

Reviewed 

 Entered in IIS

**Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality
Air Quality Complaint Investigation Report**

Facility Name	AltEn, LLC	Facility ID Number	84069
Mailing Address	1344 County Road 10 Mead, NE 68041-4036	Location	1344 County Road 10 Mead
Inspectors	Joseph J. Harris, Program Specialist Zach Homolka, Program Specialist	Date/Time	December 3, 2019 / see entrance interview for arrival time(s)
Facility Representatives	Ken Peterson, Production Manager Brad Anderson, Project Manager Dean Egr, ADNR Manager / Assistant Production Manager	Phone	319 360-2127

Complaint background

On December 3, 2019, EPA forwarded a summary of a telephone complaint they had received alleging open burning. The summary stated:

*"Seeking assistance for
Problem with a business west of his home
Mead Cattle, Mead NE - burning off old seed corn ^{Note 1}
Smell horrific
Talked to someone last year – said congress/someone might stop stockpiling
Probably 5 acres rotting seed corn dumping in green piles
Company started burning about a year ago
Saunders County not doing anything - blind eye since beef cattle
Smell horrific, many residents complaining - Not manure smell
1 Not healthy
2 property values going down
Big company doing whatever they want
State says watching them closely"*

Note 1 The Secretary of State's web site provided the following information: Mead Cattle Company, LLC; SoS Account #10052096; Principal Office Address – 1344 County Road 10, Mead; Registered Agent – Capitol Corporate Services, Inc., Suite 800, 1125 South 103rd Street, Omaha; Designated Office Address – 1344 County Road 10, Mead; A domestic LLC since November 13, 2003; active at the time I conducted this review.

I was assigned to investigate this general open fire complaint, and based on the description of the material in piles, instructed to confirm whether or not AltEn, LLC ^{Note 2} was operating their biochar system. Mr. Zach Homolka accompanied me on this investigation.



Note 2 The Secretary of State's web site provided the following information: SOS Account #10131696; Principal Office Address – 5225 Renner Road, Shawnee, KS 66217; Registered Agent and Office Address – Capitol Corporate Services, Inc., Suite 800, 1125 South 103rd Street, Omaha; a Kansas LLC filed in Nebraska on February 3, 2010; active at the time I conducted this review.

Arrival and entrance interview

We arrived unannounced at 1220 hours. It was clear, about 50°F with a 15 to 20 mph northwest wind. We drove east from County Road 10 along County Road K to County Road 9, then south about 1.1 miles where the road was blocked. We returned the way we came, and then drove south along County Road 10 and east along the first east-west road south of Mead Cattle Company, LLC. Upon reaching County Road 9, we returned the way we came. During the drive-by, we saw only condensed water vapor plumes at the Mead Cattle Company, LLC and AltEn, LLC sites. We did not smell burning material, nor did we see smoke or signs of open fires. When we were south and southeast of the cattle yard, we smelled only manure.

At 1250 hours, we went to the AltEn, LLC office, signed in and told Mr. Peterson we were investigating a complaint. He arranged for Mr. Anderson and Mr. Egr to join us. Mr. Peterson confirmed he had notified Mr. Scott Tingelhoff, General Manager, that we were onsite, but Mr. Tingelhoff was unable to attend the entrance interview. We exchanged business cards and I read the complaint information EPA had sent the department (italicized above). We then presented our photo identification cards and I gave Mr. Peterson a copy of Title 115, Chapter 2 regarding business confidentiality, and Nebraska Revised Statute §81-1511 stating the agency authority to conduct investigations.

I stated it appeared the complainant had conflated the Mead Cattle Company, LLC and AltEn, LLC sites. I then summarized our observations from our drive-by, stating we found no evidence of open burning at either site. I asked if we could confirm whether the biochar system had recently operated. Mr. Peterson stated they had not operated the system since May 2019, and would not operate it until they repaired the unit, and received department approval. Mr. Peterson and Mr. Anderson escorted us to the biochar system. Mr. Peterson explained how the system operated and that an air leak had caused damage rendering the unit unusable until repaired. He showed us the biochar that they had previously generated.

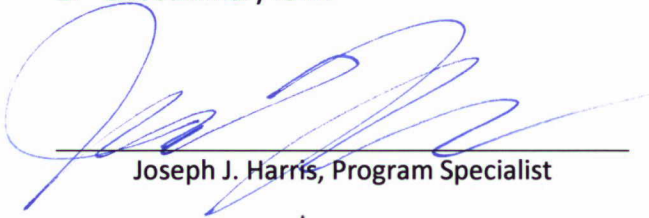
Mr. Peterson asked if we needed to see anything else onsite. I stated the information he provided was consistent with our drive-by observations and we returned to the office.

Exit interview

We conducted an exit interview with all three of the AltEn, LLC representatives and prepared an exit summary form stating we identified no concerns, which Mr. Peterson signed. I gave him the original and stated that within six weeks, the department would forward a copy of the investigation report to AltEn, LLC. We concluded the investigation and left the site at approximately 1250 hours.

Attachment

1. Aerial photographs
2. Exit summary form



Joseph J. Harris, Program Specialist

12.4.19

Date



Zach Homolka, Program Specialist

12/4/2019

Date



County Roads used for the drive-by observations





Biochar facility

Google Earth

Imagery Date: 6/4/2018 41°11'51.22" N 96°28'38.68" W elev 1184 ft eye alt 4286 ft

Inspection Exit Summary

NDEQ ID: _____ NDEQ Program ID: _____ NDEQ Notification #: _____

Facility/Operation Name: Alt En

Address _____

City/Town: Mead, County Saunder, State of Nebraska.

Owner/Occupant/Operator Inspection Contact(s): _____

Inspector	Phone No	E-Mail address
<u>Joseph Harris</u>	<u>402-471-</u>	<u>joseph.harris</u> @nebraska.gov
<u>Zach Homolka</u>	<u>402-471-6412</u>	<u>Zach.homolka</u> @nebraska.gov

Mailing Address: Department of Environmental Quality, PO Box 98922, Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-8922

Inspection Date: 12/3/2019 Start Time: 12:20 End Time: 1320☒ No concerns observed☐ Further agency discussion needed☐ Concerns observed:☐ Actions to be performed immediately or as soon as reasonably practical:**Please notify the Inspector when the above actions are completed.**

The Department will provide a final inspection report to you usually within 45 days of the inspection. The final inspection report will contain a complete list of any alleged violations. This inspection exit summary does not preclude any other legal action by the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality and your prompt attention to the documented concerns will be considered in assessment of your voluntary compliance. This summary was left

with: Ken Peterson. Please contact the Inspector if you have any questions concerning this inspection exit summary.

Signing this document is not an admission of liability by the facility.

Inspector Signature

Inspection Contact Signature

revised 12/11/15