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Department of Health and Environmental Sciences
STATE OF MONTANA HELENA, MONTANA 59601

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- Environmental Quality Council, Helena
- Department of Fish and Game, Helena
- Mr. Richard A. Williams, Fairview Ranches, Inc., Melville, Montana 59055

PRELIMINARY ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW
FOR THE
FAIRVIEW RANCHES, INC. BULL TEST STATION

Pursuant to the Montana Administrative Code, Section 16-2.2(2)-P2030 (Rule IV), the following preliminary environmental review has been prepared by the Department of Health and Environmental Sciences concerning the Bull Test Station, Fairview Ranches, Inc. and a request by Mr. Richard A. Williams for a waste discharge permit for that animal confinement facility located west of Melville, Montana.

The purpose of this preliminary environmental review is to inform all interested governmental agencies, public groups, or individuals of the proposed action and to determine whether or not the action may have a significant effect on the human environment. This preliminary environmental review will be circulated for a period of ten days at which time a decision will be made as to our future action. If you care to comment on this proposed action, please do so within that allotted time.

The animal confinement facility around which this action is centered is located in the NW $\frac{1}{4}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$, Sec. 6, T. 4 N., R. 14 E., of Sweet Grass County, approximately six miles northwest of Melville, Montana. The approximate location of this facility is indicated on Figure No. 1.

Although livestock has been held in confinement at this location for many years, the Bull Test Station was just constructed in January of 1975. The current feeding area encompasses approximately 3.8 acres and has maximum capacity for approximately 350 head of livestock. The area is quite flat with slopes of less than one percent from north to south. Soil characteristics are a fine, sandy loam on the surface with a gravelly sub-surface. Groundwater depth is relatively shallow and varies from eight to 12 feet. Surface runoff which would be generated from precipitation falling directly on the feeding area would be diverted into a retention pond. Extraneous drainage would be prevented from reaching the feeding area through a diking system. The waste control facility proposed would provide well in excess of the storage required to retain the runoff which could be expected from a 25-year, 24-hour rainfall event.

Due to the size of the waste control facility, the liquid which accumulates therein will be disposed of primarily through evaporation. Solid waste which might accumulate within the lagoon will periodically be removed by mechanical means and disposed of on adjacent agricultural land. Likewise, manure which accumulates within the feeding area will be periodically mounded and removed at least once each year for disposal on surrounding land. Approximately 3,000 acres of agricultural land is available for waste disposal. This material would then be utilized for its nutrient value by the crops that are being grown with little, if any, detrimental effects to either the soil or the growing crops.

Any animal confinement facility such as this will have an effect on the surrounding environment, but adverse environmental effects can be minimized through adherence to a good waste management program. As previously stated, the surface runoff would be adequately prevented from reaching state waters. Due to the relatively high groundwater table, the waste control facility will be lined with an impervious clay liner to prevent contamination of the groundwater.

Flies around the animal confinement facility will be controlled through a periodic spraying program. Dead animals will be disposed of through the services of a local rendering company.

The entire area surrounding the site of this animal confinement facility is utilized primarily for agricultural production. There are no known historical or archaeological sites which would in any way be affected by the operation. Since the facility is in existence as of this time there should be no unusual demands placed on other environmental resources. If the waste management program as outlined in this preliminary environmental review is adhered to, the problems associated with animal confinement facilities should be eliminated or significantly minimized.

Secondary and social impact due to the proposed action should be minimal due to the fact that the area has been used for quite some time as an animal confinement facility, and a change in use of the land would not occur.

In summary, the overall impact of the proposed action is significantly minimized due to the fact that the site has been used for quite some time as an animal confinement facility and the waste management program proposed should adequately deal with anticipated problems.



Steven L. Pilcher
Water Quality Bureau
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SLP:vlf
Enclosure
cc: Ben Wake
Air Quality Bureau

Fig. #1

