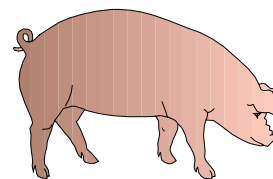


Intensive Agricultural Operations

Intensive Agricultural Operations, refers to the raising of large numbers of livestock usually in a confined indoor facility. Compared to small livestock farms common all over Pennsylvania, these operations have greater requirements for feed, water, fresh air, and manure handling due to the large number of animals being raised on the farm.



Five to ten percent of Pennsylvania farms fall into the Intensive Agricultural Use category. This percentage is increasing. While the total number of farms in Pennsylvania has been decreasing, the number of animals being raised on the remaining farms has greatly increased. Traditional small farm owners continually find it difficult to make a living off of their livestock. In order to make a profit, farms must produce very large numbers of animals on relatively small acreage.

Zoning

Intensive Agricultural Operations can be controlled through a zoning ordinance. For example, the West Cocalico Township Zoning Ordinance defines an Intensive Farming Operation as any livestock operation, regardless of acreage, involving a combined total of more than fifty animal units of livestock.

Examples of fifty animal units include:

- 50 or more Beef Cattle
- 50 or more Dairy Cattle
- 50 or more Horses
- 150 or more hogs, sheep, or goats
- 1000 or more chickens or turkeys
- 1000 or more small animals (rabbits, minks, guinea pigs)

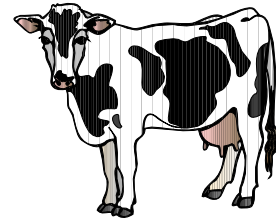


The intensive farming operation is then permitted as a special exception in the Agricultural District. By permitting as a special exception, the farming operation must go through the zoning hearing process. This allows the municipality to review the plan and make sure concerns are addressed.

Intensive Agricultural Operations can create conflict between the farm and nearby residents due to the increased waste and odor. This problem is not easily solved. Because of the Right to Farm Act, farmers cannot be prohibited from conducting normal farm operations. Some municipalities, however, have implemented setback requirements for the livestock housing buildings. The North Middleton Township Zoning Ordinance requires any building used for commercial livestock operations be setback 500 feet from a property line and 1000 feet from a residential district.

Nutrient Management Act (Act 6)

The State regulates large Intensive Agricultural Operations to ensure the proper management of manure. For the purposes of Act 6, the State Conservation Commission defines Intensive Agricultural Operation as a farm containing more than two Animal Equivalent Units (AEUs) per acre of land suitable for the application of manure. An AEU is defined as 1000 pounds of live weight. If a farm meets this definition, the State Conservation Commission requires the submission of a Nutrient Management Plan to the County Conservation district for approval. This is to ensure that livestock producers handle manure in a responsible manner.



A Nutrient Management Plan must address how manure will be applied to fields, the rate at which the nutrient will be applied, how much manure will be exported to other farms, how the manure will be stored at the farm until it is spread, and how runoff will be addressed. Farms with less than two AEUs per acre are encouraged to voluntarily develop nutrient management plans.

Nutrient Management Plans must be prepared by a certified nutrient management specialist. Once implemented, it must be reviewed by the operator every year, and by a nutrient management specialist every three years. The farmer should retain necessary records for the most recent three year period so that the Plan can be accurately reviewed. The necessary records that should be kept are:

- records of soil testing results
- records of analysis of manure and other nutrient sources
- nutrient application records:
 - location and number of acres of nutrient application
 - month of nutrient application
 - rate of nutrient application by field or crop group
- approximate annual crop yield levels for each crop group
- annual manure production

Any significant changes in nutrient management require the approval of a plan amendment.