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Confined Feeding Operation regulations and standards balance industry growth with environmental and health protection

Edmonton Province-wide regulations and standards governing new and expanding Confined Feeding Operations (CFOs), designed to protect the provinces environment and Albertans health while allowing sustainable industry growth, were released today by Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. The new rules also affect all agriculture producers who use manure as a soil nutrient or supplement.

The regulations and standards accompany amendments to the *Agricultural Operation Practices Act*, passed earlier this year, giving the province responsibility for siting, monitoring and enforcing new and expanding CFOs through the Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB). The legislation, along with regulations and standards, takes effect January 1, 2002.

Shirley McClellan, Deputy Premier and Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, said the regulations and standards follow extensive public consultation. They are based on the 2000 Code of Practice for Responsible Livestock Development and Manure Management.

"Albertans clearly told us to protect our air, water and soil. Industry clearly told us they will meet new guidelines that are consistent, transparent and fair," said McClellan. "These province-wide regulations will ensure our \$5-billion livestock industry can grow and expand, and continue its substantial contribution to the Alberta economy."

Regulations and standards set the type and size of CFOs requiring NRCB approvals, to ensure they are constructed and operated to minimize impacts on neighbouring properties and the environment. Smaller CFOs will be registered to ensure they are built and operated to the same set of standards; however, public notice will not be required.

The new rules also define who should be notified of a proposed or expanding CFO, including neighbouring residents, water users, government agencies and municipalities. New manure management standards outline storage and application conditions. Standards also set minimum distances between CFOs and neighboring residences.

While regulations and standards are aimed at new and expanding CFOs, some apply to all agricultural operators. For instance, all operators applying manure must adhere to new water protection buffer zones, designed to protect ground water and surface water. To minimize odour nuisance, all producers will inject or incorporate manure within 48 hours after it is applied to a cultivated field.

While seasonal feeding and bedding sites will not be subject to the CFO approval process, they must protect surface water from manure contamination. Cow/calf operators will have until January 2005 to meet these requirements.

Details of the new regulations and standards can be obtained from the departments Web site, Ropin the Web, www.agric.gov.ab.ca or from Queens Printer bookstores in the new year.

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For further information, contact:

Louise Starling - Technical Services Division, Agriculture, Food and Rural Development - (403) 340-5306

Terry Willock - Communications Director, Agriculture, Food and Rural Development - (780) 422-7683

Dial 310-0000 for toll-free access outside Edmonton.

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