2 1/2-Year Pollution Breather

State Weighs Feedlot Extension

By Fred Thomas

Nebraska livestock feeders may get more time — up to 2 1/2 years longer — to control pollution from their feedlots.

The Nebraska Department of Environmental Control has proposed changes in its feedlot waste control program which would give feeders until June 30, 1977, to complete construction of pollution control facilities.

The proposal will be discussed Saturday at a public hearing sponsored by the Nebraska Environmental Control Council, which governs departmental activity.

The current deadline for completion of control facilities is Dec. 31, 1974, but there is no way it can be met, Lanny Ice-nogile, chief of the department's agricultural pollution control division, said Monday.

So far, more than 5,000 of Nebraska's estimated 20,000 feeding operations have been inspected by the state to see if pollution control equipment is needed, he said.

The state needs to inspect only operations which have a potential for pollution, he said.

That generally means feedlots with large numbers of animals and those operated along streams.

Hundreds more must be inspected, and compliance schedules prepared by which the feedlot operators show step by step progress in ending pollution, Ice-nogile said.

The original deadline was Dec. 31, 1972, then it was extended to this Dec. 31, and now the proposal is to make the final Nebraska deadline the same as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's new national deadline, June 30, 1977, Ice-nogile said.

The hearing will be at 10:05 a.m. at the Radisson-Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln.

Great Western Battles EPA

A hearing is scheduled on a dispute between federal and sugar company officials over the company's discharge of wastes into the North Platte River at four Nebraska locations.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Great Western Sugar Co. will meet to discuss permits for discharges from the company's sugar-beet-processing plants at Scottsbluff, Gering, Bayard and Mitchell.

The dispute centers on a permit requirement that Great Western limit the fecal coliforms (bacteria from human or animal wastes) in its discharges, according to Dennis Lessig of the Nebraska Department of Environmental Control.

Great Western says the bacteria was in the water before the plants used it, so Great Western isn't responsible for removing it, Lessig said. The bacteria may come from cattle which graze in the area, he said.

The state hasn't taken a position, but wants to see the discharges monitored, said Lessig, chief of the water pollution control division.

The hearing will be within 30 days, but no date was announced. Further information is available from Shirley Shepard, regional hearing clerk, EPA, 1735 Baltimore Street, Kansas City, Mo.

Sugar Firm Gets Water Hearing

Lincoln (AP) — The Great Western Sugar Co. has been granted a hearing by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to contest some of the restrictions in its water pollution control permit.

According to Dennis Lessig of the Nebraska Department of Environmental Control, the company does not want to be held responsible for bacterial pollution in water the company uses for cooling at its Scottsbluff, Gering, Bayard and Mitchell plants.

The company claims the bacteria are in the water before the company uses it.

No hearing date has been set.

GW Official Warns Of EPA Regulations

Scottsbluff (AP) — An official of the Great Western Sugar Co. said Thursday Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations on chemical application could require 85% of sugar beet growers to be certified applicators by 1976.

Dr. Kenneth Dubrovin, director of Great Western's research center at Longmont, Colo., told Nebraska Non-Stock Beet Growers Assn. members at their annual meeting here that "EPA had a profound effect on our chemical research last spring. It was completely halted for a time and then we were allowed to continue at a limited level.

"Our purpose in research is to improve the quality of beets for the benefit of the grower and the processor and make beet production and processing more profitable, but you can't benefit from our research unless you are allowed to use the methods and chemicals that research produces."

Dubrovin cited fertilizers as an example and said: "EPA regulations may control the amounts of fertilizers you use in the future. The amounts they prescribe will not be based on needs for production but on nutrient runoff."

Dubrovin referred to EPA guidelines which will require farmers using certain chemicals and fertilizers considered hazardous to be certified as qualified to use them.