

State of Oregon
Department of Environmental Quality

Memorandum

Date: Nov. 20, 2013

To: Environmental Quality Commission

From: Dick Pedersen, Director

Subject: Agenda item J, Informational item: Hermiston Foods site history and DEQ's involvement
Dec. 11-12, 2013, EQC meeting

Purpose of item DEQ will present information about its work regarding Hermiston Foods, a food processing plant in Hermiston. Neighbors of the plant have raised concerns about the plant's effects on human health and the environment, and the commission requested an informational update in late 2013.

Background In 2010, neighbors of a food processing plant in Hermiston spoke to the Oregon Environmental Quality Commission as part of public forum. The neighbors expressed concerns about their health, quality of life and the commercial viability of their agricultural products due to conflicts with land-applied wastewater from the processing plant. That plant, operated by NORPAC as Hermiston Foods, is regulated by DEQ.

Since that initial contact, DEQ has worked with the company, Oregon Departments of Health and Agriculture, Oregon State University, the neighbors and others to find solutions to the environmental concerns. In some instances, the plant has modified its operating practices and made updates to its equipment. These changes do correlate to a reduction in registered complaints and incidents reported by the neighbors, but have not ultimately resolved the concerns and conflicts.

Linda Hayes-Gorman, DEQ's Eastern Region administrator, will present this item along with co-presenters from Hermiston Foods, the Oregon Health Authority and Oregon State University. This item is presented at the commission's request to provide additional information about the site history, DEQ's regulatory authorities and boundaries and opportunities for resolution among involved parties.

Next steps There is no request for commission action. DEQ will provide additional information to the commissioners as requested.

Attachments

- A. Staff report and attachments, December 2010 EQC informational item regarding Hermiston Foods
- B. Staff report and attachments, February 2011 EQC information

item regarding Hermiston Foods

- C. Two reports from Oregon State University regarding odor management best practices and water reuse lab studies
- D. Timeline of DEQ site visits, February 2011 through Nov. 20, 2013

*Report prepared by Stephanie Caldera from
information provided by DEQ staff*