

Biogas Farm, Sleaford Moor, Holdingham, Sleaford, NG34 8JG Environmental permit number ERP/ZP3830EU

On 30 January 2014 the Environment Agency received an application for a poultry farm at the above address. The proposed site is to house up to 590,400 broiler chickens. Please see below some frequently asked questions and responses regarding this proposal.

We have also received a separate application for an Anaerobic Digestion plant at this site. This will be handled separately; therefore the information below is only regarding the poultry farm proposal.

What is an Environmental Permit?

Any business whose activities could be harmful to the environment needs an environmental permit to operate. The permit gives the holder permission to carry out certain types of activities at a specific location. It sets conditions which will protect the environment and people's health.

If we grant a permit we carry out periodic audits and inspections to check they are complying. We review permit conditions and can change them at any time. We take enforcement action if the permit holder breaks the conditions of their permit.

Is an Environmental Permit the same as planning permission?

Our decision whether to grant an environmental permit is completely separate from the planning process. Planning permission allows a new site to be built. The planning process determines whether the development is an acceptable use of land and considers a broad range of matters such as visual impact, traffic and access, which do not form part of our decision-making process.

An environmental permit allows the site to operate once it has been built. A new development will need to have both permissions before it can operate. We will only issue a permit if we believe the facility will be designed, constructed and operated in a manner that will not cause significant pollution of the environment or harm to human health

I have heard that poultry farms can cause problems with flies.

This application is for a broiler farm, which means that chickens are on site for approximately 40 days. The permits we issue have conditions in them to ensure the site is kept as clean and dry as possible through appropriate management practices. Due to the short length of the growing cycle and the way the farm is managed, we would not expect to see an issue with flies at this type of farm. Once the birds have left the farm, all the litter is removed and the sheds are thoroughly cleaned.

In the unlikely event of flies causing annoyance, the Environment Agency will ensure the operator reviews any relevant management practices. In line with permit conditions, they would then submit to us for approval a pest management plan to be implemented on the farm.



What about odour and noise?

Again, the permit will have conditions in it that the Environment Agency will enforce, ensuring that odour and noise pollution from the farm is kept to a minimum.

We do have experience of farms causing issues with odour and noise when the operator is not taking all appropriate measures. As a regulator, we ensure that any permit holder complies with permit conditions to keep emissions from the farm, including odour, to a minimum. An odour modelling report and an Odour Management Plan were submitted with the permit application. The modelling showed that odours are not predicted to exceed the Environment Agency benchmark levels on the local community.

Having assessed the plan, we are satisfied the odour management and control measures are satisfactory for the proposed farm. If the farm did cause what we perceive to be odour or noise pollution in the local community, we would ensure the operator investigates alternative control measures.

Is the farm too close to local residents?

We have many farms that are in relative close proximity to residents, often much closer than this farm will be.

Our guidance states that if there are sensitive receptors within 400 metres of the site then we would expect the operator to have a robust Odour Management Plan. Despite the closest receptors being 700 metres from the farm, the operator has submitted an Odour Management Plan with the application. As previously mentioned, this plan satisfies our requirements in line with current guidance.

How you can contribute to us making the best decision.

Once we have accepted an application, we put it on our public register. These are held in our local offices and the offices of the relevant local authority. We will always consult on applications for new bespoke permits and invite people and organisations to comment. This consultation lasts for 20 working days. We are not able to reply to each person individually but we welcome all comments and take account of them in our decision making process.