



Steve Troxler
Commissioner

North Carolina Department of Agriculture
and Consumer Services
Agronomic Division

Dr. David H. Hardy
Director

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To Whom It May Concern:

Based on field observations, conversations with agronomists and technical specialists, and in consideration of past and predicted weather conditions, the NCDA&CS is supportive of a blanket extension for swine effluent application on bermudagrass hayfields to the end date of October 15th, 2024. This is two weeks longer than the normal application which ends September 30, 2024.

Granting extensions on a case-by-case basis by Regional Agronomists is normally done, but it is anticipated that the need over the next few weeks will be greater than staff can accommodate. This type of an extension is not unprecedented. In 2015, 2016, and 2018, blanket extensions were granted after extended periods of wet weather and tropical systems.

Currently, there are areas in primary swine production counties of the southern Coastal Plains that have been impacted by heavy rainfall events over the past few weeks. The relentless rains, especially from the unnamed tropical system last week, dropped upwards of 12" in some areas. The rain bands from Hurricane Helene this week have kept soil conditions too wet for land application during the important last weeks of the normal application window.

Growers have been applying within permit requirements and have maintained compliance. If growers had soil conditions conducive for land application between these two tropical systems, the rains have returned to the waste system the same amounts of water that were removed through the application. With heavy rains from Hurricane Helene late this week, soil conditions will remain saturated through the weekend thus preventing any application until next week.

Therefore, it is our recommendation to place a blanket pumping window extension for bermudagrass sprayfields through October 15, 2024. The current growing conditions of warm daytime and nighttime temperatures are projected to continue into early/mid-October, which will keep bermudagrass growing and utilizing additional nutrients. The next two-week forecast does not indicate that dormancy, which sets in when the mean ambient temperature reaches 50° F for an extended period, will occur for several weeks. In general, the grass can likely benefit from additional nutrients. All other receiving crops should be assessed on a per farm basis for a possible extension of the pumping window.

Please let me know if there are any questions.

Sincerely,

David H. Hardy, Ph.D.
Director