



County of Santa Cruz Environmental Health Services

701 OCEAN STREET, ROOM 312, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060-4073

Main: (831) 454-2022 Direct: (831) 454-3133 FAX: (831) 454-3128

Livestock Property Regulations

Both Santa Cruz County and the State of California have laws that are designed to protect water from contamination by animal waste and from silt that results from erosion. There are also laws to promote “good neighbor” practices to minimize impacts on neighbors from flies odor and runoff.. This memo is written to provide you with information about these laws and resources to help you to manage your livestock so that you can be a good guardian of your water and prevent other problems.

LAWS

There are many County and State Laws that affect how animals are kept and land is cared for to protect water supply and ensure that animals do not become a nuisance to neighbors.

Water Quality

County Ordinance Chapter 7.72 sets bacteriological standards for swimming and other recreational water activities so that the public may be assured that they will not contract diseases from contact with their local waterways.

County Ordinance Chapter 7.79.110 sets a requirement to prevent, control, and reduce stormwater volume and pollutant load through the implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs). All responsible parties shall implement appropriate BMPs, including any BMPs identified by the County, as needed to minimize contribution to pollution or contamination of the storm drain system, receiving waters, groundwater or a body of standing water.

The State Health & Safety Code Section 5411 prohibits discharge of animal waste, in any manner which will result in contamination, pollution or a nuisance. Section 116990 states that no person shall keep any horses or live stock of any kind, penned, corralled, or housed on, over, or on the borders of any stream, pond, lake, or reservoir, in a manner that the waters become polluted, if water is drawn therefrom for the supply of the inhabitants of this state.

The Regional Water Quality Control Board for the Central Coast specifically prohibits discharges containing fecal material from domestic animals into the waters of creeks, rivers and tributaries known to have high bacteria levels. This list includes Corralitos/Salsipuedes Creek Watershed, San Lorenzo River Watershed, Aptos Creek Watershed, Soquel Lagoon Watershed, Pajaro River Watershed, Soquel Lagoon Watershed and Watsonville Slough.

Erosion Control

County Ordinance Chapter 16.22 is the erosion control ordinance that protects riparian corridors, streams, and river from being affected by dirt that washes off when land is disturbed by construction, grazing or other activities. Bare paddocks with no cover of grass are especially likely to allow dirt to wash into a nearby drainage way (then to the nearest creek or river) and provide little natural treatment of animal waste.

Streams and Riparian Corridors

County Ordinance Chapter 16.30 is the Riparian Corridor Ordinance that protects sensitive areas that are close to streams. It is important to disturb these areas as little as possible. Horses and cows that are allowed to roam in these areas can damage vegetation and pollute the water (especially if they have no other source of drinking water).

Livestock Density

Santa Cruz County Codes 13.10 has sections that regulate the density of livestock. Livestock must be kept on a minimum site of one acre, with not more than two animals per acre. An additional animal may be kept for each 20,000 square feet beyond one acre. Special permission is required where animals are boarded at a density greater than 2 per acre.

Zoning

County Chapter 13.10, Zoning, requires a 20 foot setback from property lines, and requires a discretionary use permit and erosion control plan for larger operations with greater numbers of animals than two per acre.

Fly Control

County Ordinance Chapter 7.36.020 prohibits any condition whereby flies, fly larvae, or pupae endanger the health or interfere with the comfort of persons occupying neighboring property.

INSPECTION AND ENFORCEMENT

If you don't manage your operation properly and violate any of the laws listed above, you may be subject to enforcement action to bring the property into compliance with State and County Codes. The Environmental Health Service has an inspection and enforcement program and visits large stables on an occasional basis during rainy months to ensure that BMP's are followed.

You may be contacted

If an EHS inspector finds or hears of any violations on your site, you will be contacted by letter, telephone or email to discuss your operation and arrange a site visit.

If a violation is found

After an inspection is performed, you will be directed on necessary actions you must take to reverse the violations within the time period provided. Should the necessary work not be done, this Department may institute summary abatement procedures and/or appropriate legal action.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE

There are numerous resources available to assist with improved manure management in Santa Cruz County. Below are some useful links

The Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County:

<http://www.rcdsantacruz.org/livestock>

<http://livestockandland.org/>

The Natural Resource Conservation Service:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/?cid=stelprdb1044545>