MACA | MID AMERICA CROPLIFE ASSOCIATION

Water Update

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Fun Fact: A ruling proposed by the EPA under Biden has been withdrawn under Trump resulting in no changes or additional regulations.

The EPA withdrew a rule proposed in January 2024 regarding the setting of effluent limitation guidelines and standards for the meat and poultry products industry as a point source category under the Clean Water Act (CWA). The rule was withdrawn on September 3, 2025 and would have revised the effluent limitation guidelines for the meat and poultry products industry by revising requirements to be more stringent with several options. Some of the options included more robust stipulations on total nitrogen, new limitations on total phosphorus, and updated limitations on other pollutants. Further effluent limitations included chlorides and establishing effluent limitations for *E.coli* for direct dischargers.

Public comment was open for 60 days resulting in the EPA receiving more than 5,000 public comment submissions from private citizens, industry representatives, technology vendors, government entities, environmental groups, and trade associations. Three public hearings were held by the EPA with a combined total of 362 attendees and 46 individuals registering to provide comment.

After receiving public comment on the proposed rule, the EPA announced the revised effluent limitation guidelines will not be implemented for the meat and poultry product industry. As part of the EPA's judgement, it was determined it is not appropriate to impose additional regulations on the industry with concerns such as protecting food supply and mitigating inflationary prices for American consumers. The meat and poultry product industry was noted as being critical to the nation's food supply and protecting against external stressors such as "COVID-19 food supply and supply chain stressors, inflationary pressures, highly pathogenic avian flu (HPAI), and the New World Screwworm (NWS)." Negative impacts on the environment and public health by implementing the additional requirements were also highlighted such as increased air pollution and solid waste.

In this instance, the meat and poultry product industry will not see additional requirements for the wastewater produced at meat packing facilities. Time will tell if this is a trend for Secretary Zeldin's EPA.

For more information on the EPA ruling, click HERE. If you would like more information on the January 2024 proposal, click HERE for a February 2024 article from the National Ag Law Center.

Each month Andrea Rice, CCA, Director of Research, Education, and Outreach, CCA Program Administratorfor the Missouri Agribusiness Association, which serves as MACA's Water Consultant; provides an update on current water issues. Please share their information with others in your company.

– Rodney Schmidt, MACA Executive Director.