Instructions for Planning Animal Waste Management Systems

This instruction covers the planning for animal waste management systems from initial contact with producer, development of comprehensive nutrient management plans (CNMP or CAP 102) or nutrient management plans (NMP or CAP 104), and through implementation of animal waste management practice(s).

General Planning

Planning for animal waste management systems starts when a producer makes the initial contact with the field office with an expressed interest in an animal waste management system. The field office shall, at this time and beyond, keep a record of the producer’s planning for animal waste management on the Data Inventory for Planning Livestock Waste Management Systems (ENG – 48) form and in any other appropriate place in the producer’s file (i.e. conservation planning assistance notes).

As part of the planning process, a determination of the animal capacity (herd or animal unit (AU) quantity) of the site will need to be made. Using conversations with the producer, available production records, sizes of lots or buildings, etc. determine the typical or average herd or animal unit capacity of the animal feeding operation. If a producer intermittently stocks animal feeding operation, determine the typical or average herd or animal unit capacity based on the capacity when the facility is stocked.

For existing animal feeding operations, manure sampling results shall be used to provide information regarding manure nutrient quantities and manure production records be used to determine manure production quantities, if available. For new facilities, data from facilities that have the same characteristics of the new facility (management, feed, structural, etc.) can be used. If this information is not available then the Animal Waste Management Field Handbook (AWMFH) Chapter 4 – Agricultural Waste Characteristics, most current version, shall be used to calculate animal waste and nutrient generation quantities. Other references will not be used unless values are not available from the AWMFH Chapter 4 reference. Contact the NRCS Area Engineer for guidance when dealing with situations not described in AWMFH Chapter 4.

Comprehensive Nutrient Management Planning

Recent releases of policy have provided the following guidance concerning when a CNMP is required. The two policies from the General Manual and EQIP are noted below:


(4) If an EQIP schedule of operations includes animal waste storage or treatment facility on an animal feeding operation (AFO), the participant must develop and provide a copy of a NRCS approved comprehensive nutrient management plan (CNMP) prior to implementation of any waste storage and handling facility or nutrient management activities. This includes any conservation practice planned for an AFO associated with storing, treating, application, or handling (transfer) of animal waste or organic byproducts, such as animal carcasses.

(i) The requirement for development of a CNMP only applies to an AFO operation where animals are kept and raised in confined situations. As defined in EQIP regulations, AFOs congregate animals, feed, manure, dead animals, and production operations on a small land area. Feed is brought to the animals rather than the animals grazing or otherwise seeking feed in pastures,
field, or on rangeland. An AFO is a lot or facility (other than an aquatic animal production facility) where both of the following conditions are met:

• Animals have been, are, or will be stabled or confined and fed or maintained for a total of 45 days or more in any 12-month period.

• Crops, vegetation, forage growth, or postharvest residues are not sustained in the normal growing season over any portion of the lot or facility.

(ii) Implementation of all practices cited in the CNMP is required by the end of the contract period, regardless of financial assistance provided. This requirement is established in program statute, regulation and may not be waived.


B. Prepare a CNMP when NRCS or NRCS-designated agents are providing technical or financial assistance to an AFO/CAFO to address manure or wastewater handling and storage, treatment, and nutrient management that involves the application of manure and wastewater associated with the AFO/CAFO. Note: A CNMP is not required for an operation that applies manure or wastewater as a nutrient source and has no livestock or manure storage facilities (permanent or short-term). Once developed, the producer must sign the CNMP before the installation of any waste storage handling facilities and initiation of any nutrient management activities identified in the CNMP.

The purpose of this section is to further clarify the situations where a CNMP or NMP is required.

A CNMP is required before the implementation of the following practices without any exceptions:

313 – Waste Storage Facility
317 – Composting Facility
359 – Waste Treatment Lagoon
366 – Anaerobic Digester
629 – Waste Treatment
632 – Waste Separation Facility
634 – Waste Transfer
635 – Vegetated Treatment Area
591 – Amendments for the Treatment of Agricultural Waste
520/522 - Pond Sealing or Lining, Compacted Soil Treatment/Concrete

A CNMP is required for the following practices only if one or more of the practices previously listed are being implemented concurrently:

367 – Roofs and Covers
533 – Pumping Plant
561 – Heavy Use Area Protection
558 – Roof Runoff Management
A CNMP or nutrient management plan is required for the following practices (on a standalone basis) when sufficient quantities of agricultural waste is generated.

360 – Waste Storage Closure – An engineering plan meeting the statement of work requirements for 360 is required along with a nutrient management plan accounting for all of the waste materials in the facility to be closed.

367 – Roofs and Covers – A CNMP is required when the practice is used to close open feedlots for conversion to confinement (building).

561 – Heavy Use Area Protection – A Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) is required for all winter feeding stations along with a grazing management plan. A CNMP is required for situations where sufficient quantities of manure, etc. would accumulate on the heavy use area and require disposal. Determination of these situations will be completed by the Area Engineer/Area Resource Conservationist with consultation of state office staff, as appropriate.

316 – Animal Mortality Facility - CNMP is required for situations where windrow composting is utilized or for a site servicing more than 1,000 live animal units. A nutrient management plan detailing how the animal mortality waste is to be disposed of is required in all other cases.

The facility has a CNMP from a previous practice implementation and practices not included in original CNMP are proposed to be implemented – what to do.

The producer/operator is required to update or create a new CNMP to account for the new practice(s) and/or change(s) to the operation that have occurred since the implementation of the original CNMP. The exception to this guidance are practices/situations such as 360 – Waste Storage Closure and 316 – Animal Mortality Facility that fall into the “A CNMP or nutrient management plan is required for the following practices (on a standalone basis) when sufficient quantities of agricultural waste is generated,” section.

Operations proposing expansion or new facilities – what to do.

If a producer is proposing an expansion of an existing facility with a CNMP or a new facility then only technical assistance can be provided for addressing potential resource concerns. Financial assistance will not be provided in these cases. A facility that is proposing expansion and has not ever had a CNMP completed may receive technical and financial assistance to complete a CNMP to address resource concerns.

How does one determine the number of CNMP’s that can be written for a producer – see following guidance:

A CNMP shall be developed to include all portions of the operation the producer controls and are included in their conservation plan. This includes all noncontiguous locations regardless of distance(s) between the fields or farmsteads. Exception to this would be a producer who controls several
noncontiguous locations (fields or farmsteads) which have different conservation plans, resource concerns, and operated in a matter that is substantially different for each or groupings within the noncontiguous locations.

**Financial Assistance for the completion of a CNMP:**

Where Financial Assistance is being provided to the applicant for the completion of a CNMP. Applications for the associated practices that are part of the CNMP will remain in “Pending” status in ProTracts until the CNMP is completed. Once the CNMP is completed applications for Financial Assistance for the associated agricultural waste management practice (e.g. 313 – Waste Storage Facility) and other supporting practices, when all other eligibility criteria are met, may be moved to “Eligible” in ProTracts to consider for funding.

**Animal Waste Management Practice Planning**

If the identified Resource Concern from conservation planning is runoff from an open feedlot. Prior to payment of Financial Assistance for a 313 Waste Storage Facility and/or 367 – Roofs and Covers, elimination of the open feedlot which shall be closed, except for pens needed for handling facilities or pen(s) for sick animals, for the life span of the practice is required. This includes removal of feedlot fences, feeding facilities and watering facilities and the area(s) shall be vegetated. This is the final part of treating the identified Resource Concern.

Open lot (pens) for handling or for sick animals shall be less than 10% of the 313 - Waste Storage Facility or 367 – Roofs and Covers area, whichever is larger. The remaining open lot areas, including sick pens, etc., shall also be treated to prevent runoff prior to payment of financial assistance for 313 Waste Storage Facility.

Operations utilizing open lots in conjunction with pasture (i.e. cow/calf operations) are not eligible for unless lots are closed according to the guidance in the previous two paragraphs and the animals must be confined year around. If the operation wants to continue to use pasture as part of the livestock operation then a grazing management plan and applicable grazing practices are to be applied.

The Heavy Use Area Protection practice is intended to be applied to areas that need to be protected from animal traffic and to facilitate the collection and removal of manure. For areas with resource concerns derived from vehicular traffic, for example a road to access a winter feeding station, use other practice(s), such as Access Road to remedy the resource concern(s). Lanes for feed alleys outside of livestock pens and/or livestock housing are not eligible for assistance.