

# Evaluating confined livestock operations

All livestock producers should address water quality issues. You can begin assessing your own operation by asking yourself the question "Do wastes from my facility discharge, or have the potential to discharge, into any surface or ground water?" If the answer is yes, your operation may have an impact on water quality that should be addressed.

This self-assessment can help you evaluate your operation based on features found at your site. This assessment is designed as a voluntary, confidential assessment of your property. Checking a high risk category does not necessarily mean you are adversely affecting water quality; however, it is an indication that your operation has a risk of adversely impacting water quality. Remember, this is a general evaluation, it does not include all site-specific concerns. This assessment is designed for owners of "animal feeding operations". Animal Feeding Operations are defined as follows: **"A lot or facility where animals have been, are, or will be stabled or confined and fed or maintained for a total of at least 45 days in any 12-month period, and the animal confinement areas do not sustain crops, vegetation, forage growth, or post-harvest residues in the normal growing season."**

<b>Site Features: Based on your confined livestock facilities</b>	<b>Higher Risk</b>	<b>Lower Risk</b>	<b>Indicate with H or L</b>
<b>What is the distance to surface water?</b>	Less than 100 feet away	More than 500 feet away	
<b>Is the confinement area located in the floodplain?</b>	Within the floodplain	Far above the floodplain	
<b>What is the depth to groundwater?</b>	Less than 50 feet deep	More than 100 feet deep	
<b>Is this aquifer used for drinking water?</b>	Yes	No	
<b>What are the soil types?</b>	Sandy or gravelly soils with low water and nutrient holding capacities	Clayey soils with high water and nutrient holding capacities	
<b>What is the distance to any water wells?</b>	Less than 100 feet away	More than 500 feet away	
<b>What is the condition of well? (if you are unsure please answer no) Is the well properly sealed?</b>	No	Yes	
<b>Is it above surface water drainage?</b>	No	Yes	
<b>Does terrain slope towards or away from surface water?</b>	Toward	Away	
<b>What is the slope of terrain?</b>	More than 5%	Less than 1%	

## Evaluating confined livestock operations (cont.)

Site Features	Higher Risk	Lower Risk	Indicate with H or L
Are animal liquid and/or solid wastes being applied to crop or hayland?	Animal wastes are not applied or are applied with no nutrient management plan	Animal wastes are applied to cropland with a nutrient management plan	
Is there a vegetative buffer/filter between facilities and surface water?	No buffer, with animals or wastes in contact with surface water	Large and well vegetated buffer between wastes and surface water	
What is the density of vegetation surrounding the confinement area?	Little or no vegetation	Well vegetated	
Does the site have surface water run-off management/diversion?	No run-off management/diversion	Water collection/diversion provided on facilities	
Does surface run-off flow toward drinking water source?	Yes	No	
Do the livestock have direct and constant access to stream in the confined area?	Livestock have fairly constant contact	Livestock have little or no surface water contact	
How are the operation's dead animals disposed of?	In or near surface water	Upland disposal or removal	

If, after completing the self-assessment, you discover the majority of your responses fall into a high risk category, it is recommended that you seek further assessment assistance by contacting your local Conservation District, Extension Service office, or the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Even if you have marked only a few in the high risk category, it is recommended that you explore options to address the potential risk. **Please remember this evaluation is an attempt at providing guidance for a complex, site-specific situation. It is recommended that you seek additional assistance in evaluating your operation.**

For additional information contact the Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts at: 517 E 19<sup>th</sup> Street, Cheyenne, WY 82001; (307) 632-5716; bobbie.frank@conservewy.com.