

NRCB Livestock Population Verification Program for feedlots

The Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB) has initiated a program to verify that the livestock population of feedlots permitted by the NRCB are within their allotted numbers.

The Livestock Population Verification Program is a response to evidence provided by complainants indicating that some operators in Lethbridge County may be exceeding the livestock numbers in their permits. Since reviewing that evidence, the NRCB has received more overpopulation of feedlot complaints involving other counties.

As a result, the NRCB is requesting randomly selected feedlot operators to provide information regarding their current livestock numbers. The NRCB is conducting this verification program to ensure confined feeding operations (CFOs) are compliant with their permitted livestock numbers; the program is not part of a grandfathering determination. The program currently focuses on feedlots that have an NRCB permit, as those permits are very clear on the type and number of livestock allowed at an operation.

Compliance with the *Agricultural Operation Practices Act*

The *Agricultural Operation Practices Act* (AOPA) aims to reduce the potential for groundwater contamination and surface water runoff, and to lessen the nuisance impacts of CFOs on neighbours. Permit requirements are one tool that help achieve these objectives. CFOs that are confining more livestock than their NRCB issued permit allows are considered non-compliant with AOPA.

Seasonal fluctuations in animals

The NRCB recognizes that the number, along with the type of livestock confined in a given operation fluctuates seasonally. Changing the number of animals by changing type within category (e.g. finishers to feeders to feeder calves) is permissible under AOPA, without a permit amendment and without notice to the NRCB, but only if:

- the change will not increase the amount of manure produced on an annual basis
- and
- the change will not increase the level of odour production.
(Sections 2(2) and 3(2) of the Part 2 Matters Regulation)

Phased approach

The first phase of the program commenced in Jan/Feb 2024 and focused on feedlot operations in the Lethbridge County region. Since then, the program has expanded to other counties in the province and will continue until all identified feedlot operations have been contacted.

Process

If your CFO has been selected as part of the program, the following steps will occur.

1. An NRCB inspector will contact you to notify you that your CFO has been selected as part of the Livestock Population Verification Program. The inspector will give an overview of the program and discuss any questions or concerns that may arise.
2. You will receive a letter, by email, providing details about the program. This letter will also include a form for you to fill out and return to the NRCB. Information requested in the form includes CFO contact information, existing permits, permitted livestock numbers, and current livestock numbers/type/weight

confined per pen. Google Earth imagery of your operation will also be included for you to label with the pen numbers. The NRCB has requested that the required information be submitted to the NRCB within a week of the date the letter was sent to you.

3. The NRCB inspector will review the submitted livestock numbers to ensure compliance with your NRCB permit. The NRCB may ask for supporting documentation to confirm current livestock numbers. The NRCB may also do a site inspection to verify livestock numbers.
4. A follow-up letter, thanking operators for their assistance with the program, will be sent to you after reviewing the livestock numbers. The follow-up letter will confirm receipt of the livestock numbers and inform the operator that the NRCB may conduct an audit of the submitted information.

Next steps

The NRCB inspector will work with any operation where overpopulation is identified to bring the operation back into compliance with AOPA.

With any program, the success of the program requires ongoing monitoring and auditing. To ensure the success of the Livestock Population Verification Program, the NRCB may reach out to operators in the future to assist with monitoring and/or auditing processes.

The NRCB would like to thank CFO operators for their cooperation in the Livestock Population Verification Program and the timely submission of their livestock numbers.

For more information on the NRCB Livestock Population Verification Program contact an inspector at your local NRCB field office or send us an email:

Morinville 780-939-1212

info@nrcb.ca

Red Deer/Airdrie 403-340-5241

www.nrcb.ca

Lethbridge 403-381-5166