

Confined Animal Feed Operations (CAFO) Program

As part of protecting Oregon’s natural resources, the Oregon Legislature established a special regulatory program for Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) in 1989. The legislation required the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to issue CAFO permits and directed ODA to inspect CAFO facilities. In 1993, the CAFO statutes were amended to direct the Environmental Quality Commission (EQC) and ODA to enter into a formal memorandum of understanding (MOU). The MOU authorizes ODA to perform the CAFO related functions of DEQ and the EQC. ODA has continued to operate the CAFO Program in concert with DEQ under this MOU. The most current CAFO Program MOU was signed on December 23, 2015 and expires December 31, 2020.

The ODA and DEQ jointly issue CAFO permits to livestock owners so manure does not pollute ground or surface water.

There are two different types of CAFO General Permits in Oregon.

- National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit which is a federal permit and
- Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF) which is a state permit

ODA conducts all of the Permit registrations, facility inspections, compliance activities as well as education and technical assistance regarding CAFOs. Currently, there are 513 CAFOs permitted in Oregon (378 NPDES permits and 135 WPCF permits, including general and individual permits).

The most common permitted facilities in the state are dairy operations, followed by cattle operations but dog kennels often also require a CAFO permit as does the Wildlife Safari in Douglas County.

CAFO Breakdown		
CAFO Permit Size	Number of total permits all species	Number of beef animal permits
Small	178	21
Medium	212	66
Large	123	40
TOTAL	513	127
CAFO permit size for beef farms	Number of beef animal permits	
Small	Less than 300	
Medium	300-999	
Large	1000 or more	

ODA has 6 inspectors and 3 technical and management staff in the CAFO program and conducted 741 inspections of all types with CAFOs in calendar year 2018. The goal of the CAFO program is to inspect each permitted operation once every 10 months to ensure a facility is being inspected during different seasons.

In addition to the general NPDES and WPCF permits, the program also issues individual permits which gives the state the ability to customize the permit for the operation. Typically, an individual permit is issued instead of the general permit when the operation has had a history of compliance issues, is utilizing experimental technology, or is located in an environmentally sensitive area. There are currently 5 individual permits in Oregon and those facilities are inspected four times a year.