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IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
ADMINISTRATIVE CONSENT ORDER

IN THE MATTER OF:

KNUTH FARMS, INC.
Dubuque County Iowa

ADMINISTRATIVE CONSENT ORDER
NO. 2022-AFO- 40

AFO #66309

TO: Mark Knuth, Registered Agent Knuth Farms, Inc. 1193 Farley Road Cascade, Iowa 52033	Eric Knuth, Facility Contact Knuth Farms, Inc. 23124 Hwy 136 Cascade, Iowa 52033
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I. SUMMARY

This administrative consent order is entered into between the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Knuth Farms, Inc. (Knuth Farms) for the purpose of resolving repeated failures to timely submit Manure Management Plan (MMP) updates and fees for an animal feeding operation located in Dubuque County, Iowa. This administrative consent order requires Knuth Farms to pay an administrative penalty in the amount of \$3,000.00. In the interest of avoiding litigation, the parties have agreed to the provisions below.

Questions regarding this administrative consent order should be directed to:

Relating to technical requirements: **Relating to legal requirements:**

Ashley Sherrets
DNR Field Office 1
1101 Commercial Court, Suite 10
Manchester, Iowa 52057
Phone: 563/927-2640

Kelli Book, Attorney for the DNR
Wallace State Office Building
502 East Ninth Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0034
Phone: 515/210-3408

Payment of penalty to:

Director of the Iowa DNR
Wallace State Office Building
502 East Ninth Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0034

II. JURISDICTION

This administrative consent order is issued pursuant to the provisions of Iowa Code section 455B.175(1), which authorizes the Director to issue any order necessary to secure compliance with or prevent a violation of Iowa Code Chapter 455B, Division III, Part 1 or Iowa Code Chapter 459 and the rules adopted or permits

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issued pursuant thereto; and Iowa Code section 455B.109 and 567 Iowa Administrative Code (IAC) Chapter 10, which authorize the Director to assess administrative penalties.

III. STATEMENT OF FACTS

1. Knuth Farms owns and operates an animal feeding operation located at 2455 McCarthy Road; Bernard, Iowa (Section 21, Prairie Creek Township, Dubuque County). The facility consists of three confinement buildings housing 2,000 head grow to finish swine and 990 nursery swine (899 animal units). The annual MMP update deadline was established as October 1 of each calendar year, and the annual compliance fee for the facility is \$134.85.

2. Knuth Farms failed to timely submit the annual MMP updates and fees by October 1 for the following years: 2010, 2012, 2015, 2016, 2018, 2020, and 2022. Facilities are required to submit a complete Phosphorus Index MMP every four years. Knuth Farms failed to timely submit the complete Phosphorus Index MMP and fees by October 1 for the following year: 2009, 2013, 2017, and 2021.

3. DNR issued Notice of Violation or Letters of Noncompliance each year for the untimely submittals of the complete Phosphorus Index MMPs, the annual MMP updates, and associated fees.

IV. CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. Iowa Code section 459.103 provides that the Environmental Protection Commission (Commission) shall adopt rules related to the construction or operation of animal feeding operations. The Commission has adopted such rules at 567 IAC Chapter 65.

2. Iowa Code section 459.312(13) and 567 IAC 65.16(3)"b" require an owner of a confinement feeding operation who is required to submit an MMP to submit a complete updated MMP and compliance fee on an annual basis to the DNR. The updated plan must reflect all amendments made during the period of time since the previous MMP submission. The compliance fee is fifteen cents per animal unit. 567 IAC 65.17(17)"d" states that the phosphorus index is valid if the soil phosphorus concentration data is less than four years old. Knuth Farms failed to timely submit the Phosphorus Index MMP and fees for 2009, 2013, 2017, and 2021. Knuth Farms failed to timely submit the annual MMP updates and fees for 2010, 2012, 2015, 2016, 2018, 2020, and 2022. The above-mentioned facts indicate multiple violations of this provision.

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V. ORDER

THEREFORE, the DNR orders and Knuth Farms agrees to do the following:

1. Knuth Farms shall pay an administrative penalty in the amount of \$3,000.00 within 30 days of the date the Director signs this administrative consent order.

VI. PENALTY

1. Iowa Code section 455B.191 authorizes the assessment of civil penalties of up to \$5,000.00 per day of violation for each of the water quality violations involved in this matter.

2. Iowa Code section 455B.109 authorizes the Commission to establish by rule a schedule of civil penalties up to \$10,000.00, which may be assessed administratively. The Commission has adopted this schedule with procedures and criteria for assessment of penalties in 567 IAC Chapter 10. Pursuant to this chapter, the DNR has determined that the most effective and efficient means of addressing the above-cited violations is the issuance of an administrative consent order with an administrative penalty of \$3,000.00. The administrative penalty is determined as follows:

Economic Benefit - 567 IAC Chapter 10 requires that the DNR consider the costs saved or likely to be saved by noncompliance. 567 IAC 10.2(1) states that "where the violator received an economic benefit through the violation or by not taking timely compliance or corrective measures, the department shall take enforcement action which includes penalties which at least offset the economic benefit." 567 IAC 10.2(1) further states, "reasonable estimates of economic benefit should be made where clear data are not available." Knuth Farms' repeated delay in timely submitting the Phosphorus Index MMPs, MMP annual updates, and fees allowed the facility to save time and money. It is estimated that Knuth Farms gained an economic benefit of at least \$100.00 and that amount is assessed for this factor.

Gravity – One of the factors to be considered in determining the gravity of a violation is the amount of penalty authorized by the Iowa Code for that type of violation. As indicated above, substantial civil penalties are authorized by statute. Despite the high penalties authorized, the DNR has decided to handle the violations administratively at this time, as the most equitable and efficient means of resolving the matter. The MMP submittals are a crucial aspect of the DNR's animal feeding operation program and the compliance fees are crucial to the budget of the animal feeding program. Knuth Farms repeated delay in timely submitting the Phosphorus Index MMPs, MMP annual updates, and fees threaten the integrity of the animal feeding operation regulations. Therefore, \$1,000.00 is assessed for this factor.

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Culpability – Knuth Farms has a duty to remain knowledgeable of DNR’s requirements and to be alert to the probability that his conduct is subject to DNR’s rules. Knuth Farms failed to timely submit the Phosphorus Index MMP and fees for 2009, 2013, 2017, and 2021. Knuth Farms failed to timely submit the annual MMP updates and fees for 2010, 2012, 2015, 2016, 2018, 2020, and 2022. Knuth Farms is aware of the regulations yet has repeatedly failed to comply with the requirements by the deadline. Therefore, \$1,900.00 is assessed for this factor.

VII. WAIVER OF APPEAL RIGHTS

This administrative consent order is entered into knowingly and with the consent of Knuth Farms. For that reason, Knuth Farms waives the right to appeal this administrative consent order or any part thereof.

VIII. NONCOMPLIANCE

Compliance with Section V of this administrative consent order constitutes full satisfaction of all requirements pertaining to the violations described in this administrative consent order. Failure to comply with this administrative consent order may result in the imposition of administrative penalties pursuant to an administrative order or referral to the Attorney General to obtain injunctive relief and civil penalties pursuant to Iowa Code section 455B.191.

KAYLA LYON, DIRECTOR
Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Amanda Enemme, Treasurer
KNUTH FARMS, INC.

Dated this 18 day of
November, 2022