Maryland Department of Environment

Land and Materials Administration
Resource Management Program
1800 Washington Blvd, Suite 610
Baltimore, MD 21230-1719
410- 537-3314, 1-800-633-6101

Inspector: **Jeff Croissette**
AI ID: 23560

Site Name: **Kilby Farms LLC / Hartland Holdings LLC**
Facility Address: 785 Fire Tower Road, Colora, MD 21917
County: Cecil County

Inspection Date: September 30, 2026, **Start Date/Time:** September 30, 2026, 13:00 hours
End Date /Time: September 30, 2026, 19:00 hours

Media Type(s): **Animal Feeding Operations (AFO)**

Contact(s):

1. **David Bramble: {MDE Inspector / Supervisor / ECS IV} 120 Broadway Avenue, Suite #13, Centreville, MD 21617 / PH#: 443-630-0476 / Email: david.bramble@maryland.gov**
2. **Brett Coakley: {Department of Natural Resources – Eastern Reginal Manager for DNR Fisheries} 580 Taylor Avenue, Annapolis, MD 21401. / PH# 410-928-3643 / Email: brett.coakley@maryland.gov**
3. **Jeff Carter: {MDE Section Head, Fish Kill Investigations Section Bioregulatory Monitoring and Response Division } 1800 Washington Boulevard, Baltimore, Maryland 21230 / PH# 443-759-0891 / Email: jeffrey.carter@maryland.gov**
4. **Michael Estes: { WSA – Water & Science Administration of MDE} Inspector / 201 Baptist St, Suite 22, Salisbury, MD 21801 / (cell) 443-506-8554 / Email: Michael.estes@maryland.gov**
5. **Benjamin Flahart: {Kilby Farms, Heartland Holdings LLC} / [redacted]**

Animal Feeding Operations (AFO)
Permit / Approval Numbers: Not permitted
Site Status: Active
Site Condition: Significant Noncompliance
Recommended Action: Refer to OAG
Inspection Reason: Complaint
Evidence Collected: Water readings, Visual Observation
Weather: Clear, temperature 70 °F

Fiel Inspection Report

On September 30, 2026, at approximately 13:00 Hours I received a call from my Division Chief Alexis Capes in reference to a suspected discharge and accompanying fish kill in the Basin Run tributary, which is suspected to be coming from the Kilby Farm. I was not in the immediate area and contacted Michael Estes from MDE Water and Science Administration. Mr. Estes had assisted me before on the Kilby Farm and was familiar with the area and the past discharges. Mr. Estes was able to respond immediately to the location. By 3:00 PM MDE had started receiving multiple citizen complaints from the area stating a large fish kill had occurred. Mr. Estes was there investigating the incident and saw a dead fish and took a picture of it. By 4:00 PM, my supervisor, David Bramble and I went to respond to the Kilby Farm location to investigate further. We met Brett Coakley from DNR and Jeff Carter from MDE at that location who were conducting their own investigations. At approximately 5:00 PM when we arrived, I called Mr. Flahart and told him the situation and that I needed to enter the farm. Mr. Flahart stated it was after hours and he had nobody to escort us on his property. David Bramble called Mr. Flahart back and expressed the urgency of the situation, asking him again to enter the farm. Mr. Flahart denied our request.

Jeff Carter, who handles investigations involving fish kills and water quality started conducting his investigation in Basin Run, outside the Kilby Farm location with Brett Coakley. (see Jeff Carters report). Dave Bramble and I went to several locations around the Kilby Farm and made observations, to wit:

Fisk Road & Canning House Road (Downstream of Kilby Farm): MDE Inspectors David Bramble and I arrived at approximately 17:00 hours on September 30, 2026, Dave Bramble and I confirmed the presence of brown, cloudy water with foamy bubbles flowing downstream in Basin Run stream. There was no smell at this time. MDE inspectors observed similarities between this incident and past incidents.

1455 Colora Road: Dave Bramble and I arrived at approximately 18:00 hours on September 30, 2026, We observed the Basin Run to be cloudy with a brownish substance floating downstream from the Kilby Farm. Dave Bramble and I also saw a dead fish and several dead eels. This was indicative of past incidents where manure ended up in the Basin Run tributary, which is believed to have come from the Kilby Farm. The Kilby Farm is approximately half a mile upstream. Dave Bramble and I observed a heavier concentration of brownish water in some stagnated pools of water under the Colora Road bridge. The last measurable rainfall in Colora was as follows:

Colora, Maryland received a total of 0.17 inches of measurable rainfall from September 21 through October 5, 2026.

Weather station logs for Colora Station KMDCOLOR11 show that nearly the entire 15-day timeframe was dry, with measurable precipitation occurring on only a single afternoon.

Daily Rainfall Breakdown

Date Range	Daily Rain Total	Conditions / Observations
Sept 21 – Sept 25	0.00 inches	Overcast to clear skies; no accumulation recorded.
Saturday, Sept 26	**0.17 inches**	**Measurable Rain:** Light rain fell consistently between 1:55 PM and 4:00 PM.
Sept 27 – Oct 1	0.00 inches	Mostly cloudy to clear skies.
Friday, Oct 2	0.00 inches	Overcast with minor humidity but no ground accumulation.
Oct 3 – Oct 5	0.00 inches	Clear, dry fall conditions.

The rainfall data shows that the discharge was an "event" and not caused by rainfall mixing with farm fields that recently had manure placed on them. The rainfall on Saturday, September 26, 2026 would be insignificant to wash enough manure into Basin Run to cause the fish kill and discolored water almost 4 days later.

700 & 800 Blocks of Fire Tower Road (Upstream of Kilby Farm): Dave Bramble and I arrived at approximately 18:30 hours on September 30, 2026, The Basin Run Creek was clear, the bottom of the creek up to 3 feet was visible, and there were no unusual smells or signs of discharge. Dave and I saw an abundance of fish swimming around, as well as eels.

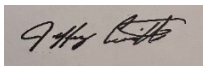
SUMMARY:

There had been no significant measurable rainfall in the 15 days in the Colora Maryland area.

The incident on the 30th of September 2026, is reminiscent of past discharges over the last couple of years. Jeff Carter's report, as well as witnesses' information, tends to point to a discharge. The location, after the Fire Tower Road bridge and before the Colora Road bridge brings the likelihood of the source to Kilby Farm. The approximate distance between the Fire Tower Road Bridge and the Colora Road Bridge is 1,648.5 meters (1.2 miles). Kilby Farm is the only known animal farm situated along Basin Run between these two points.

Basin Run is a State of Maryland waterway that flows into the Susquehanna River and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay.

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Site Name: Kilby Farms LLC / Hartland Holdings LLC
Facility Address: 785 Fire Tower Road, Colora, MD 21917



Inspector: _____ October 8, 2026
Jeff Croissette / Date

Received by: _____
Print Name

Report Provided to:
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