


IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
FIELD SERVICES AND COMPLIANCE BUREAU
FIELD OFFICE #2 - MASON CITY IOWA

DATE: July 11, 2022

TO: The Record

FROM: Sheila Bly 

SUBJECT: Complaint No. 30931 Investigation – Hancock County
Hawkeye Pride Egg Farms, LLP (NPDES #4100203, AFO #66173)

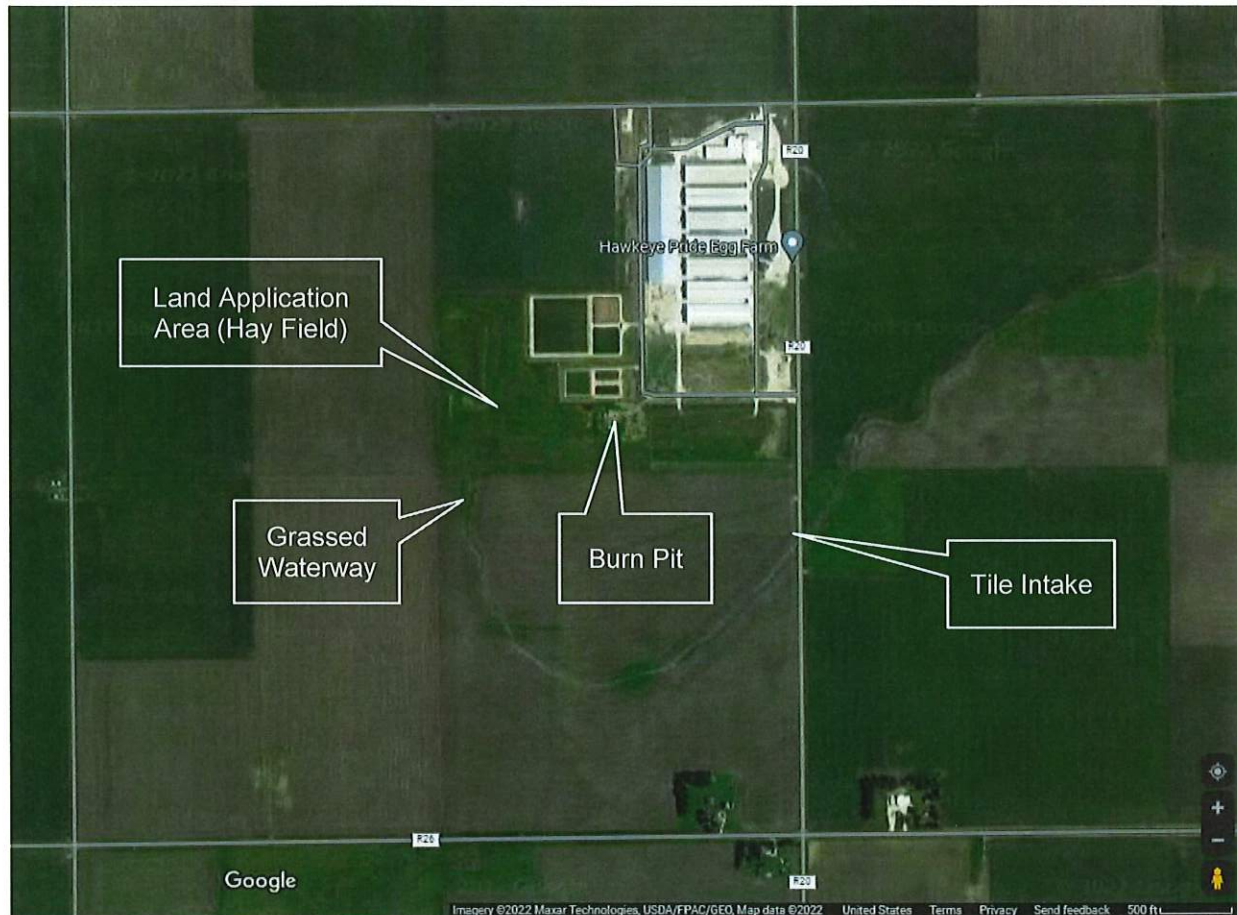
On June 27, 2022, Conservation Officer Ben Bergman forwarded a complaint to our office. The complainant spoke to Ben over the weekend and stated that Hawkeye Pride has been applying wastewater on the hay field adjacent to their facility and that the water is running off via a grassed waterway and into an intake that leads to the Boone River. The complainant also indicated that Hawkeye Pride burns construction materials at dusk, releasing dark smoke to the atmosphere.

On July 1, 2022, I visited the site to investigate this complaint. I first viewed the land application areas to the east and west of the facility to see if the center pivots were in operation. No wastewater was being applied to these fields at the time of my investigation and there was no runoff occurring. I then viewed the grassed waterway and tile intake located a short distance south of the facility. There was a damp spot in the waterway on the west side of Deer Ave, but no actual flow through the waterway or into the tile intake. Three large culverts convey water from the grassed waterway under Deer Avenue. The large diameter of these culverts indicate that a significant amount of flow may be moving through this area.

I then proceeded to the facility. Upon arrival, I was approached by Mr. Bob Schissel. I told him that I was there to investigate the complaint and he drove me out past the lagoons and to the adjacent land application area. Mr. Schissel indicated that they had an issue with the application equipment for the hay field, so it had been a week or more since the last application. It appeared that work had been recently completed on the pumping station located on the west side of the lagoon.

I inquired about recent rainfall as the permit for this facility prohibits application during rainfall events. Mr. Schissel indicated that they had just one rainfall (approximately ½") in the last two weeks. The permit also limits the hydraulic loading rates to ½" per hour or 3" per week and prohibits application or runoff outside of the field boundaries. Mr. Schissel stated that the area north of the lagoons (Field 3) is no longer used. Wastewater is applied to the hay field (Field 1) at a rate of about 2" per week using several stationary guns located throughout the field. There is a berm along the southwest portion of the application area to prevent any runoff from leaving the hay field or entering the grassed waterway. Two of the guns are located very near this berm, but they appeared to be facing away from the berm and into the application field. No pooled wastewater was observed in the hay field or along this berm and there was no visible runoff or flow path to the waterway.

We also observed the grassed waterway immediately south of the hay field. A damp area and some minor channelization were observed at the edge of the field. A flow path is visible on aerial maps and Mr. Schissel indicated that they get some heavy flows through this section.



While viewing the application area, Randy Epting also joined us. Mr. Epting indicated that they have a contract with ISG to operate both of the permitted wastewater lagoons and the land application system. He reported that Eric Driver from ISG directs the staff on the proper land application of all process wastewater at this facility, but that the application rates depend on the weather and the crop. He indicated that the two guns nearest the berm don't operate, though the photos submitted by the complainant indicate that they may have at least some flow at times. Mr. Epting stated that they have plans to remove or relocate these two guns.

No runoff issues were observed and the following photos were taken:



Grassed waterway facing west (upstream) from Deer Ave.



Tile intake on the west side of Deer Avenue (facing north/northwest toward the facility).



Three large culverts convey water from the grassed waterway under Deer Ave.

I also asked Mr. Epting about the construction status and burning activities at this site. He stated that they have completed the construction and cannot expand any further on this site without obtaining more land, which he did not believe would happen. He indicated that they are just cleaning up the site now. He stated that they always notify the sheriff's office whenever they are burning. I asked him what they burn and he stated that it was just clean wood like construction scrap and plywood crates from their cages.

I informed Mr. Epting and Mr. Schissel that as an industry, they are not permitted to burn anything except for landscape waste that originates on the property. Therefore, an NOV will be issued for open burning violations. As Mr. Schissel took me back to my vehicle, I was able to take one photo of the waste materials in the burn pit area. The metals had been separated for recycling, but many other C&D materials were present in the pile.



C&D wastes that have been burned and/or possibly buried on site.