



**STATE OF TENNESSEE
NASHVILLE, TN**

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To: Interested Parties

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Department of Environment and Conservation

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Subject: Emergency Procedures for Dairy Operations During an Animal Disease Outbreak

Introduction

Outbreaks of disease among livestock have the potential to cause public health problems resulting from dead animals, spread of harmful pathogens, and ground and surface water contamination. Proper biosecurity procedures are needed to help reduce the potential spread of pathogens during a disease outbreak.

Legal Authority

The Tennessee Department of Agriculture (TDA)-Veterinary Division is the lead state agency to oversee biosecurity and mortality issues for animal operations.

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC), Division of Water Resources (DWR) is the lead agency for disposal of wastewater in the state through Tennessee Code Annotated §69-3-108 and through rules established in Chapters 1200-04-05 (renumbered to 0400-40-05 after finalization of rulemaking change), "Permits, Effluent Limitations and Standards," and 1200-04-03 (renumbered to 0400-40-03 after finalization of rulemaking change), "General Water Quality Criteria". These statutes and rules establish the standards for the disposal of waste through discharge to surface waters or to land surface.

Scope

While it is recognized that many types of animal disease could affect the state, this guidance addresses dairy operations specifically. These guidelines are meant to address the disposal of milk that cannot be shipped to a bottling facility within an acceptable period of time, and the washing of the outside of milk tanker trucks and other vehicles at a dairy farm to prevent the spread of disease.

Vehicle Washing

Participating farms shall make specific plans to determine a suitable area to wash down and disinfect trucks arriving at and leaving from a dairy operation. The washing site must either be situated in a location that will allow for wash water to soak into the ground without discharging into ditches or surface waters, or wash water must be collected and disposed of in a location where it will not discharge into ditches or surface waters.

Upon declaration of an emergency by the Governor, staff from TDEC and/or TDA will visit participating farms within the affected areas. Once staff have visually inspected and approved the vehicle washing setup, the farm will be approved to ship milk. Farms that have not been inspected and approved will not be allowed to ship milk. Farms that have submitted plans for their washing facilities prior to the emergency declaration will be inspected first. The effective period of the approval will last until the end of the declared emergency.

Milk Disposal

It is recognized that during an animal disease outbreak, there may be a period of time where dairy farms, even those that are unaffected by the disease, may not be able to ship milk. Most dairy farms have enough storage for only one or two days of milk. After this time, it will be necessary to dispose of the milk so that cows can continue to be milked. Upon the declaration of an emergency by the Governor, it is acceptable to dispose of this milk in the waste storage pond of a dairy operation. Typical requirements for maintenance of freeboard, waste analysis and land application will still apply. Alternately, farms may dispose of milk by land applying it in such a way that the milk will not be discharged into or run off into surface waters.

Mortality Management

Participating farms shall plan for proper management of any dead animals (mortalities). Mortalities must be handled in such a way as to prevent the discharge of pollutants to surface water. Farms shall dispose of mass mortalities following guidance from the State Veterinarian's office.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this guidance, please feel free to contact Yatasha Moore, DWR Emergency Services Coordinator, at (615) 253-5321 or Dr. Charles Hatcher at (615) 837-5120.