

## **EPA cuts reporting requirements for livestock farmers**

Dec. 26 -- The U.S. EPA has proposed a rule change that would allow livestock producers to avoid having to report ammonia and hydrogen sulfide releases from animal waste that occurs on their farms.

The reporting exemption would allow authorities to better focus their attention on hazardous substances releases that require emergency response while reducing reporting burdens on farmers, according to the EPA. Release notifications would still be required to emergency response authorities when hazardous substances are released from sources other than animal waste -- such as a leak from an ammonia tank.

The National Chicken Council, which represents poultry farmers, released said it welcomed the proposal.

"The Environmental Protection Agency has wisely proposed to grant to poultry farmers a narrowly tailored exemption from rules that would otherwise require them to report emissions that are actually nothing more than normal consequences of livestock and poultry operations," according to a National Chicken Council statement. "The fact is that chickens and turkeys, like cattle, produce ammonia in small concentrations as their wastes biologically degrade. These are not the industrial emissions that are regulated by the law."

However, environmental advocacy groups, including the Sierra Club, criticized the proposal, saying it would deny the public their right to know about hazardous air emissions from farm operations.

"Once again, Bush's EPA is poised to put polluters before public health," said Ed Hopkins, director of the Sierra Club's Environmental Quality Program. "EPA's new proposal would let factory farms off the hook for releasing hazardous chemicals into our air, exempting these large livestock operations from even the most basic of pollution laws like reporting their hazardous releases."

Existing law requires livestock producers with hazardous releases exceeding certain thresholds to report the releases under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act and the Emergency Planning Right-to-Know Act

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