

INFORMATION SHEET

Susquehanna River Basin Commission 1721 North Front Street • Harrisburg, PA 17102 • 717-238-0423 • www.srbc.net

DOCUMENTING AGRICULTURAL WATER WITHDRAWALS

"The commission may collect, compile, coordinate, and interpret systematic surface and ground water data, and publicize such information when and as needed for water uses, flood warning, quality maintenance, or other purposes."
--Section 3.4(4) of the Susquehanna River Basin Compact, P.L. 91-575; 84 Stat. 1509 et seq.

What is SRBC's water withdrawal documentation program?

On May 11, 1995, the Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) adopted a new regulation (18 CFR Part 804, §§804.1-804.5) that requires all surface and ground water withdrawals in the basin greater than 10,000 gallons per day (based on the average over 30 consecutive days) to be documented with SRBC. The regulation covers all users, regardless of when their water withdrawal came into existence.

What is the purpose of this water withdrawal documentation program?

The Susquehanna River Basin Compact gives the commission responsibility for managing the water resources of the basin. The primary purpose for managing the water resources is to ensure that the needs of all basin water users are met. The documentation program will help SRBC to carry out that responsibility.

What are the benefits of the documentation program?

Through the documentation program, SRBC will be able to collect and compile reliable data about water users in the basin. This will allow users to establish a record of their current daily water needs, which will put them in a stronger legal position should conflicts

occur. The documentation program will not in any manner limit or create property rights. However, it will provide evidence of an established water use if conflicts were to develop with competing water users.

Disputes over water use have long been part of this nation's history--whether it be between neighboring states, municipalities or adjoining property owners.

Which agricultural operations must meet the documentation requirement?

Although this documentation program applies to any operation fitting the 10,000 gallons per day criteria, this information sheet applies only to agricultural operations.

An agricultural water use operation is defined as a water use associated primarily with the raising of food or forage crops, trees, flowers, shrubs, turf, fish, poultry and livestock.

Typical farming operations using more than 10,000 gallons per day include:

- dairy operations with more than 200 cows
- beef cow/calf operations with more than 500 cows
- swine farrow to finish operations with more than 250 sows
- swine feeder production operations with more than 900 sows
- poultry layer operations with more than 125,000 chickens (no evaporative cooling system)

(over)

- poultry broiler or pullet operations with more than 250,000 chickens (no evaporative cooling system)

When does the documentation program go into effect for agricultural operations?

SRBC's regulation on water use documentation has been in effect since May 11, 1995. All existing agricultural water use operations should document their water withdrawal immediately. Any new agricultural water use operations should document their intended water withdrawal prior to withdrawing water.

How can agricultural operators document their water withdrawals?

Documentation forms and instructions are available from SRBC. SRBC has sought the assistance of other government agencies (such as local conservation districts or agricultural extension offices) to help distribute the documentation form.

For more information, contact Mr. Andrew Dehoff at SRBC.

Is there a documentation fee?

No! The agricultural community from all three SRBC member states urged the commission not to impose a documentation fee. SRBC heard their concerns and elected not to charge a fee.