may be discharged only in accordance with the terms of a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (“NPDES”) permit issued pursuant to that Section.

5. Section 504(12) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1362(12), defines the term “discharge of pollutant” to include “any addition of any pollutant to navigable waters from any point source.”
6. To implement Section 402 of the CWA, the EPA promulgated regulations codified at 40 C.F.R. § 122. Under 40 C.F.R. § 122.1, a NPDES permit is required for the discharge of pollutants from any point source into waters of the United States.
7. “Pollutant” is defined by Section 502(6) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1362 to include, *inter alia*, biological materials and agricultural waste discharged to water.
8. “Point source” is defined by Section 502(14) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1362 to include “any discernible, confined and discrete conveyance, including but not limited to any pipe, ditch, channel, tunnel, conduit, well, discrete fissure, container, rolling stock, concentrated animal feeding operation . . . from which pollutants are or may be discharged.”
9. “Animal feeding operation” or “AFO” is defined by 40 C.F.R. § 122.23(b)(1) as a lot or facility where animals have been, are, or will be stabled or confined and fed or maintained for a total of 45 days or more in any twelve-month period, and where crops, vegetation, forage growth, or post-harvest residues are not sustained in the normal growing season over any portion of the lot or facility.
10. “Concentrated animal feeding operation” or “CAFO” is defined by 40 C.F.R. § 122.23(b)(2) as an animal feeding operation that is defined as a Large CAFO in accordance with 40 C.F.R. § 122.23(b)(3).
11. “Large CAFO” is defined according to 40 C.F.R. § 122.23(b)(4)(iii) as an animal feeding operation that stables or confines more than “1,000 cattle other than mature dairy cows or veal calves.”
12. “Waters of the United States” are defined in 40 C.F.R. § 122.2 to include intrastate rivers and streams, and tributaries thereto.
13. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (“IDNR”) is the agency within the state of Iowa with the delegated authority to administer the federal NPDES Program. The EPA maintains concurrent enforcement authority with delegated state NPDES programs for violations of the CWA.

Factual Background and Findings of Violation

14. Respondent owns and operates an animal feeding operation (“Facility”) that is located in Section 22 of Township 96 North, Range 45 West, in Sioux County, Iowa.
15. The Facility confines and feeds or maintains cattle for a total of 45 days or more in any twelve-month period.
16. Neither crops, vegetation, forage growth, nor post harvest residues are sustained over any portion of the Facility’s feeding areas.
17. The Facility is an AFO as defined by 40 C.F.R. § 122.23(b)(1), and as that phrase is used in Section 502(14) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1362(14).
18. Inspectors from EPA inspected the Facility on January 31, 2007.
19. At the time of the January 31, 2007 inspection, the Facility was confining approximately 1,328 head of cattle. The number of cattle confined and fed at the Facility is greater than 1,000, therefore the Facility is a large CAFO as that term is defined in 40 C.F.R. § 122.23(b)(4).
20. Respondent did not have a final NPDES permit at any time prior to the EPA inspection. IDNR issued a final NPDES permit for the Facility on or around March 12, 2007. However, adequate runoff controls have not been constructed.
21. Runoff from the Facility enters the north temporary settled open feedlot effluent basin (SOFEB). This temporary SOFEB has a pipe located at the south end to allow process wastewater to overflow into a second depression that drains south/southeast approximately 300 yards to an unnamed intermittent tributary. This intermittent tributary flows approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile into a relatively permanent unnamed tributary of the West Branch of the Floyd River. This tributary is fed by drainage tiles and contains water a significant portion of the year. This tributary flows approximately $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles before reaching the West Branch of the Floyd River, a navigable surface water.
22. The West Branch of the Floyd River and its tributaries are waters of the United States, as defined by 40 C.F.R. Part 122.2.
23. The Facility does not have adequate livestock waste control facilities to prevent the discharge of animal waste to the West Branch of the Floyd River and its tributaries. Feedlot discharges from the Facility contain pollutants including ammonia, fecal coliform and other pollutants typically associated with feedlots.

24. Based on the size of the Facility, the distance from the Facility to the West Branch of the Floyd River and its tributaries, and the slope and condition of the land across that distance, wastewater containing pollutants from open feeding areas at the Facility will discharge into West Branch of the Floyd River and its tributaries as a result of significant precipitation events.
25. The ongoing flow of wastewater from Respondent's Facility to the West Branch of the Floyd River and its tributaries constitute unauthorized discharges of pollutants from a point source to waters of the United States. This is a violation of Sections 301 and 402 of the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. §§ 1311 and 1342, and implementing regulations.

Order For Compliance

Based on the Findings of Violation set forth above, and pursuant to Sections 308(a) and 309(a)(3) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. §§ 1318(a) and 1319(a)(3), Respondent is hereby ORDERED to take the following actions to eliminate its violations of the CWA:

26. Respondent shall immediately comply with the Clean Water Act by immediately ceasing discharges or removing cattle from all areas within the Facility where runoff is not controlled in a manner to prevent discharges to waters of the United States. If cattle cannot be confined at the Facility in a manner that prevents discharges to waters of the United States, then Respondent shall reduce the number of cattle confined at the Facility below regulatory thresholds within 30 calendar days of Respondent's receipt of this Order. Respondent shall not repopulate cattle above regulatory thresholds at the Facility unless the Facility can be operated in a manner that prevents discharges to waters of the United States and maintains compliance with the Clean Water Act.
27. Regardless of whether the number of cattle is reduced below regulatory thresholds, if Respondent cannot immediately cease all discharges from the Facility to waters of the United States, then Respondent shall immediately remove and properly dispose manure from areas that cannot be controlled in a manner to prevent discharges.
28. Within thirty (30) days of the effective date of this Order, Respondent shall inform the EPA, in writing, of all actions that Respondent has taken to comply with the Clean Water Act and the terms of this Order.
29. Respondent shall comply with all terms contained in the NPDES permit for the Facility therein including terms related to the construction and operation of livestock waste controls. Respondent shall also maintain and submit records to IDNR as required by the NPDES permit.

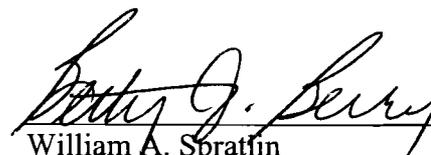
30. If Respondent intends to construct runoff control structures to allow the confinement of cattle above regulatory thresholds, then beginning thirty (30) days after the effective date of this Order and continuing monthly on the seventh day of each month until Respondent submits a Notice of Construction Completion to the EPA, Respondent shall submit written monthly progress reports to the EPA. The monthly reports shall describe, in detail, the construction and related activities that occurred at the Facility during the reporting period, construction and related activities anticipated during the upcoming reporting period, and a description of any problems encountered or anticipated and how these problems were/will be addressed.
31. Upon completion of the runoff control structures, Respondent shall submit a Notice of Construction Completion certified by a professional engineer to EPA within thirty (30) days of construction completion. The notification shall be in writing and shall include as-built drawings of the constructed improvements.

Effect of Order

32. This Order shall not constitute a permit under the CWA. Compliance with the terms of this Order shall not relieve Respondent of its responsibility to obtain any required local, state and/or federal permits.
33. Compliance with the terms of this Order shall not relieve Respondent of liability for, or preclude the EPA from initiating an administrative or judicial enforcement action to recover penalties for any violations of the CWA, or seek additional injunctive relief, pursuant to Section 309 of the CWA, 42 U.S.C. § 1319.
34. Nothing in this Order shall limit the EPA's right to obtain access to, and/or inspect Respondent's Facility, and/or to request additional information from Respondent, pursuant to the authority of Section 308 of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1318.
35. The EPA may subsequently amend this Order in accordance with the authority of the CWA. For example, the EPA may amend this Order to address any non-compliance with the CWA, including but not limited to any non-compliance with the requirements of Section 402 of the CWA. In the event of any such subsequent amendment to this Order, all requirements for performance of this Order not affected by the amendment shall remain as specified by this original Order.

36. If any provision or authority of this Order or the application of this Order to Respondent is held by federal judicial authority to be invalid, the application to Respondent of the remainder of this Order shall remain in full force and effect and shall not be affected by such a holding.
37. All submissions to the EPA required by this Order shall be sent to:
- Donald F. Hamera
CAFO Enforcement Program
Water, Wetlands and Pesticides Division
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region, VII
901 North 5th Street
Kansas City, Kansas 66101.
38. Pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 2.201-2.311, Respondent may assert a business confidentiality claim covering any portion of the submitted information which is entitled to confidential treatment and which is not effluent data. For any such claim, describe the basis for the claim under the applicable regulation. Any material for which business confidentiality is claimed should be placed in a separate envelope labeled, "Confidential Business Information." Failure to assert a claim in the manner described in 40 C.F.R. § 2.203(b) allows the EPA to release the submitted information to the public without further notice. The EPA may disclose information subject to the business confidentiality claim only to the extent set forth in the above-cited regulations. Special rules governing information obtained under the Clean Water Act appear in 40 C.F.R. § 2.302.
39. Notice is hereby given that violation of, or failure to comply with, any of the provisions of the foregoing Order may subject Respondent to (1) civil penalties of up to \$32,500 per day for each violation, pursuant to Section 309(d) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(d); or (2) civil action in federal court for injunctive relief, pursuant to Section 309(b) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(b).
40. The terms of this Order shall be effective and enforceable against Respondent upon its receipt of the Order.

06/18/07
Date

WAS


William A. Spratfin
Director
Water, Wetlands and Pesticides Division

01/13/2007
Date

Elizabeth M. Huston for
J. Daniel Breedlove
Assistant Regional Counsel

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that on the date note below I filed the original and one true and correct copy of the signed original Findings of Violation and Order of Compliance with the Regional Hearing Clerk, Region VII.

I further certify that I sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, a true and correct copy of the signed original Findings of Violation and Order for Compliance together with cover letter and small business assistance information, to the following.

Mr. Harlan VanVoorst
Harlan VanVoorst Feedlot
3241 360th Street
Sioux Center, Iowa 51250.

I further certify that on the date noted below, I sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, a true and correct copy of the signed original Findings of Violation and Order for Compliance to the following representative of the State of Iowa:

Gene Tinker
Animal Feeding Operations Coordinator
Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Wallace State Office Building
900 East Grand
Des Moines, Iowa 50319.




Date _____