



Vermont Legislative Research Shop

Large Farms & their Impact

In many states, large farm operations are causing massive air and water pollution problems. Because of this, many states are currently adopting new regulations and innovative measures to combat the problems. At the same time, federal policy is being developed to include regulations for concentrated animal feeding operations.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency has recently produced the Compliance Assurance Implementation Plan For Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations. The plan includes seven steps:

1. strong State and Regional compliance/enforcement partnerships;
2. effective State-specific compliance/enforcement strategies;
3. productive, coordinated compliance assistance activities;
4. strong compliance monitoring program;
5. effective enforcement;
6. better data/information on CAFOs (concentrated animal feeding operations) for targeting compliance assistance and inspections;
7. plans for developing a feedback mechanism to the EPA, States and other Federal Agencies.

These steps are integral in protecting the environment, but can only work if states and the federal government and agencies all cooperate. Both the New York Times (3/6/98) and the Chicago Tribune (3/6/98) have recognized this plan as the next major step in regulating large-scale farms.

Many states are currently producing and adopting plans to deal with pollution, particularly in the water, from large farm operations. South Carolina, for example, has a particular watershed that houses over 15,000 beef cattle, 4,800 dairy cattle, 2,800 swine, and 1,000,000 poultry that produce around 75,000 tons of waste annually. To improve water quality in the area, a watershed project coordinated effort among federal, state, and local agencies and landowners to improve water quality in the water shed. Using a Geographic Information System, authorities could inspect operations and work with landowners to bring facilities into compliance with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control regulations. The project also installed best

