



Date: July 27, 2005

SUBJECT: ENG- Wash water disposal for Mobile Slaughter Units

Purpose: To provide guidance on the disposal of wash water used for cleaning mobile slaughter units.

A question has been raised regarding the management and disposal of wash water from Mobile Slaughter Units in California. The specific case we looked at is on the Central Coast. There the mobile units are capable of managing up to 5 beef animals per slaughter due to the limiting size of the refrigeration unit. The water tank has a 300 gallon capacity though generally less water is used each time when cleaning the unit. The water is collected through a drain and can be disposed of in a controlled manner. The wash water contains blood, dirt, water and food surface approved disinfectant and the operation generally occurs once or twice per year per site.

Based on these conditions, NRCS offers the following guidance:

1. Any specific requirements by the Regional Water Quality Control Board will be included in any plans prepared for clients using Mobile Slaughter Units
2. Wash water will not be allowed to run off the site and will be kept contained until proper disposal.
3. Wash water can be applied to land for disposal using the following recommendations:
 1. Apply at a rate that does not exceed the intake rate of the soil.
 2. Apply waste to land using a different location each time. Do not establish a single dumping site. Site should be flat enough to prevent wash water from running off the land.
 3. Do not apply to land with a shallow water table of less than five feet deep.
 4. Do not apply during rainfall or irrigation, if there is a chance the wash water will run off the site.
 5. Allowable a reasonable setback distance between the application point and any drainages or waterways to lessen the possibility of the wash water entering surface waters. Though a reasonable setback may vary from site to site, 100 feet is a good rule of thumb to use unless there are county setback requirements or other local regulations in place. A lesser distance might also be reasonable if filter strips or other conservation practices have been installed or the ground has an extremely flat slope.
 6. Wash water will contain minimal animal flesh or other animal material.

Currently, only 100 to 200 gallons of wash water needs to be disposed of each time once or twice per year. If the operation was performed much more frequently or more water was being used,

creating a situation where more wash water needed to be dealt with, NRCS would need to reevaluate these recommendations and possibly offer further guidance.

Contact Beckie Challender, State Water Quality Engineer, 530-792-5621 if you have any questions.

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