

Air pollution by concentrated animal feeding operations

Parag Patel^a, Terence J. Centner^{b*}

^aDepartment of Economics, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602, USA

^bDepartment of Agricultural and Applied Economics, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602, USA
email: tcentner@uga.edu

Received 7 October 2009; Accepted 15 February 2010

ABSTRACT

With large concentrations of animals at individual facilities, animal production may be accompanied by environmental problems. One concern is whether adverse health effects may occur due to the emission of contaminants into the air. Concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) emit ammonia, hydrogen sulfide, particulate matter, volatile organic compounds, and other hazardous air pollutants. Under current environmental regulations in the United States, few CAFO actions fall under the regulation of Clean Air Act. Therefore, the primary environmental statutes concerning air emissions from CAFOs are the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act and the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act. Concerns about hardships on small animal producers led the federal Environmental Protection Agency to limit the application of the latter two laws to large CAFOs. States and CAFOs rushed to implement and comply with new regulations that became effective on 20 January 2009. This paper evaluates the justification for the regulation of CAFOs and evaluates whether the regulation of only large CAFOs is sufficient to safeguard public health.

Keywords: Air quality; Concentrated animal feeding operations; Legal enforcement; Regulation

* Corresponding author.