



Distillers Grains on the Farm

Distillers grains (DGs) are one of the by-products from the process of distilling spirits. These grains are marketed in several forms based on moisture content. Distillers grains is an acceptable form of livestock feed and may be sold as wet, modified or dried.

- Wet, or “thin stillage,” is often 6% dry matter. Thin stillage is very perishable and becomes spoiled after only a day or two.
- Modified, or “wet cake,” contains approximately 28% - 50% dry matter. Decreasing the moisture content allows for a slightly longer shelf life of about one week.
- Dried distillers grains, which is generally 85% - 95% dry matter, have an extended shelf life and can be transported longer distances. However, some feeding value may be lost in the drying process.

For more information on feeding distillers grains, see the University of Kentucky, College of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service publication “[Distillers Grain Coproducts for Beef Cattle](#)” (ASC-186).

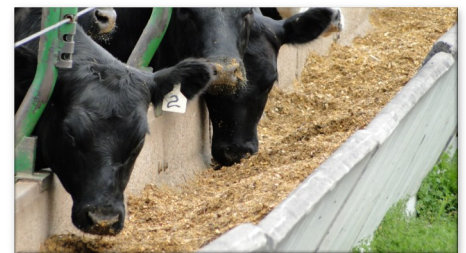


What Can a Farm Do with Excess Distillers Grains?

Distillers grains that have not been eaten by livestock may be tested and applied to land as a soil amendment for beneficial reuse.

Applying the distillers grains to the land must have a beneficial use and the application must not violate Kentucky environmental performance standards ([401 KAR 47:030](#)).

In some commercial applications, a permit may be required and must be obtained from the Division of Waste Management (DWM). Contact the Solid Waste Branch at (502)564-6716 or email waste@ky.gov if you have any questions regarding the proper application or management of distillers grains.



Management of distillers grains shall not violate Kentucky Environmental Performance Standards ([401 KAR 47:030](#)).

Can Excess Distillers Grains Go in My Lagoon?

Many farms have a lagoon or storage pond for manure, which requires an [Agricultural Kentucky No Discharge Operational Permit](#) (KNDOP) from the Division of Water (DOW). This type of permit is only available for **animal waste handling systems**.

If a farm takes distillers grains as animal feed, and all of the grain is eaten, no permits are needed. If a farm takes distillers grains and has excess that is either unconsumed or spoiled and wants to put the excess distillers grains in the lagoon or storage pond, they must first get either an [Industrial Kentucky No Discharge Operational Permit](#) or [Kentucky Pollutant Discharge Elimination System \(KPDES\) permit](#), because the distillers grains are an **industrial waste**.

Contact the DOW Surface Water Permits Branch at (502)564-3410 or email SWPBsupport@ky.gov before putting DGs in a lagoon.

By putting the excess distillers grains in the lagoon or storage pond, the lagoon and all its contents are now treated as **special waste** (waste from an industrial process). Land application of the contents of that lagoon is considered as the beneficial reuse of special waste, requiring that the [Registered Permit-By-Rule for Beneficial Reuse for Special Waste](#) form be submitted to the Division of Waste Management ([401 KAR 45:070](#)).

Odor Standard

Kentucky has an odor standard that applies to outdoor or ambient air ([401 KAR 53:010](#)). When an [odor complaint](#) is received, the Division for Air Quality (DAQ) staff will visit the site of the reported odor to investigate. An inspector will sample the air using a device that mixes the outdoor air with odorless (filtered) air. A violation is documented if an inspector detects an odor with the device.

Strong and steady odors are often required to document a violation of the Kentucky odor standard. Many odors not rising to the level of a violation are, nevertheless, corrected through cooperative efforts between the inspector and responsible party.

Need More Information?

The Environmental Compliance Assistance Program (ECAP) assists businesses, individuals and organizations in complying with environmental requirements. Contact the program via email at envhelp@ky.gov or call (502)782-8099 for any of your environmental compliance assistance needs.

Department for Environmental Protection Contacts

Division for Air Quality

Website: <https://eec.ky.gov/air>
Phone: (502)564-3999
Email: burnlaw@ky.gov

Division of Water

Website: <https://eec.ky.gov/water>
Phone: (502)564-3410
Email: SWPBsupport@ky.gov

Division of Waste Management

Website: <https://eec.ky.gov/Environmental-Protection/Waste>
Phone: (502)564-6716
Email: waste@ky.gov

The information in this document is offered only as general guidance. It is not a substitute for reading and understanding Kentucky's statutes and regulations governing the applicability and issuance of environmental permits. Specific requirements may vary with location. ECAP is not authorized to relieve any person from any requirement of federal regulations or Kentucky law through this document.

