

## General information

**Public comment period begins:** May 8, 2026  
**Public comment period ends:** June 8, 2026  
**Current permit issued:** February 1, 2018  
**Current permit expiration date:** January 31, 2023

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Commissioner has made a preliminary determination to reissue this permit for a term of approximately five years.

**Name and address of Permittee:**

Bongards' Creameries  
250 Lake Dr E  
Chanhassen, MN 55317-9364

**Facility name and location:**

Bongards' Creameries - Perham  
110 3rd Ave NE  
Perham, MN 56573-1831  
Otter Tail County  
T136N, R39W, Section 014

**MPCA contact person:**

Kameron Lindsey  
Industrial Division  
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency  
520 Lafayette Road N  
St. Paul, MN 55155-4194  
Phone: 651-757-2736  
Email: [kameron.lindsey@state.mn.us](mailto:kameron.lindsey@state.mn.us)

File manager phone: 651-757-2728 or  
844-828-0942

A draft permit is available for review on the MPCA Public Notices webpage at <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/get-engaged/public-comments>. Additional materials relating to the issuance of this permit are available for inspection by appointment at any MPCA office (<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/about-mpca/contact-us>) between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The MPCA will mail or email a copy of the draft permit upon request. Comments, petitions, and other requests must be received at the MPCA in writing on or before the public comment period end date and U.S. Mail comments must be received by 4:30 p.m.

**Watershed:** Otter Tail River

**Receiving water:** Unnamed Wetland to Unnamed Creek - Class 2D, 3, 4A, 4B, 5, 6 water

## Description of permitted facility/activity

The Bongards Creameries - Perham facility (facility) is located at 110 3rd Ave NE, Perham, Minnesota 56573-1831, Otter Tail County.

The principal activity at this facility is the processing of milk into cheese, and the processing of whey by-product into protein powder and deproteinized whey powder.

Wastewater from the facility consists of process wastewater, reverse osmosis reject water, and non-contact cooling water (NCCW). A portion (approximately 44%) of the process wastewater (the condensate of whey and permeate from whey concentration) is treated using a reverse osmosis membrane system polisher and discharged at average and maximum rates of 0.400 million gallons per day (MGD) and 0.700 MGD (WS 003 and WS 004). WS 003 and 004 are then mixed with NCCW prior to discharge to surface water via the city of Perham's municipal storm sewer system (SD 001). The remainder of the process wastewater (from all other processes and cleaning wastewater) and reverse osmosis reject are routed to the facility's aerated wastewater pond system for treatment, prior to land application via spray irrigation. NCCW is discharged to surface water via the city of Perham's municipal storm sewer system (SD 001). The discharge of process wastewaters other than the polished wastewater to surface waters is not authorized under this permit. Sanitary wastewater from the facility is routed to the city of Perham Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF).

This permit authorizes the discharge of once-through NCCW at average and maximum rates of 1.3 and 2.0 MGD, respectively. The NCCW and polished wastewater are authorized to discharge at a combined average and maximum rate of 1.75 MGD and 2.0 MGD, respectively. The water source is an onsite well or municipal source water. The municipal source water is chemically treated with chlorine. There are no other chemical additives in this discharge. NCCW and polished wastewater are discharged through SD 001 to an Unnamed Wetland (2D, 3, 4A, 4B, 5, 6 waters), via a municipal storm sewer/basin system, upstream of the Otter Tail River.

This permit also authorizes spray irrigation of process wastewater (WS 002) to seven spray irrigation sites (LA 301, LA 302, LA 305, LA 316 to 319), for a total of 304.7 acres. An average and maximum flow of 0.50 and 0.80 MGD (measured at WS 001), respectively, is treated at the facility's aerated wastewater pond system, which is located adjacent to the facility's spray irrigation sites, prior to spray irrigation. The maximum amount authorized for spray irrigation is 163.967 million gallons per year (measured at WS 002). There are eight monitoring wells adjacent to the spray irrigation sites to evaluate groundwater impacts from spray irrigation (GW 001, GW 006, GW 009 to GW 014). Groundwater intervention limits and response actions are included for several parameters. Tile line drainage is not present in the approved spray irrigation sites.

This permit also authorizes land application of the following industrial by-products: antibiotic/unusable milk (WS 302) and whey separator solids (WS 303). WS 302 is designated only for unusable milk that has entered a Bongards' production facility and is therefore an IBP. If milk is rejected prior to unloading and never enters a Bongards' facility, it should not be managed as WS 302, unless Bongards' directs it to a manure storage station authorized in this permit. WS 303 is designated for whey separator solids only.

This permit also includes three additional stations (WS 005, WS 006, and WS 007) for monitoring wastewater pond elevation with intervention limits for each pond.

In lieu of obtaining coverage under both the Industrial Stormwater General Permit and the individual NPDES permit, the MPCA has added the necessary industrial stormwater requirements language and limits and monitoring to this permit so that coverage under this NPDES permit alone will cover both permits. SD stations 002 to 006 are authorized for stormwater discharge and include intervention limits for several parameters.

The preliminary determination to reissue this Wastewater permit is tentative.

## Procedure for public participation

As stated in Minn. R. chs. 7000 and 7001, there are three formal procedures for public participation in the MPCA's consideration of this matter. Interested persons may:

- 1) Submit written comments on the draft permit.
- 2) Petition the MPCA to hold a public informational meeting.
- 3) Petition the MPCA to hold a contested case hearing.

## Submitting written comments

Comments may be submitted:

- 1) Online at <https://mpca.commentinput.com/comment/search>; or
- 2) By U.S. postal mail to the following address:  
Kameron Lindsey  
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency  
520 Lafayette Rd N  
St. Paul, MN 55155-4194

Submitted comments or petitions must state:

- 1) Your interest in the permit application or the draft permit.
- 2) The action you wish the MPCA to take, including specific references to the section of the draft permit you believe should be changed.
- 3) The reasons supporting your position, stated with sufficient specificity as to allow the MPCA to investigate the merits of the position.

## Public informational meeting

A public informational meeting is an informal meeting during which interested persons can ask questions concerning the proposed facility. MPCA staff will be present to provide information. If an interested person would like the MPCA to hold a public informational meeting, the person should include all information identified above and in addition include a statement of the reasons the person desires the MPCA to hold a public informational meeting and the issues that the person would like the agency to address at the public informational meeting.

## Contested Case Hearing

A contested case hearing is a formal proceeding before an administrative law judge empowered to advise the MPCA regarding issues of fact. As described in Minn. R. 7000.1800, persons who submit petitions for a contested case hearing must also state the issues they propose to address in a contested case hearing, the specific relief requested or resolution of the matter, and the reasons (which may be in the form of proposed findings) supporting an MPCA decision to hold a contested case hearing. Failure to comply with these rules exactly may result in a denial of the request. To the extent known, the petitioner may also submit a list of prospective witnesses to be called at a hearing, a proposed list of publications, references, or studies to be introduced at a hearing and the approximate time required for the petitioner to present the matter at a hearing. The decision whether to hold a contested case hearing will be made under Minn. R. 7000.1900.