

N.C. Department of Environmental Quality

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State environmental officials send violation notice to Sanderson Farms

RALEIGH – The N.C. Department Environmental Quality today issued Sanderson Farms with a notice of violation and intent to enforce for starting construction on a proposed chicken processing facility in Robeson County without a proper permit.

Staff in the Department of Environmental Quality state that Sanderson Farms violated a state environmental law by starting construction on their wastewater processing plant before a non-discharge land application permit was issued. The department's Division of Water Resources is responsible for issuing the permit.

The notice from division staff instructs the company to stop any construction related to the proposed wastewater infrastructure. The department could fine the company for the violating the state law.

Sanderson Farms has proposed operating a chicken processing facility at 2026 N.C. Highway 20 in St. Pauls, about two miles northwest of Interstate 95. A public hearing was held on Sept. 17 in St. Pauls to gather comments on the proposed issuance of a non-discharge, land application permit required for the proposed facility. The comment period ends on Oct. 2. However, during the hearing, concerned residents indicated that Sanderson Farms had started construction of the facility. Regional staff inspected the site Sept. 18 and documented excavation activities taking place near the proposed wastewater treatment infrastructure, which would include lagoons and basins for holding and treating wastewater.

“Construction of the wastewater facility is not allowed until a non-discharge, land application permit has been issued,” said Jay Zimmerman, director of the N.C. Division of Water Resources. “We take this action very seriously and appreciate the information we received from concerned residents during the public hearing process.”

The state's violation notice requests that Sanderson Farms provide an explanation for the violation within 10 days. The information the company provides will be reviewed and considered by division staff before the agency determines whether to issue a civil penalty.

To see the notice of violation, go to

http://www.ncwater.org/files/novs/NOV2015CV0007SANDERSON_FARMS.pdf. The draft wastewater irrigation permit and a fact sheet are available online at: <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/wq/aps/lau>.

The application and other information about the project are available for public inspection at the division's Raleigh headquarters at 512 North Salisbury St., and at the division's Fayetteville Regional Office at 225 Green St., Suite 714. People who wish to make copies of the information on file will be charged based on the costs for reproduction.

Sanderson Farms may be required to obtain other environmental permits before operations can begin in Robeson County.

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