

Citizen Resolution # 131516

#15

(For Hearing Officer completion)



CAFOs: A Dangerous Threat to Public Health

Each year the Conservation Congress accepts written resolutions from the public; in each county throughout the state regarding natural resource issues of statewide concern. These resolutions are introduced by the public in attendance during the Conservation Congress county meeting that is held annually in conjunction with the DNR Spring Fish and Wildlife Hearings in April.

In order for a resolution to be accepted for further consideration by the Conservation Congress and for public vote at the annual Conservation Congress county meeting, all resolutions introduced must meet the following requirements:

1. The concern must be of statewide impact.
2. The concern must be practical, achievable and reasonable.
3. The resolution must have a clear title.
4. The resolution must clearly define the concern.
5. Current state statutes and laws must be considered, with reasonable cause for change being presented.
6. The resolution must clearly suggest a solution to the concern and a description of further action desired.
7. Resolutions must be 250 words or less exclusive of the title and author contact information. (This guidance is not included in the word count.)

Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs), AKA Factory Farms, are a threat to public health due to the many contaminants prevalent in the manure they generate which may include antibiotics, growth hormones, E Coli, nitrogen, phosphorus, animal blood and more. The DNR has issued 14 CAFO permits in Dane County and 280 throughout the state, according to the DNR's web site.

Factory farms discharge large quantities of chemical-contaminated manure by spreading it on fields providing an unacceptable threat to our drinking water. The DNR regulates waste discharge via a permit process. However, CAFOs are only inspected about once every five years, leaving the industry to be largely self-regulating. Even with the lack of inspections, numerous CAFOs are cited each year for illegal manure spills and other violations. Shockingly, there are no air quality or animal welfare standards.

Due to lax regulations and the backing of large agribusiness interests, more CAFOs are moving to Wisconsin, and there is little that communities can do to stop them. These facilities are touted as desirable for the jobs they create; however, little regard is paid to small family farms that cannot compete against these behemoths.

Residents living near CAFOs have watched their property values plummet while suffering from noxious fumes, respiratory issues, headaches, nausea and other ailments. The World Health Organization is investigating links between a Smithfield Foods CAFO and the swine flu outbreak. The American Public Health Organization and the Union of Concerned Scientists have also raised concerns about CAFOs threat to public health.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Conservation Congress advise the DNR to enact a moratorium on issuing new CAFO permits, and that existing permits be phased out as they expire.

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