



How to Avoid CAFO Status

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The first criteria for an animal feeding operation (AFO) also being defined as a CAFO is animal numbers. See the table on the back to determine whether you are a small, medium, or large CAFO. Large CAFOs are AFOs that confine at least a threshold number of a particular livestock species, such as cattle or sheep. Therefore, to avoid being a large CAFO, you must keep the numbers of animals below the cutoff levels.

Medium and small AFOs can be defined or designated as CAFOs based on two additional criteria. Only one of the two criteria needs to be met, in order to be defined or designated as a CAFO. The two criteria are:

- 1) *"Pollutants are discharged into surface water through a manmade ditch, flushing system, or other similar **manmade device** from the animal feeding operation."*

The key factor in this criterion is that a manmade device is used to channel wastewater into surface water. This includes practices like diverting lagoon water into an irrigation ditch or dry creekbed via a ditch or pipe.

- 2) *"Pollutants from an AFO are **discharged directly into surface water** that originates outside of the facility and passes over, across, or through the facility or otherwise comes into contact with the animals confined in the operation."*

In other words, if a creek or irrigation ditch passes through or runs along side the confinement area and animals, manure, or runoff from the lots come into contact with surface waters, the AFO is discharging directly to surface water.

These criteria can be applied to small and medium AFOs in the following ways:

- A medium AFO is **defined** as a medium CAFO if either of the previous conditions exists.
- A medium AFO can be **designated** a CAFO if the state determines that the facility could be a significant contributor of pollutants to surface water.

- A small AFO can be **defined** a CAFO if either of the previous conditions exists, **and is designated** by the state if it is determined that the facility could be a significant contributor of pollutants to surface water.

Inspect your AFO to see if either of these conditions is true on your operation. Then change it, so you won't be defined or designated as a CAFO in the future.

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