



NICHOLAS MEAT INFORMATION BRIEF

Understanding Water Usage and the Permit Process

THE QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF WATER ARE IMPORTANT TO EVERYONE IN THE COMMUNITY. Water is also crucial to all food processing facilities, including Nicholas Meat.

Nicholas Meat appreciates public concern about water, and we address some of the more common questions about water use and the potential impact on the aquifer below.

Q: What process is utilized to ensure there is enough water for the community? Are permits needed?

A: Nicholas Meat is committed to ensuring there is an adequate water supply for neighbors and the community, as well as to operate the plant. Permits are required and issued by the Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC). The SRBC is an interstate agency that coordinates the management of water resources in the Susquehanna River Basin. Its mission is to enhance public welfare through comprehensive planning, water supply allocation, and management of water resources.

This organization regulates water withdrawal projects of 100,000 gallons per day or more and both groundwater and surface-water withdrawals. When working on such projects, their main regulatory concerns include availability of water in the watershed/basin and impacts of withdrawal on other users and water resources.

Nicholas Meat has hired Meiser & Earl, Inc., a hydrogeological firm in State College, Pa., to conduct ongoing analyses of Nicholas Meat's proposed water withdrawals and potential impacts to the aquifer and surrounding water sources.

They also oversee Nicholas Meat's well development, source monitoring, aquifer testing, and the application/permitting process.

When first starting the permitting process in January 2018, Nicholas Meat and its hydrogeological

team met with the SRBC to discuss the type of project, long-term goals, proposed water usage, and any potential concerns.

Following this initial meeting, hydrogeologists evaluated the hydrogeological setting and determine the best location for well drilling while adhering to required setbacks. Once placement was determined, the wells were constructed according to regulatory guidelines, and tested for potential water yield and water quality.

After well construction, the team submitted an aquifer test plan (ATP) or alternative hydrogeologic evaluation (AHE) to the SRBC. This plan must be within regulatory withdrawal limits and consists of background project information, hydrological setting information, groundwater availability analysis, groundwater basin determination, availability of water during drought conditions, and an inventory of existing users. The existing user inventory is determined by data from online databases and a door-to-door survey of all homes and businesses located within a half-mile of new wells drilled by Nicholas Meat. Additionally, a monitoring plan is submitted for all wells, springs, and streams to be monitored during a 72-hour pumping test.

Once the SRBC approves any aquifer test plan or alternative hydrological evaluation, the applicant prepares for a 72-hour pumping test. This test must be performed during a natural water -declining event and with little to no precipitation. Throughout the test, a constant pumping rate must be maintained. Water levels are measured continuously with automatic data loggers at all monitoring points (wells, springs, and streams) 48 hours before the pumping, during the pumping, and after the pumping. Spring and stream flows are also monitored using weirs, flumes, or flow meters. Water quality is measured in the pumping well, springs and streams. Instruments are installed to measure precipitation throughout the pumping test.

Precipitation occurring throughout the testing period can require the test to be extended or in some cases redone. The SRBC is onsite at times during the test to ensure testing procedures and protocol are followed.

Nicholas Meat successfully conducted pumping tests on two of its new wells in 2021 and one of its new wells earlier this year. Upon completion of the pumping test, data was evaluated and a hydrogeological report was created consisting of data tables, graphs, and maps showing extent and area of any water level impacts. Once the data and graphs were analyzed, a Groundwater Withdrawal Application was completed and submitted to the SRBC. This application consists of background data, facility information, well information, an updated groundwater availability analysis, hydrogeological report and conclusions. Public notifications were sent to the DEP, local municipality, planning commission, newspaper and property owners with a quarter mile of the wells tested.

Upon receipt of the application, the SRBC has been evaluating the application and may request additional information or testing. If approved, the SRBC prepares a docket (permit) for the withdrawal specifying pumping rate, 30-day average daily and maximum daily withdrawal, monitoring and reporting requirements.

Q: What is the status of Nicholas Meat's Groundwater Application?

A. Applications for all three of the new wells were submitted and reviewed by the SRBC. On December 14 2023, the SRBC approved the permit.

“After review of the record, including the technical findings of Susquehanna River Basin Commission (Commission) staff, the Commission has determined that no significant adverse impacts are anticipated by the operation of this project as described and conditioned herein, the project is physically feasible, and does not conflict with or adversely affect the Commission’s Comprehensive Plan. Accordingly, the Commission hereby approves the project described herein in accordance with the conditions set forth.”

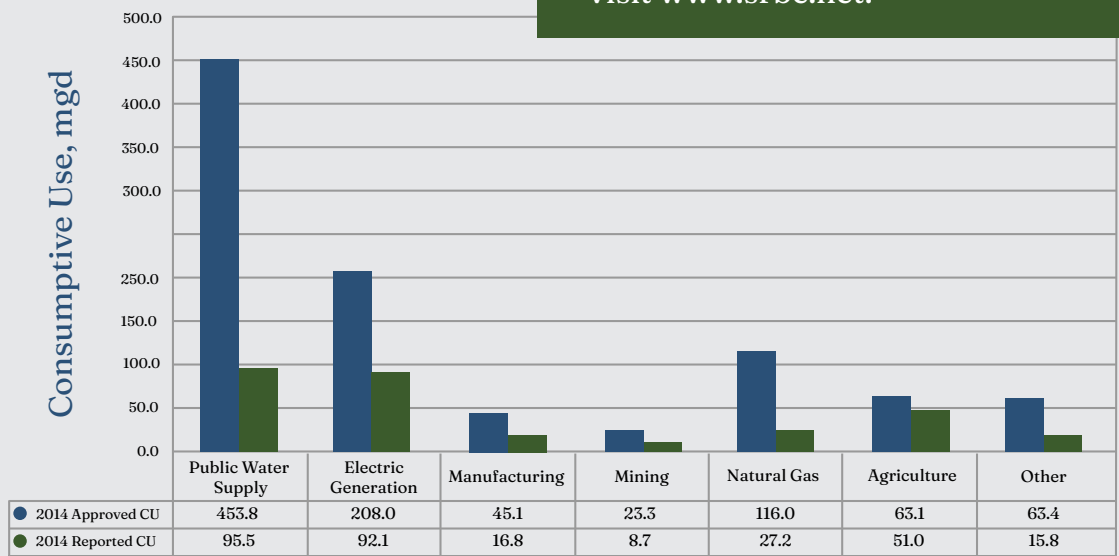
Q: If you are going to recycle 90 percent of the water used at the plant through the SRF, why did you apply for additional withdrawal of water?

A: Our goal of reaching 90 percent water reuse will develop in phases over the next several years. Therefore, we need to have an adequate supply of water as we work toward our goal. Additionally, we will need to have enough water to support operations during maintenance and repair periods.

Q: Is Nicholas Meat one of the largest water users in the Susquehanna River Basin?

A: No. According to the SRBC, public water supply and electric generation are the largest water users in the Susquehanna River Basin. The river basin drains 27,510 square miles, covering half the land area of Pennsylvania and portions of New York and Maryland. It includes all or portions of 66 counties and has six major subbasins. Also, according to the 2010 Census Bureau, the river basin supports a population of more than 4 million. Loganton is in the West Branch Susquehanna subbasin.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE SRBC visit www.srbc.net.



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LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW NICHOLAS MEAT IS DEDICATED TO A SUSTAINABLE SUGAR VALLEY AT:

www.NicholasMeat.com

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