

Environment Agency permitting decisions

Variation

We have decided to issue the variation for Moor Farm Poultry Units operated by Mr Paul Stephens, Mrs Rosalyn Stephens and Miss Kathryn Stephens (Trading as Messrs W D Stephens).

The variation number is EPR/GP3739UA/V004

Issued 31/07/2014

We consider in reaching that decision we have taken into account all relevant considerations and legal requirements and that the permit will ensure that the appropriate level of environmental protection is provided.

Purpose of this document

This decision document:

- explains how the application has been determined
- provides a record of the decision-making process
- shows how all relevant factors have been taken into account
- justifies the specific conditions in the permit other than those in our generic permit template.

Unless the decision document specifies otherwise we have accepted the applicant's proposals.

Structure of this document

- Key issues
- Annex 1 the decision checklist

Key issues of the decision

The applicant is varying their permit to include 4 biomass boiler(s) with a net rated thermal input of 0.8 MW.

In line with the Environment Agency's May 2013 document "Biomass boilers on EPR Intensive Farms", an assessment has been undertaken to consider the proposed addition of the biomass boiler(s).

This guidance states that the Environment Agency has assessed the pollution risks and have concluded that air emissions from small biomass boilers are not likely to pose a significant risk to the environment or human health providing certain conditions are met. Therefore a quantitative assessment of air emissions will not be required where:

- the fuel will be derived from virgin timber, miscanthus or straw, and;

- the biomass boiler appliance and installation meets the technical criteria to be eligible for the Renewable Heat Incentive, and;
- the aggregate boiler net rated thermal input is:
 - A. less than 0.5MWth, or;
 - B. less than 1MWth where the stack height is greater than 1 metre above the roof level of adjacent buildings (where there are no adjacent buildings, the stack height must be a minimum of 3 metres above ground), and there are:
 - no Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Ramsar sites or Sites of Special Scientific Interest within 500 metres of the emission point(s);
 - no National Nature Reserves, Local Nature Reserves, ancient woodlands or local wildlife sites within 100 metres of the emission point(s), or;
 - C. less than 2MWth where, in addition to the above criteria for less than 1MWth boilers, there are:
 - no sensitive receptors within 150 metres of the emission point(s).

The biomass boilers do not meet the requirements of any of the criteria above, as the stack heights are not greater than 1 meter above the roof level of adjacent buildings.

We therefore carried out a quantitative assessment of the emissions in order to assess the risk from emissions. We used the information supplied in the application to assess the risk from emissions on nearby sensitive receptors. The closest receptor, that could be affected is the farm house located approximately 200m from the boiler stacks located at Moor Farm Sheds.

The relevant pollutants for assessment are oxides of nitrogen. Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂) and HF have not been assessed due to the boiler fuel being clean woodchip which would contain very little or no sulphur.

For NO_x, the long term statutory air quality limit is 200 µg/m³ (annual mean) and for short term 40 µg/m³ (1 –hour mean).

The screening tool was run considering the emissions from the boilers operating at the same time and the effects of the closest building. The result of the assessment showed that emissions are unlikely to exceed the long term or short term statutory air quality limits. We are therefore satisfied, based on the information in the application, that emissions from the boilers are unlikely to pose a significant risk to the environment or human health and therefore no further assessment is required.

The variation also includes changes to conditions as a result of the implementation of the Industrial Emissions Directive. The Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 were made

on the 20 February and came into force on 27 February. These Regulations transpose the requirements of the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED).

As a result of the requirements of the Industrial Emissions Directive, all permits are now required to contain condition 3.1.2 relating to groundwater monitoring. However, the Environment Agency's H5 Guidance states **that it is only necessary for the operator to take samples** of soil or groundwater and measure levels of contamination where the evidence that there is, or could be existing contamination and:

- The environmental risk assessment has identified that the same contaminants are a particular hazard; or
- The environmental risk assessment has identified that the same contaminants are a hazard and your risk assessment has identified a possible pathway to land or groundwater.

H5 Guidance further states that it is **not essential for the Operator** to take samples of soil or groundwater and measure levels of contamination where:

- The environmental risk assessment identifies no hazards to land or groundwater; or
- Where the environmental risk assessment identifies only limited hazards to land and groundwater and there is no reason to believe that there could be historic contamination by those substances that present the hazard; or
- Where the environmental risk assessment identifies hazards to land and groundwater but there is evidence that there is no historic contamination by those substances that pose the hazard.

Conditions 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 have also been amended to reflect new requirements on notification in the amended Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

Annex 1: decision checklist

The permit conditions		
Raw materials	<p>We have specified limits and controls on the use of raw materials and fuels.</p> <p>We have specified that only virgin timber (including wood chips and pellets), miscanthus or straw shall be used as a fuel for the biomass boiler. These materials are never to be mixed with, or replaced by, waste.</p>	✓
Environmental Risk Assessment and operating techniques		
Operating techniques	<p>We have reviewed the techniques used by the operator and compared these with the relevant guidance notes.</p> <p>The operating techniques are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the fuel is derived from virgin timber, • the biomass boiler appliance and it's installation meets the technical criteria to be eligible for the Renewable Heat Incentive; and <p>The proposed techniques for priorities for control are in line with the benchmark levels contained in the SGN EPR6.09 and we consider them to represent appropriate techniques for the facility. The permit conditions ensure compliance with relevant BREFs and BAT Conclusions, and ELVs deliver compliance with BAT-AELs.</p>	✓