

STATE OF WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

PUBLIC NOTICE OF INTENT TO MODIFY A WISCONSIN POLLUTANT DISCHARGE ELIMINATION SYSTEM (WPDES) PERMIT No.WI-0050245-10-1

Permittee: CEDAR GROVE CHEESE FACTORY, P O BOX 185, PLAIN, WI, 53577

Facility Where Discharge Occurs: Cedar Grove Cheese Factory, SWQ SEQ SEC 4 T9N R4E

Receiving Water And Location: Channelized agricultural ditch (unnamed) that joins Honey Creek, in the Honey Creek (LW-16) Watershed of the Lower Wisconsin River Basin.

Brief Facility Description: Cedar Grove Cheese Factory (Cedar Grove Cheese) is an existing discharger with an annual average discharge of 0.004506 MGD (based on effluent volume measured in the living machine). Cedar Grove makes cheddar cheese and a variety of other cheeses. Wash water from cheese making process is stored in a 6000 gallon equalization (EQ tank) which is subsequently treated in an aerobic wastewater treatment plant ("Living Machine") which consists of a series of ten tanks containing a mixture of aquatic plants and microorganisms that feed on organic materials in the wastewater. The EQ tank receives wash water, spillage, and water from floor drains. Procedures are in place to reduce the amount of milk, whey, and salted whey sent to the EQ tank for optimal operations of the living machine. There was an overflow on the EQ tank that went directly to the lagoon that has been closed off. Treated wastewater from the living machine is discharged to a pond (originally designed as an absorption pond) and then an unnamed tributary to Honey Creek. This pond is approximately 290 yards by 10 yards and six feet deep. The pond was last dredged more than 15 years ago.

The department has determined that the location of the current effluent samples for outfall 002 may not be representative of the discharge at the point at which the discharge enters waters of the state. Code (s. NR 205.066(1), Wis. Adm. Code) requires that "monitoring shall occur at the point of discharge or at the internal waste stream if the permit limitations are imposed on the internal waste stream under s. NR 205.065 (2) unless an alternative location is established by the department in the permit." Any alternative location would need to be representative of the effluent quality at the point of discharge to a water of the state. The existing lagoon/pond has not been officially abandoned and additional evaluation is needed. Therefore, the permit has been updated to include a schedule to investigate the lagoon/pond to determine if the permittee will maintain the lagoon or complete the abandonment process. The permittee is in the process of approval for abandonment at the time of this modification. The proposed permit includes schedules to determine compliance with all limits and the status of the lagoon. If the lagoon is not properly abandoned monitoring and limitations will be required at the v-notch weir at the end of the lagoon next permit term. Additionally, this permit term is notification to the permittee that the receiving water is an unnamed tributary to Honey Creek that after field verification has been determined to be Limited Aquatic Life (LAL). However, this classification may require administrative code changes that are not currently in place. It is anticipated that BOD and TSS concentration, in addition to the mass limits, will become effective within the first 2 years of the next permit reissuance. The permittee should consider the BOD and TSS concentration limits in the WQBEL dated 12/20/2021 before making any plant upgrades or operational changes. Please be in close contact with the department regarding updates on the code changes for LAL waters not currently listed in ch. NR 104, Wis. Adm. Code.

The waste from the EQ tank (outfall 004) is either directly land applied on sites specifically approved for liquid industrial waste, taken to offsite manure storage pits (less than 10% industrial wastewater), or disposed of at municipal wastewater treatment plants. The 3000-gallon Salt Whey Tank stores waste from the whey separator, salted whey wastewater, and first rinse milk tank water. The Salt Whey Tank waste (outfall 005) is either land applied directly on sites specifically approved for industrial waste, taken to manure storage pits (volume limited to less than 10% of total wastewater volume) or disposed of at a municipal wastewater treatment plant. Outfall 006 is for sludge from the Living Machine. In the previous permit term almost all waste from the storage pits was hauled to a municipal treatment plant.

Permit Drafter's Name, Address, Phone and Email: Jennifer Jerich, DNR, Mailing address: Lisa Creegan, 3911 Fish Hatchery Road, Fitchburg, WI, 53711 (920) 450-4078, Jennifer.Jerich@wisconsin.gov

Basin Engineer's Name, Address, Phone and Email: Tanner Connors, 3911 Fish Hatchery Road, Fitchburg, WI 53711, (608) 575-6891, Tanner.Connors@wisconsin.gov

Proposed Modification: Permit modification -1 completed to include Water Quality Trading following the conditional approval of the WQT Plan dated 6/10/2026. This includes removal of MDV requirements as of the effective date of the modification except for one last payment requirement for the months in 2026 that the MDV was in effect.

The Department has tentatively decided that the above-specified WPDES permit should be modified.

Limitations and conditions which the Department believes adequately protect the receiving water are included in the proposed permit. Land application of waste shall be done in accordance with permit conditions and applicable codes. All land application sites shall be approved prior to their use. To receive a list of approved sites, or to be notified of potential approvals, contact the above-named basin engineer.

Persons wishing to comment on or object to the proposed permit action, or to request a public hearing, may write to the Department of Natural Resources at the above-named permit drafter's address. All comments or suggestions received no later than 30 days after the publication date of this public notice will be considered along with other information on file in making a final decision regarding the permit. Anyone providing comments in response to this public notice will receive a notification of the Department's final decision when the permit is issued. Where designated as a reviewable surface water discharge permit, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is allowed up to 90 days to submit comments or objections regarding this permit determination. If no comments are received on the proposed permit from anyone, including U.S. EPA, the permit will be issued as proposed.

The Department may schedule a public informational hearing if requested by any person and shall schedule a public informational hearing if a petition requesting a hearing is received from 5 or more persons or if response to this notice indicates significant public interest pursuant to s. 283.49, Wis. Stats. Requests for a public informational hearing shall state the following: the name and address of the person(s) requesting the hearing; the interest in the proposed permit of the person(s) requesting the hearing; the reasons for the request; and the issues proposed to be considered at the hearing.

Information on file for this permit action, including the draft permit, fact sheet and permit application, may be inspected and copied at either the above-named permit drafter's office or the above named basin engineer's office, Monday through Friday (except holidays), between 9:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Please call the permit drafter or basin engineer for directions to their office location, if necessary. Information on this permit action may also be obtained by calling the permit drafter at (920) 450-4078 or by writing to the Department. Reasonable costs (15 cents per page for copies and 7 cents per page for scanning) will be charged for information in the file other than the public notice, permit and fact sheet. Permit information is also available on the internet at:

<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/wastewater/PublicNotices.html>. Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, reasonable accommodation, including the provision of informational material in an alternative format, will be made to qualified individuals upon request.