

# Clean Water Action Council

OF NORTHEAST WISCONSIN

CELEBRATING 35 YEARS OF WORKING TO PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN NORTHEAST WISCONSIN

SUMMER 2020

## The Impact of Factory Farms in Northeast Wisconsin

*And the loss of small to midsize family farms.*



Wiese Brothers Farm, 7091 Old 57 Rd., Greenleaf, Brown County. Licensed for 10,460 animal units.

~ The difference between the two photos shows CAFOs as industrial sized operations. ~

### Introduction by CWAC President Dean Hoegger

In 2012, CWAC members from Kewaunee, Door, and Brown counties asked for our help in addressing issues related to factory farms known as concentrated animal feeding operations referred to as CAFOs. Their first concern was for safe drinking water. In some Kewaunee County towns, as much as 40% of the wells tested were found unsafe due to the presence of bacteria or high levels of nitrates, or both. We then published our first newsletter about CAFOs in September 2012. ([Fall 2012 Newsletter](#))

Making matters worse, not only were CAFOs polluting drinking water but they were also adversely impacting nearby resident's health and quality of life. Complaints were coming in about animal buildings being built so close



Robert Columb Farm, 3220 Lime Kiln Rd., Sturgeon Bay, Door County.  
Less than 100 dairy cows before a recent herd sell off.

to existing homes that exhaust fans were blowing odors and particulates into their home. Quiet rural roads were becoming the industrial highways for semi-truck tankers hauling manure to farm fields located many miles away from the CAFO.

Semi-truck manure tankers were replacing the tractor pulling a dry manure spreader directly from the farm to the fields or sometimes down the road to nearby fields. During prime liquid manure spreading times, these tankers are

leaving a CAFO every five minutes or less and often traveling more than 30 miles, round trip. CWAC recently observed such hauling and found the trucks were traveling at over 60 miles per hour on county and state highways.

Odor complaints became more common as liquid manure storage and spreading was replacing dry manure on many different size farms. On factory size farms the odor was amplified because rather than having 500 animals, factory farms could contain 5000 animals. Liquid manure odor is often referred to as a stench since the smell is more like what is found near some industrial sites and can be harmful to breathe. Even the hauling of liquid manure releases these odor-causing gases, as we noted while following a tanker through the rural countryside and one small town.

Probably the most alarming concern brought to us was the threat from manure spraying. One CAFO in Kewaunee County was already testing this method of delivering manure to fields directly from manure pits or hauling to pumping equipment at fields that were miles away. The large concentration of animals at CAFOs means they are producing millions of gallons of waste that need to be disposed of.

Using a traveling gun, which resembles a giant sprinkler on wheels, a CAFO can spray its manure waste onto fields and over crops. This raised a concern about the airborne drift of this sprayed waste and the vast distance pathogens could travel; thereby, contaminating other human food crops and surfaces such as children's play equipment. (See photo below.)



Based on their previous experience with CAFO complaints to the WDNR, residents doubted the agency would adequately enforce spraying regulations. Therefore, CWAC worked to pass manure spraying bans, and 17 Northeastern Wisconsin towns have done so. *Contact us if you need help to pass a ban in your town.*

CAFO owners will tell you that their farms are the most highly regulated agricultural operations in the state. While it is true that there are some higher standards for farms reaching the 1,000 animal unit level, impacted residents and some area elected officials will tell you that these regulations are also very poorly enforced. So much so that CWAC and several other environmental groups filed a petition in October of 2014 to the Environmental Protection Agency for action in Kewaunee County under the Safe Drinking Water Act. This was primarily

due to the overspreading of liquid animal waste by CAFOs.

After nearly four years, modest revisions to the NR151 Administrative Rules for manure spreading began to go into effect. The full implementation of these rules is being hindered by a lack of soil depth maps that show where depth to bedrock is less than 24 inches.

While these giant factory farms produce the amount of waste equal to a small city, which goes untreated on agricultural fields, they still have the protections provided to farms under Wisconsin's right-to-farm laws. Just ask the Little River plaintiffs who tried to stop a CAFO from building a liquid manure storage facility 14 miles away from their cattle buildings. Sanctioned for not proving their case for an injunction, the court initially ordered the plaintiffs to pay over \$100,000 in legal fees claimed by the CAFO.

As the number of animals kept increasing at CAFO operations, the number of small to mid-size farms was declining. According to the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, in the last decade, the State of Wisconsin has lost 5,637 dairy farms, a decrease of 44 percent. However, the total number of cows in the State of Wisconsin has remained relatively the same due to CAFO herd increases.

The CWAC Board of Directors was compelled to find a way to help these smaller operations within our budget constraints. Over a three year period, we sponsored four workshops for dairy farmers. Two workshops focused on making the farm more profitable by using managed grazing techniques, and the other two workshops showed farmers how to diversify through agri-tourism.

It is clear that the quality of life in parts of rural Northeastern Wisconsin is changing as a result of dairy farming becoming more industrialized. You will hear more in this issue about how rural residents are being impacted, how small to mid-size farms are declining, and what you can do to support more sustainable forms of agriculture.

## **The Impact of Factory Farms on the People of Northeast Wisconsin**

By Dean Hoegger

All of us are affected by the proliferation of industrial-sized farming in northeast Wisconsin. The impact of these factory farms, known as concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) is felt by any citizen concerned about water quality in our region. There is little doubt that the non-point pollution of manure run-off is a significant contributor to Kewaunee County rivers becoming so contaminated that the Environmental Protection Agency has labeled them as IMPAIRED. Or, that the concentration of CAFO's in the Fox-Wolf River Watershed is contributing to the "dead zone" in the Green Bay.

While all northeast Wisconsin residents are harmed by our waters being polluted, some residents are harmed to an even greater degree. The following four articles will articulate that harm in greater detail.

## Lynda Cochart, Town of Lincoln, Kewaunee County



Lynda with granddaughter Carly and grandson Brody.

Lynda Cochart is a clean water activist and farmer in the Town of Lincoln. With two grandchildren who spend time at her home, she has good reason to be fighting for safe drinking water. Her home is located between two large CAFOs, Dairy Dreams with almost 6,000 animal units and Kinnard Farms with over 10,000 animal units, which makes Lynda constantly concerned about the safety of her well water.

Beginning in 2010, Ms. Cochart and her partner Dick Bultman began noticing a problem with their well water. Testing was showing coliform bacteria, an indication that the well may be contaminated with harmful bacteria. Years later, testing would in fact show E-coli, bovine bacteria, and salmonella bacteria. At the time, bacteria were attempted to be eradicated through well chlorination, but this was unsuccessful for Ms. Cochart's well. Finally, in 2016, the well was replaced with a state grant (taxpayer money) that paid for a portion of the replacement costs.

Ms. Cochart believes that living between these two CAFOs, or factory farms as some residents call them, is the source of her well problems. Regular testing of the new well has not shown any contamination thus far. But as she points out, others in the area have replaced their wells only to have them go bad again. "When will it go bad? How will I know?" are questions Ms. Cochart constantly asks herself. Her uncertainty in the safety of her own well has led her to stop drinking her well water.

With her grandchildren spending time at her farm, Lynda is also concerned with other uses of her water. For instance, bathing with a cut or skin abrasion could open the door to pathogens in manure, such as methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus* or MRSA. Researchers at Johns Hopkins University's Bloomberg School of Public Health found that the application of manure to crop fields increased levels of risk for being infected with MRSA. "What about just washing their hands if they have a cut," she wonders. "I don't even let my grandchildren wash their hands in the water. I have them use boiled water instead."

On her farm, Lynda and Bob, with help from her son Cory, raise crops and grass fed beef. Lynda has 72 years of history in Lincoln. She grew up there on the family farm and then purchased her farm in 1976, at a time when family farms dominated the landscape. Since then, she has seen many agricultural changes. She noted that there has been a substantial increase in traffic from manure haulers. Ms. Cochart has noted that the increase in manure hauling and spreading has affected her air quality as well as her asthma symptoms.

These agricultural changes have made life on her farm far less enjoyable. Her health, and that of her loved ones, is now at greater risk.

## John and Margaret Larmay, Town of Little River, Oconto County



The Larmays have enjoyed their county home since 1989. The home and farm were originally surrounded by family farms. They knew their neighbors and there was a sense of rural community. Outdoor gatherings and barbecues with family and friends were common and much enjoyed. "Our granddaughter's graduation party was wonderful," remarked

Margaret when referring to the outdoor celebration.

Over time, family farms began to disappear in their neighborhood and barnyards were turned into crop fields. Liquid manure spreading became more common and was primarily being done by B&D Dairy from Pound, WI. However, in the summer of 2018, the neighborhood radically changed when B&D Dairy built a manure pit, or cesspool, about a quarter mile from their home. After the 2.6 million gallon capacity cesspool began to fill with liquid manure, the stench became overwhelming.

"The smell is so strong that you can hardly stand to be out in the yard," stated John. Being west of the manure pit provides some relief as the wind does not always blow from the east. However, "You can't plan ahead, not knowing which way the wind will blow," he explained. The Larmays noted that when people come to visit, they complain of the odor.

Liquid manure is the source of these complaints. CAFOs and other large farms collect, move, and store manure in liquid form, often containing only 5% solids. This manure smells much different than solid manure, which was more common in the past. The gasses that cause the smell are toxic and can cause health problems. Hydrogen sulfide, carbon dioxide, methane, and ammonia are even more present when agitating the manure prior to pumping it out for spreading on farm fields. Spreading also causes an increase of gases being released.

In the fall and spring, B&D Dairy is now spreading manure from the cesspool. During these releases, the Larmays find that the gases enter their home even coming into their basement. On some days, a gas mask is needed while cutting the lawn. If the dogs are outside when manure spreading is happening across the road, "they smell so bad we don't want to let them in," complained Margaret.

After the pit was built, the Town of Little River passed an ordinance to require manure pits be 1320 feet from neighboring homes, instead of the 250 feet from a property line. This ordinance would not have required the cesspool to be built further from the Larmays' home since their home was just beyond the new setback. However, it does affect how they might use their property in the future. Any new homes built on the property would not receive the benefit of the 1320 feet setback.

The Larmays are not certain what the future holds for

them in Little River. While selling or passing on the property to family members may be an option, it likely has lost value since the manure cesspool was built.

### **Richard and Dorothy Kloes, Town of Little River, Oconto County**



Richard and Dorothy found that attempting to use the legal system to stop the construction of a manure pit can be an expensive proposition. In 2017 they brought their concerns to CWAC about a CAFO from another county that wanted to build a manure pit, or cesspool, next to their property. At that time the CAFO, B&D Dairy, located 14 miles away in Pound,

Marinette County, wanted to build a 12.6 million gallon liquid manure storage cesspool. B&D applied for a variance of the standard setback from a road to make the cesspool as large as possible.

After reviewing the variance request, CWAC wrote an appeal, which was based on the belief that the variance did not meet the requirements of the county ordinance. Neighbors also testified at a hearing before the Oconto County committee made up of county board members. They voted to disallow the variance. Unfortunately, the threat of a manure cesspool reappeared just 14 months later.

Without any notice, construction of the cesspool began, this time without a variance. An examination of the permit showed that B&D was again trying to build the manure storage facility closer to the road than what CWAC believed the setback requirements would allow. The plan showed a 250' setback, not from the roadway, but from the right-of-way on the opposite side of the road. So, CWAC again wrote an appeal for the Kloes.

CWAC again wrote an appeal to revoke the permit based on the setback error. However, it was rejected by Oconto County's Corporation Counsel on the basis that CWAC did not have standing under the livestock siting law. Appeals by local residents were also rejected because their appeals were about expected odors from the pit instead of a legal fault with the permit.

At this point Richard, Dorothy, and several neighbors decided to hire a law firm to fight the citing of the manure cesspool, and this is when the costs began adding up. According to Richard, the law firm first charged the group of petitioners \$40,000 for several client meetings, a deposition meeting, a court appearance, and apparently some bungled legal research.

CWAC advised the attorneys that making a nuisance claim against the CAFO would not work because Wisconsin's right to farm laws protect farmers from such suits, even when they are factory-size farms. Farmers are also further protected from such suits because the law allows the court to sanction petitioners with

payment of the farms legal fees to defend a failed nuisance suit.

However, the lawyers went ahead and filed the nuisance claim. The result was that it was disallowed and the neighbors now owed B&D legal fees amounting to over \$100,000. Stunned, the plaintiffs again reached out to CWAC. Fortunately, CWAC was able to find a law firm that was able to shift blame for the misguided lawsuit to the plaintiffs' attorneys. So, in the end, Richard reported the final cost for him and his neighbors amounted to \$7,000 each, including the attorneys' fees.

While there was a great relief regarding the reduced expense, it is still hard for the Kloes to accept that a 12.5 million gallon manure cesspool is now located just down the road from the home they have lived in since 1999. Richard believes that there have been no odor mitigation efforts made by B&D dairy at this cesspool. Besides the odor issues, Richard worries that manure runoff could contaminate his seven plus acres of fish ponds, or that leakage could pollute his well.

### **The family running a small to mid-size farm in Northeast Wisconsin**



Chris Vandertie shared his concerns about the plight of farmers shortly before his farm auction began.



The Polich family are milk producers for Organic Valley in Door County  
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by David Nevala for Organic Valley.

Farmer Chris Vandertie provided a tour of his dairy farm prior to the noon auction on Saturday, May 30. He and his family were concerned that buyers would not show up. In days gone by, members of nearby family farms would show up in large numbers for such auctions. They would be looking to add some cattle to their herd or replace a piece of aging equipment. But today was different. With so many small to mid-size family farms out of business, who would come to bid?

"The system has failed us," Vandertie complains as he shows me around the farm compound. "The future's market," he explains, "is like dangling the carrot in front of the rabbit. It leads us to expect a price we can survive on, such as \$22 (per hundred), only to have the price drop to \$13.50." The increase in CAFO herds has also produced an abundance of milk, making it a wholesale buyers' market.

Vandertie noted that it was not only the market pressures on the price of milk that was forcing him out but also soil and water department requirements for manure containment facilities. This complaint was shared by other small operators as well. In Vandertie's case, it was the \$80,000 for his 30% cost-sharing for a new containment facility. With a nearly break-

even operation, a mortgage on the farm, and other bills to pay, it was just too much.

He remained hopeful about his future on the land. However, many farmers in his situation have had to resort to renting or selling land to nearby CAFOs.

Farmers who sell directly to a cheese or processing plant can do better, including dairy farmers producing a niche product such as organic milk such as the Polich family has done. They are pictured to the left and were featured in our Summer 2018 CWAC Newsletter.

CWAC member and recently retired dairy farmer David Heidl was producing premium milk from grass-fed cows for Organic Valley. Heidl continues to graze beef and hogs for his diversified farm while his daughter has taken over the organic dairy business. Heidl was also one of the key presenters in our 2017 managed grazing workshop.

Yet, even the small specialty farms selling organic dairy products are being threatened by factory farms. For example, corporately owned Horizon Organic is now the largest producer of organic milk in North America. The company's practices are highly questioned by small organic operators because how can Horizon Organic provide the grazing conditions necessary for USDA Organic certification when many of their milk suppliers come from mega-farms.

As consumers, we will want to keep our food dollars local and supportive of sustainable agriculture. *Be sure to read, "How you spend your food dollars can protect the environment," in this newsletter.*

## Socio-economic Impact of CAFOs on Small Communities

By Charlie Frisk

In the 1970s Nixon's Agriculture Secretary Earl Butz famously told farmers to "get big or get out" and plant "fence row to fence row." He championed industrial farming. Butz's advice has led to both economic and environmental catastrophe in the Midwest, and one of the best places to see the impact is Northeast Wisconsin.

Fifty years later the same mantra is being parroted by Sonny Perdue, Trump's Agriculture Secretary. Perdue spoke at the World Dairy Expo in Madison in October of 2019 and said, "In America, the big get bigger and the small go out. I don't think in America, for any small business, we have a guaranteed income or guaranteed profitability."

Jerry Volenec, a fifth-generation Wisconsin dairy farmer put it this way: "What I heard today from the Secretary of Agriculture is there's no place for me." He's right. Under Perdue there is no place for small farmers and under this administration there is no place for a thriving, small-town rural America.

For the past fifteen years Wisconsin has lost two dairy farms a day. In 2004 Wisconsin had 15,904 dairy farms, and by 2020 more than half of those are gone. On Jan. 1, 2020, Wisconsin was down to 7,292 dairy farms. Yet the number of dairy cows has actually gone up slightly during that period, due to the development of the large industrial type dairy farms.

Wisconsin Dairy Farm Number Trend, 1930-2017



Farmers like Volenec do not expect a guaranteed income, but they do expect the opportunity to compete on a level playing field. The farm subsidy program greatly favors the larger, wealthier farmers, while small farmers, particularly those participating in environmentally friendly practices such as rotational grazing and organic production receive almost nothing.

As of October 2019, according to a report released by the nonprofit Environmental Working Group, most of the \$8.4 billion given out in last year's farm bailout went to wealthy farmers, exacerbating the economic disparity with smaller farmers. The top 10% of farmers received 54% of the subsidies in 2019.

What makes this particularly ironic is that when the farm subsidy program first started during FDR's administration it was set up as a means to allow small family farms to compete with larger farms. There were originally size limitations that prevented larger farmers from receiving subsidies. Since that time those subsidies have been turned on their head so that today they are actually helping drive small farmers out of business.

Small farms are the economic and social backbone of most small communities in the Midwest. As those farms go, so do the communities. I grew up in a small rural town, Ackley, Iowa, a community that had about 1700 residents. The switchover to Big Ag occurred earlier in Iowa, getting started back in the 1970s with many farmers switching from a diversified livestock/crop type of farming to strictly cash grain, which led to farms growing dramatically in size as the farmers no longer had to deal with the work of maintaining livestock.

The final nail in the coffin for small Iowa farmers came with a change in the hog industry. Smithfield Foods, Inc. totally changed the economics of hog production in the entire world. Smithfield started out as a meat-processing company in 1936. They bought up most of the hog processing plants in the U.S. and killed off the unions at the plants. Working in a hog processing plant went from being a hard job that was relatively well paid, to a brutally hard, dangerous job that is poorly paid without the unions to look out for the workers.

After taking over the processing end of the industry, Smithfield turned their eyes on the production end. They started buying up hog farms and paid their own farms a

“quality” bonus over the pigs coming from private owners. Today almost all of the hog farms in Iowa are economically controlled by Smithfield. Smithfield was sold to a Chinese corporation in 2013, and in 2016 reported annual revenue of \$14 billion.

What happened due to these changes in Ackley, Iowa is typical of what took place in most small Iowa towns. Ackley had about 1700 residents when I graduated from high school in 1971. Today Ackley is down to 1300 residents and about half the businesses that I grew up with are gone, Main Street is mostly empty storefronts. My graduating class at Ackley-Geneva had 91 students; today Ackley-Geneva-Wellsburg-Steamboat Rock has classes of 20-30 students.

The population drain in the countryside is even greater than in town, as the farms get bigger, the old farmsteads are bulldozed, it makes it easier to use big equipment. Churches and businesses are shuttered and the schools get so small it makes it difficult to support band, chorus, athletics, and other activities, as well as to provide any elective classes.

What happened in Iowa in the latter years of the 20th century is taking place in Wisconsin in the 21st century. The CAFO model of dairy farming has taken over so rapidly that it is hard to believe that it really only started to have an impact about 15 years ago. Page’s Ponderosa, one of the larger CAFOs in Kewaunee Co., had 65 cows and 320 acres in 1980; today they have over 5,000 cows and 8,500 acres.

The rise of the CAFOs has been a two-edged sword for property values in the country in NE Wisconsin. Farm land values have risen dramatically, primarily because the CAFOs need huge acreage to spread their liquid manure; making it almost impossible for young people to get a start in any type of farming. However, for people who own houses in the countryside, many have seen their home values plummet. If there is a CAFO in the vicinity of their home, air quality is a constant problem, and many homes no longer have potable water coming from their wells. People who have purchased their dream home in the country can find it impossible to live in, and nearly impossible to sell.

Small farmers were told that to compete with the CAFOs they needed to be innovative and switch to things like organic production, rotational grazing, and selling genetics. This allowed some of the small farmers to hang on for a few more years, but in recent years mega-organic farms in states like Texas, where land is cheaper and they don’t have to deal with winter, flooded the organic market, and many of those farmers have gone under as well.

The biggest things working against the small farmer are the economics of scale and the disproportionate amount of government subsidies going to large corporate farms. The UW Madison Agriculture Department has determined that profit per cow is greatest on small grass-fed dairy operations. However, with milk prices so low due to overproduction, those smaller farmers cannot support themselves no matter how efficient they are.

The quickest way to level the playing field for small

farmers would be to return some fairness to the allocation of federal farm subsidies. A recent report from the Economic Research Service confirms that federal subsidies to farms are increasingly going to larger and larger farms, thus supporting the cycle of the big getting bigger. Fewer and bigger farms mean less money circulating in local economies, fewer farm jobs in rural areas, and fewer opportunities for beginning and young farmers to get into the business.

A friend of mine recently commented that the CAFOs were helping to feed the world. Nothing could be further from the truth. The previous small farm model was totally capable of providing the dairy products needed for the world; the CAFOs have produced such a surplus that farmers have had to resort to dumping their milk because the market was overwhelmed. Dairy cows cannot simply be shut off when their milk is not needed, they have to be milked.

Dairy products are also not as suitable for export as other agricultural products. Dairy consumption in adulthood is primarily a Western European thing, 75-95% of adult Africans and Asians are lactose intolerant, greatly limiting the demand for dairy in a large part of the world.

Moreover, a misconception has been spread that CAFOs will rehabilitate small communities. The lifeline for many small communities across the United States and especially in Northeast Wisconsin is a small well-functioning local bank, which requires a steady flow of investments.

However, when I talked to the president of a local bank in Kewaunee County, I was told that the local banks do not usually finance CAFOs because they are too large and that many are financed by non-traditional lenders such as insurance companies. Other Kewaunee County residents believe financing is coming from large agricultural suppliers of seeds and chemicals.

If present trends continue, small-town Wisconsin will soon be mirroring the changes that occurred in Iowa several decades ago. More storefronts will be boarded up and churches and schools will continue to wither as population drops in the countryside. CAFOs are destroying the heart and soul of rural Wisconsin, and it doesn’t have to happen. If govt. subsidies are fairly allocated and the large farms are required to pay the real costs created by the pollution produced by their operations, the small farms could compete.





## Manure Pits Impact Quality of Rural Life

By Jacob Smither, UW-Green Bay intern

A manure pit, lagoon, or more appropriately called a cesspool, is a structure on livestock farms used for collecting and storing liquid manure so that it can be used later. Liquid manure is a slurry of urine, feces, and water that eventually will be spread on, or incorporated into the soil. This serves the dual purpose of providing nutrients to the soil and a way to dispose of the waste. Manure is a known source of pathogens that can be found in drinking water.

Research from John Hopkins found that living near fields where manure is sprayed may lead to people getting sick. They found people living near livestock or crop fields had a higher chance of getting infected with methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA). It is a deadly bacterium that is resistant to antibiotics due to the overuse of them in livestock (75% of livestock antibiotics end up in manure).

Some other pathogens known to be associated with manure are *E. Coli*, *Cryptosporidium*, *Campylobacter*, *Listeria monocytogenes*, *Yersinia enterocolitis*, *Mycobacterium*, *Giardia lamblia* and of course, fecal coliform. These pathogens can lead to intestinal problems like nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. The American Lung Association has identified 160 known pathogens that can be found in manure capable of causing disease.

Manure polluted water can enter groundwater aquifers after spreading on farm fields either through cracks, fractures, or fractures in bedrock that lead directly to an aquifer. Water can also seep through porous soil due to gravity and capillary action. It is estimated that there can be 10-100 feet per day of liquid manure infiltration. The heaviest spreading often occurs closest to the manure cesspool.

So it is not surprising that Mark Borchardt, a microbiologist from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, found that proximity to a manure “lagoon” was the greatest factor in predicting well water contamination. His study, which was conducted in Kewaunee, also noted there were other factors that contributed to contamination such as the amount of rainfall and construction of a well. Borchardt found that well water can be impacted by fecal microbes up to three miles from a manure storage site.

The USDA Trade and Consumer Protection implemented regulations in 2006 that set the minimum setback distance for manure “pits” on large farms ( $\geq 500$  animals) at 350 ft from neighbor’s property lines. For short-term storage facility (holds

less than 30 days’ worth of waste) the setback is 100 feet from a property line or road and cannot expand towards them.

Even the smell of manure can have negative health impacts. Manure generates gases as it breaks down and becomes more potent the longer it is stored. These gases include hydrogen sulfide, carbon dioxide, methane, and ammonia. Hydrogen sulfide is what gives off the rotten egg smell and can lead to headaches and nausea in low doses and respiratory failure and death in higher concentrations.

Residents living on hauling routes that are to and from a manure cesspool are also impacted. While many cesspools receive manure pumped directly from the barns, others are auxiliary storage facilities miles away from the CAFO. At times, the frequency of manure tankers passing by homes or traveling through villages can be at a rate of one every 3-5 minutes. A recent CWAC monitoring of Kinnard farms found that in addition to that frequency, the odor coming from tankers was sufficient to be detected inside a vehicle travelling five to ten car lengths back. Manure hauling also impacts many people on the route as it is not unusual for CAFOs to haul manure over 15 miles away from the cesspool.

People all across the state are worried about how these manure pits will affect their quality of life. Residents of Ledgeview in Brown County have expressed fears that manure “pits” are too close to their homes and their wells. They are worried that the storage of animal waste will threaten water quality, endanger the children, and impact the values of their homes. Residents in the Town of Little River spent thousands of dollars trying to stop a multi-acre manure lagoon without success.

The town of Ledgeview established a setback of 1320 ft. or a quarter mile. With all these regulations in place, there has been pushback from the farming industry. For example, a farm in Ledgeview feels like they are being targeted. They physically do not have enough space to build a new manure cesspool without violating the new setback. No new pit means that they cannot



Manure hauler returning to Kinnard Farms from a 34 mile round trip.

expand as there is nowhere for the additional manure to go.

Another case of manure impacting water and people's lives is the court case against Kinnard Farms. Neighbors and environmentalists alike have been battling Kinnard since 2012 when Kinnard tried to double its herd. People filed a petition with the DNR to review the water pollution permits of Kinnard in October of 2012. They filed the petition because they feared the current permit was not doing enough to protect their waters.

Also, they were aware of the geology of the region and knew that the cracked bedrock and shallow soil leads to a higher risk of groundwater pollution because it does not filter water efficiently. Around 50% of private wells tested in Kewaunee County at this time were unsafe to drink. This was either due to presence of fecal coliform or because the water exceeded groundwater quality standards for nitrates.

Kinnard wanted to expand their operation to 6,500 heads of cattle, and the DNR allowed it with the stipulation that Kinnard be ordered to monitor well water contamination. In 2015, the DNR reached out for legal advice about whether they had the right to impose such a ruling or to impose herd limits. Under Wisconsin Act 21 passed in 2011, the courts found that the DNR's actions were limited and they did not have the authority. So Kinnard went forward with its expansion but environmentalists appealed to keep regulatory controls in place.

The Wisconsin Court of Appeals sent the case to the state Supreme Court in 2019 saying that this case would have implications that "would touch every state agency within Wisconsin". Written briefs were expected to be filed with the Supreme Court by late spring, with oral arguments to be heard in late fall or early winter. As of now, this latest appeal is ongoing.

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## Are road damages from large farming equipment being addressed?

By Caitlin Cravillion

Over the past few decades, as the size of Northeast Wisconsin farms has grown, so has the size of farm equipment. Larger farm equipment poses a problem to the conditions of local roads. In this article, questions will be answered by sampling a group of stakeholders and experts who understand the impact large farm equipment, often used by concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs), has on local roads.



Modern large manure spreader vs older small manure spreader

**The first question I asked each individual was if they believe the road damage caused by large farm equipment is an issue of the past or an issue that may grow in the future?**

Kevin Erb, Conservation Professional Development Specialist in the Green Bay office of the University of Wisconsin-Extension (UWEX), has been working with agricultural businesses that haul manure and other farm materials for over the last 25 years. Erb explained that the efforts of local town boards, county highway departments, and farmers have greatly reduced the damage caused by large farm equipment. Regarding the current efforts to reduce the road damage caused by large farming vehicles, Erb stated, "The discussion still happens, but not with the frequency or intensity that it used to."

Cory Cochart, Lincoln township Chairman, reported that "damage to the Town of Lincoln roads is definitely an ongoing issue." Cochart went on to explain that "with three of Wisconsin's largest CAFO farms being in Lincoln, the roads in town see an extreme amount of semi traffic." He blames the state for failing to address the issue. He stated that "The state of Wisconsin passed legislation allowing trucks hauling manure, feed, and milk to exceed the 80,000 pound gross weight to 92,000 pounds, putting more stress on our already stressed infrastructure."

Todd Every, the Kewaunee County Highway Commissioner, believes that a lot of progress has been made to address the issue of road damage caused by large farm equipment. Every explained that "damage happens to all roads, but not all roads are constructed equally, so some hold up to heavy traffic better than others." When asked if he foresees this becoming a larger issue in the

future, Every stated “Yes, but more of an issue regarding local town roads.”

Lora Jorgenson, a Forestville Trustee and Village of Brussels resident, believes townships are still not putting enough restrictions on the weight of vehicles on the road. According to Jorgenson, “County Road J comes through the Village of Brussels and is half-owned by the county and half-owned by the village, so the village cannot put weight restrictions on trucks using County J.” Jorgenson explained, “these manure hauling trucks are a safety hazard, the road sewer system that should have lasted 20 years is now having to be replaced after six years.” She went on to remark that “from an elected officials’ standpoint, the trucks coming through the village is very frustrating.”

### **What have municipalities done to address the road damage caused by large farm equipment?**

In Kewaunee County, leaders (from town associations, sheriff’s dept., UW-Extension, highway dept., etc.) have worked together to develop a mapping system designed to reduce road damage and increase road safety. The mapping system can be found on the county’s webpage.

According to Aerica Bjurstrom, an agricultural agent for the University of Wisconsin Extension, “Kewaunee County is the only county in the state to have a mapping system like this. It allows farmers and towns to work together to determine the best route to use when hauling farm equipment.”



“Pull-off” spot in Door County, Wisconsin to allow semi-trucks to unload. Courtesy of Kevin Erb.

Cochart explained that towns try to reduce the number of trucks on the road by designating hauling routes, encouraging pumping versus hauling when possible, and adding pipes under roads.”

In Marinette County, Mike Shaw, the Town of Little River Chairperson, reported that while

the town has no CAFOs, they do have a manure pit belonging to a CAFO from another county. The town was having serious damage to town roads from semi-truck tankers hauling manure to the pit. On a positive note, Shaw has noticed a smaller impact on town roads ever since B&D agreed to haul from the facility in Pound using state and county highways. Little River is still monitoring for damage to the town’s road leading to the pit. Most of the outgoing manure is now being pumped from the pit since the Town of Little River granted B&D dairy permission to use town culverts to pass under town roads.

Erb noted, “Most of Wisconsin’s newer livestock expansions are now done on county roads because they are built to a better standard and are better able to handle the heavy traffic loads.” He then explained the different strategies used by different counties to mitigate road damage caused by heavy semi-truck loads.

The first strategy is used by the city of Waupaca and Waupaca County. This strategy involves the creation of a TIF district, which allows for the additional property taxes generated by new farm construction to be allocated to road infrastructure.

A second strategy used in Door County is known as the Pull-off strategy, which allows semis to unload off the road (as seen above).

The third strategy used mainly in Manitowoc and Sheboygan counties involves the use of a one-way road system. The last and perhaps easiest strategy has been implemented by the Village of Brussels and its surrounding areas. This strategy simply asks hauler trucks to take different side roads when they are empty to reduce the frequency of trucks on any one road.

### **How are repairs to damaged roads being funded?**

According to Erb, “Town boards and local governments are limited in how much funding they can raise from property taxes for all purposes, including repairing or rebuilding roads.” Erb also explained that it is challenging to place blame on any one farm or request reimbursement because in most cases the roads are being used by a large variety of drivers.

Chairman Cochart explained that “The town receives road aid from the state, which has now gone up from \$113,000 to around \$130,000. The \$130,000 of aid received from the State is to be used to pay for all our snow plowing, ditch mowing, patching, culvert replacement, and road maintenance each year. Most of this aid is spent toward winter plowing, which leaves only enough money to chip-seal a couple of miles of road each year.

Cochart believes that an impact fee would be the best solution to achieve proper funding for the damaged roads. According to Cochart, “It [an impact fee] could be assessed by the number of cattle at a farm or gallons of product and waste leaving the farm per year. The fee could be paid directly to the municipalities road fund.”

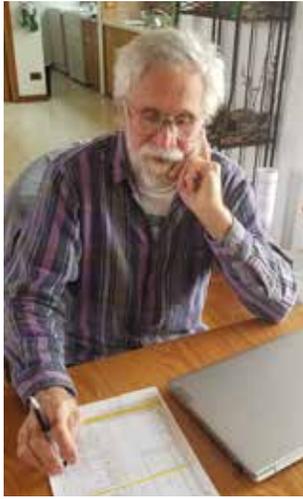
Another solution according to Every is for townships to work with the farms and have them pay for road improvements through cost-sharing agreements. Unfortunately, Every preferred not to discuss the specific towns or farms where damage has occurred. However, he did say that “the Town of Lincoln and the Town of Pierce have been successful in securing funds from the state this year to improve some town roads.” He believes that both towns had some type of agreement for sharing the local costs of the project with farms.

On another note, Jorgenson explained that the Village of Brussels has received grant money from the Department of Transportation. Yet, she believes that the agricultural industry is not having to fund as much of the road damage as she believes it should. She explained that this is because farms are exempt from specific fees.

It is clear from this sampling of local elected officials and government employees that there is little consensus as to how severe road damage is from large farm operations. Clearly, town budgets are not sufficient to handle this burden alone.

# Wisconsin Department of Revenue confirms that proximity to a CAFO impacts property value.

By Grace Steele, CWAC intern



Sitting at his kitchen table, Mick Sagrillo, from the Town of Lincoln in Kewaunee County, looks over his well water test results. When Mick and his wife Lynn moved to Lincoln in 1978, the

area contained many small family farms. The Sagrillo's rural living situation was altered when Dairy Dreams was set up and began operation as a concentrated animal feeding operation, or dairy CAFO, in 2002, complete with two 80,000,000 gallon manure cesspools, aka animal waste storage lagoons.

Meant to capture and hold the manure and wastewater from the CAFO, these cesspools reeked day and night. The cesspools were emptied in the spring before planting and again in the fall after harvesting to "fertilize" the depleted soil where the CAFO was planting their crops. An untold amount of this liquid manure and agricultural wastewater ended up leaching into the area's groundwater, contaminating up to 40% of the township's wells, a resource that all town residents rely on for drinking water.

Prior to 2015, Wisconsin supported over 10,000 farms, with most of them being small, family operations. Today, cattle outnumber people 5 to 1 in Kewaunee County.

When a farm's milk producing herd reaches a population of 700, the farm is regulated as a CAFO. DNR records show that Kewaunee County has 16 CAFOs within an area of only 343 square miles. Many people in Kewaunee County do not feel confident that the drinking water from their home wells is safe. With such a large

concentration of cattle, there is a high risk of groundwater contamination as well as pollution running off into streams, rivers, and lakes. All of Kewaunee County's rivers have been labelled as "Impaired Waters" by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

However, water contamination is not the only issue caused by CAFOs in Kewaunee County and throughout northeast Wisconsin. Home property value is also seeing the negative impacts of CAFOs. One such couple experiencing their dream home losing value is Scott and Deborah Kliment from the town of Pierce. When the Kliments bought their property in 1995, the nearby Ebert's family farm was large, but not large enough to be defined as a CAFO. However, things quickly took a turn when Henry Ebert sold his operation to his son Randy and his wife, which resulted in the farms expansion. Within 5 years, the farm became a full-blown CAFO and continued to grow. The Kliments dream home was now surrounded by the noise and odors from the CAFO.

The Kliments decided to try and sell their house, but according to two realty companies their property has lost significant value compared to a few years earlier. The Kliments situation became even bleaker when their 2016 property tax bill significantly increased due to a higher assessment. With this new information, the Kliments sought a reassessment from the town, claiming they were assessed too high, noting the recent appraisal. Upon evaluation the town's assessor lowered their property tax but did not account for the Elbert farm operation, stating that the issue would need to be discussed by the town of Pierce's Board of Review.

The Kliments performed some research and found that six different properties around the Ebert farm were selling for about 30% less than their assessed value, which meant they were being overtaxed. They took what they learned to the Board of Review. The board admitted they didn't know if they had the authority to reassess based on what the Kliments presented. So, the original assessor's estimate remained.

The Kliments appealed to the Department of Revenue (DOR). The department performed a study on property sales near CAFOs with more than 4,000 animal units. From this, the department concluded that the value of a property located over a mile away from a CAFO, or within any distance from a CAFO with less than 4,000 animal units, is not impacted. The property values of homes located between a quarter mile and a mile of a large CAFO are reduced by 8%. The property values of homes within a quarter mile of a large CAFO, like the Kliment's home, are reduced by 13%.

While this may be a small victory for Kewaunee County residents for tax purposes, losing property value is not something that pleases most residents. The DOR noted that a tax deduction will not automatically apply to anyone living within a mile of a large CAFO nor will it automatically apply beyond Kewaunee County. Property owners will need to complete an application that one resident referred to as a complex and time consuming process.

Lincoln resident Mick Sagrillo stated that the property value reassessment process was very frustrating and time consuming. He would not recommend anyone go through what he did in his unsuccessful attempt to have the DOR reassess his property. **"I did not do this for the money, rather for the principle to make a point about CAFOs,"** explained Mick.

Even though some people have failed when seeking reassessments, it is important to note that there are successes. For example, Todd Knutson of Green County sought a reevaluation after his property assessment increased after the addition of an attached garage and breezeway. Todd purchased his house for \$125,000 in 1998, but now it was valued at \$220,700. The crux of this issue was that his proximity to a CAFO was not considered in the evaluation. He began wondering who would even buy his house at that price, because of

its proximity to a CAFO. Todd requested a reassessment from the Wisconsin Department of Revenue in 2016. The Department of Revenue ordered that Todd's property be revalued and reassessed at \$161,800, which is almost a 26% reduction. While there are pros and cons to seeking out a reassessment, it is possible to get your property value reassessed and get your taxes reduced.

If you, or someone you know, live near a CAFO and are experiencing property assessments that appear inconsistent with other sales near a CAFO, a property value reassessment may be a remedy. Under Wisconsin state law (Sec. 70.47, Wis. Stats.), if you disagree with your assessment, you may appeal it. If you are planning on protesting an assessment, you may submit a written petition to Wisconsin's Department of Revenue. A petition for reassessment may be obtained from the Equalization Bureau District Supervisor. The basis of such petition must be that the property assessment in the taxation district does not comply with the law and that the public interest will benefit from the reassessment.

For more information, please go to the Wisconsin Department of Revenue's *2020 Guide for Property Owners* at: <https://www.revenue.wi.gov/DOR%20Publications/pb060.pdf>

## How you spend your food dollars can protect the environment.

By Abraham Hill, UW-Green Bay student intern

A consumer's choice of where to buy their food and what food they want to buy is a vote for how they want their food to be grown and raised. A consumer should think of each purchase, whether non-organic or organic, corn-fed or grass-fed, caged or cage-free, as an action that has the potential to directly protect the environment. If a consumer wants to support local sustainably raised produce and animals, they can do so by taking four fundamental actions.

### 1. Join a CSA (Community-Supported Agriculture)

A CSA operates by a consumer buying shares of a local farm's produce and possibly meat (meat is not available to purchase at all CSA's). Typically, each shareholder or member gets a box of farm products each week, which contain the produce the farm is producing then. The member would then pick-up their box at a drop-off location.

These CSA boxes can come in two forms. The first is known as the "Farmers Choice," which is a box containing a mix of all produce harvested during that season. The second is known as "Market Style," which allows the consumer to select a variety of fresh produce and cuts of meat for their box.

An excellent CSA in the Green Bay area is Full Circle Community Farms. They are a local farm that produces organic vegetables, beef, pork, and chicken eggs. Full Circle Community Farms offers both "Farmers Choice" boxes and "Market Style" boxes. Like most CSA's, Full Circle Community Farms gives consumers the option to visit the farm to show consumers exactly where their food is coming from and how it is raised.



"Farmer's Choice" CSA container

### 2. Buy from local Farmers Market Vendors

In almost all cases, the food sold at the local farmers market will be sourced from local farms. However, it is not safe to assume that all the food found at the local farmers market will come from small non-factory farm

sources, which is why it is important to ask farmers market vendors, "how were your animals raised and what were they fed?"

### 3. Shop at local businesses

A great place to start for a person looking to better protect the environment is to begin shopping at local businesses. In Green Bay, local grocery stores, like Oneida Market and Down to Earth Nutrition, sell products from small Northwest Wisconsin farms, a portion of which have been distributed by a local non-for-profit food distribution service called Trust Local Foods Distribution. The Healthy Way Market in Sturgeon Bay is another good choice for local farm products.

The mission of Trust Local Foods Distribution is to guide consumers to buy from small local farms and to businesses that sell local organic foods. Trust Local Foods Distribution can guarantee the foods that they distribute are 100% locally grown, and that they rarely step foot outside of Northwest Wisconsin and never step foot outside of the state of Wisconsin.

Another locally owned business that has a tradition of providing Northeast Wisconsin with local dairy products is Lamers Dairy. According to Lamers Dairy President, Mark Lamers, "All the milk received at the Lamers Dairy bottling plant comes from seven small local family farms which are located within 30 miles of the bottling plant in Appleton." Furthermore, Lamers Dairy pays local family farmers an additional incentive to not use hormones that artificially stimulate their cows to produce more milk. By choosing to buy from small local businesses — like Lamers Dairy, Oneida Market, and Down to Earth Nutrition — a consumer will be supporting small local farms and businesses.

### 4. Be an informed consumer

In today's world, the word "organic" is constantly being tossed around in advertisements. It seems at least half of food commercials are bragging about a new "organic" product they have. However, some of these organic products being advertised are not much different from other non-organic products being sold in the supermarket. For instance, when

*continued on page 15 >*



## Call for Moratorium on the Construction and Expansion of Industrial-Sized Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations in Wisconsin Sponsored by the Sustain Rural Health Network



Wisconsin citizens' right to clean water, clean air and a good quality of life is endangered by water pollution frequently caused by industrial agriculture. Wisconsin's industrial animal factories generate more manure than crops can safely use as fertilizer leading to excess phosphorus and nitrate levels in the soil and groundwater. As a result, our local streams, lakes, and waterways are quickly becoming damaged beyond repair.

Therefore, we call upon Wisconsin to declare a temporary moratorium on the permitting and construction of new and expanding Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs).<sup>1</sup> Before Wisconsin allows new construction or expansions of CAFO facilities, the state must provide a solution for our existing manure overload problem. No facility should be allowed to pollute local waterways and groundwater without a set enforcement policy addressing the cleanup of contamination if a problem should arise.

### Why Wisconsin? Why Now?

**Water Quality** - Large-scale agriculture contributes to pollution of Wisconsin's water resources through leaching and runoff of crop nutrients, pesticides, and animal wastes, and through soil erosion from cropland. Groundwater and surface water issues associated with agriculture are a major problem in Wisconsin, especially in areas and watersheds with high densities of Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) with limited amounts of land for manure and wastewater spreading, and in environmentally sensitive regions like the karst areas, the central sands, and the clay plains.

**Water Quantity** - In certain areas of the state, primarily the Central Sands, lakes, streams and wells are drying up due to large-scale agriculture. A solid body of research shows that this loss of surface water is directly related to depletion of groundwater aquifers by high capacity wells. The depletion of groundwater not only impacts water loss but presents a public health risk as drinking water sources dry up and any pollutants such as nitrates and bacteria become more concentrated.

**Phosphorus & Nitrate Overloading** - Agricultural practices of CAFOs are a significant source of sediment and phosphorus in Wisconsin due to high erosion rates and high phosphorus levels in agricultural soils. Croplands supply 76 % of the sediment and 65 % of the phosphorus load in Wisconsin runoff. Nitrate is the most widespread groundwater contaminant in Wisconsin and, on a statewide basis, about 90% of the nitrate detected in groundwater is from agricultural sources (fertilizer, manure, and legumes). Phosphorus and nitrates contribute to algal blooms in rivers, streams, and lakes and have led to hypoxic areas (dead zones) in our estuaries, Great Lakes, and Oceans.

**Human Health & Welfare** - Industrial agriculture can emit toxins that cause a host of illnesses for neighbors and workers (asthma, headaches, nausea, diarrhea, burning eyes, other respiratory problems) and can cause mood problems (depression, confusion, fatigue, tension) for people living and working near factory farms. In addition, the overuse of antibiotics in CAFOs facilitates drug-resistant bacteria, which is a grave danger to people.

**Economic Impacts** - Counties with more CAFOs trend toward lower income growth, fewer business, and less commercial activity. In addition, property values can decrease near factory farms resulting in decreased property tax revenue to support local services such as road construction and maintenance, recycling, emergency medical services and police/fire protection.

**Sustain Rural Wisconsin Network is calling for a moratorium on new construction and expansion of concentrated animal feeding operations should be enacted until:**

- Legislation is passed that empowers the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources with the authority and mandate to address and adequately enforce water quality standards through Nutrient Management Plans and the permitting process.
- Groundwater protection policies are created which outline procedures for adequate enforcement of violations.
- The state respects meaningful local control and flexibility by allowing local elected officials to draft and pass county and municipal ordinances which take science-based measures beyond state standards to protect sensitive water resources.
- All CAFOs in Wisconsin that are currently operating with expired WPDES permits are issued a current WPDES (Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination Systems) permit for future regulation.

Sustain Rural Wisconsin Network is devoted to promoting sustainable agriculture and agricultural policies that support environmentally sound, socially responsible, profitable agriculture. We picture a Wisconsin in the year 2030 as a state where many farms and agricultural businesses dot the landscape punctuated by vibrant rural communities. In order to achieve this vision, we must have the support of government programs and policies.

To co-sponsor this moratorium request, please [click here](#) and register your group and/or municipality. For more information please feel free to visit our [website](#).

There are over 60 co-sponsors of the moratorium including Clean Water Action Council of NE WI. There are over 15 county or towns that have passed resolutions in support of the moratorium including the Town of Sturgeon Bay.

- 1) This moratorium will apply to any facilities, regardless of animal units, that the EPA has designated a CAFO in order to more closely regulate the activities that impact their administration of the Clean Water Act.

# Northeast Wisconsin Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations

<u>Name</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Mailing Address</u>	<u>Permit Expires</u>	<u>Animal Units:</u> <u>2017</u> <u>2019</u>	
CALF SOURCE LLC	Dairy	Brown	3586 Cooperstown Rd, De Pere	9/30/21	2250	2250
DENMAR ACRES LLC		Brown	6489 County Road W, Greenleaf	New		
GREENLEAF LEDGE DAIRY LLC		Brown		New		
LEDGEVIEW FARMS LLC		Brown	3870 Dickinson Rd, De Pere	New		
BRICKSTEAD DAIRY LLC	Dairy	Brown	1734 Wayside Rd, Greenleaf	5/31/20	1344	1344
COLLINS DAIRY FARM LLC	Dairy	Brown	3489 Hill Road, Greenleaf	7/31/18	1611	1851
COUNTRY AIRE FARMS LLC	Dairy	Brown	1440 Lamers Clancy Rd, Greenleaf	10/31/19	4210	4210
DAIRYLAND FARM LLC	Dairy	Brown	5424 Gauthier Rd, New Franken	9/30/20	10294	6600
KANE FAMILY FARM LLC	Dairy	Brown	4367 Lark Rd, Denmark	5/31/18	1563	1648
MEADOWLARK DAIRY LLC	Dairy	Brown	1074 Meadowlark Rd, De Pere	12/31/22	3357	2790
MIEDEMA DAIRY FARMS LLC	Dairy	Brown	4431 County Rd, Pulaski	3/31/16	1526	1573
MUELLER DAIRY FARM LLC	Dairy	Brown	2375 Day St, Greenleaf	5/31/19	1711	1750
NEW HORIZONS DAIRY LLC	Dairy	Brown	4240 Rosin Rd, De Pere	9/30/22	1437	1464
RANOVAEL DAIRY	Dairy	Brown	1244 County Line Rd, De Pere	9/30/14	1337	1337
STENCIL DAIRY FARMS LLC	Dairy	Brown	4819 Glenview Rd, Denmark	12/31/22	2803	2803
THE CATTLE CORNER	Dairy	Brown	5580 Humboldt Rd, Luxemburg	9/30/19	2350	1400
THOMPSONS GOLD DUST DAIRY	Dairy	Brown	3793 State Hwy 57, De Pere	2/28/21	2694	2694
TINEDALE FARMS LLC	Dairy	Brown	2768 Poplar St, Wrightstown	9/30/18	3689	3479
UNITED MEADOWS DAIRY LLC	Dairy	Brown	4357 Country Rd U, Wrightstown	5/31/19	772	772
WAYSIDE DAIRY LLC	Dairy	Brown	3603 Wayside Rd, Greenleaf	2/29/20	3275	3275
WIESE BROTHERS FARM	Dairy	Brown	7091 Old 57 Rd, Greenleaf	11/30/20	10464	10460
ZIRBEL DAIRY FARMS LLC	Dairy	Brown	6013 Morrison Rd, De Pere	2/29/20	1675	1675
DALLMANN EAST RIVER LLC	Dairy	Calumet	N6038 E River Rd, Brillion	9/30/19	4823	5200
GRAND VIEW DAIRY FARM INC	Dairy	Calumet	W3412 Schmidt Rd, Brillion	9/30/23	2662	2261
HOLSUM DAIRIES LLC	Dairy	Calumet	N5701 Irish Rd, Hilbert	5/31/22	13329	13865
HORNSTEAD DAIRY	Dairy	Calumet	W397 Man-Cal Rd, Brillion	3/31/19	2110	1434
RIVERS EDGE DAIRY LLC	Dairy	Calumet	W2268 Hickory Hills Rd, Chilton	10/31/21	2580	1880
SHILOH DAIRY LLC	Dairy	Calumet	N8681 Bastian Rd, Brillion	2/28/21	4570	4570
SCHNEIDER FARMS INC	Dairy	Calumet	W2920 Fargo Springs Rd, Hillbert	7/31/21	2675	2031
WENZEL HILLTOP DAIRY	Dairy	Calumet	N6414 Riemer Rd, Hilbert	3/31/16	1408	1508
WOLDT FARMS LLC	Dairy	Calumet	N9594 Country Rd, Brillion	7/31/21	2287	2335
Haberli Farms Inc	Dairy	Door	6945 Memorial DR., Egg Harbor	5/31/22	662	662
S&S Jerseyland Dairy LLC	Dairy	Door	7900 Old Elm Rd, Sturgeon Bay	3/31/2022	10230	6395
AUGUSTIAN FARMS LLC	Dairy	Kewaunee	E4361 Country Road G, Kewaunee	3/31/16	1669	1672
DA RAN DAIRY LCC	Dairy	Kewaunee	5232 BK Line Rd, Luxemburg	1/31/22	2907	2737
DAIRY DREAMS LLC	Dairy	Kewaunee	E3576 Cardinal Rd, Casco	1/31/23	5458	5995
DEER RUN DAIRY LLC	Dairy	Kewaunee	N1215 Sleepy Hollow Rd, Kewaunee	8/31/23	4627	2538
EBERT DAIRY ENTRP. LLC	Dairy	Kewaunee	N6939 City Hwy. D, Algoma	12/31/18	8642	8932
EL NA FARMS LLC	Dairy	Kewaunee	E4029 Pheasant Rd, Algoma	7/31/22	5970	2993
HALLS CALF RANCH	Dairy	Kewaunee	E2304 Country Hwy. F, Kewaunee	2/28/23	1700	1640
HEIMS HILLCREST DAIRY LLC	Dairy	Kewaunee	E3730 Rockledge Rd, Algoma	3/31/21	2358	1238
KINNARD FARMS INC	Dairy	Kewaunee	E2675 County Hwy S, Casco	1/31/23	10060	10029
LEGEND FARMS DAIRY	Dairy	Kewaunee	E3470 County Rd F, Kewaunee	1/31/23		1144
PAGELS PONDEROSA DAIRY	Dairy	Kewaunee	N4893 Hwy C, Kewaunee	3/31/21	8340	9615
ROLLING HILLS DAIRY FARM	Dairy	Kewaunee	N3265 County Rd AB, Luxemburg	2/28/17	2994	2904
SANDWAY FARMS LLC	Dairy	Kewaunee	E1411 Bolt Road, Denmark	1/31/23		1072
SEIDLs MTN. VIEW DAIRY	Dairy	Kewaunee	E745 Luxemburg Rd, Luxemburg	12/31/22	1606	1606
STAHL BROS. DAIRY LLC	Dairy	Kewaunee	N7518 Tonet Rd, Luxemburg	3/31/23	2140	2171
WAKKER DAIRY FARM INC.	Dairy	Kewaunee	N2348 Hwy 42, Kewaunee	12/31/22	4576	3123
SKYLINE BLUE ACRES	Dairy	Kewaunee	E612 City Rd BB, Denmark	2/28/17	980	
BADGER PRIDE DAIRY	Dairy	Manitowoc	15724 Hillcreek Rd., Valders	5/31/2021	1368	1368
BLUE ROYAL FARMS INC	Dairy	Manitowoc	1329 Menchalville Rd., Reedsville	1/31/2017	1837	1837
BLUE ROYAL VALLEY Dairy	Dairy	Manitowoc	1329 Menchalville Rd., Reedsville	6/30/2020	1359	1359
CEDAR SPRINGS DAIRY	Dairy	Manitowoc	2001 Hillview Rd. Mishicot	5/31/2023	1630	1520
CLARKS MILLS DAIRY	Dairy	Manitowoc	14329 Upper Falls Rd., Reedsville	7/31/2019	1311	1311
FITZ PINE DAIRY FARM	Dairy	Manitowoc	11405 County Rd. F, Newton	1/31/2024	1916	1954
GROTEGUT DAIRY FARM	Dairy	Manitowoc	7427 Newton Rd., Newton	12/31/2022	5287	4774

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# Northeast Wisconsin Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations

JOHNSON HILL FARM	Dairy	Manitowoc	5503 Marken Rd., Valders	12/31/2019	1274	1274
KOCOUREK BROS	Dairy	Manitowoc	22220 Herzog Rd., Reedsville	9/30/2021	1603	1169
KOSTECHKA DAIRY LLC	Dairy	Manitowoc	12031 Hillcrest Rd., Whitelaw	1/31/2017	1430	1430
MAPLE LEAF DAIRY	Dairy	Manitowoc	6832 Cty X, Cleveland	6/30/2017	11723	11723
MUELLER RANGELINE	Dairy	Manitowoc	10104 North Ave	3/31/2022	1134	1134
ORTHLAND DAIRY FARM	Dairy	Manitowoc	14319 S Union Rd., Cleveland	4/30/2021	1189	1189
ROBINWAY DAIRY FARMS	Dairy	Manitowoc	17231 Point Creek Rd., Kiel	10/31/2023	3006	2992
RUSTIC WAGON WHEEL	Dairy	Manitowoc	14331 Saxonburg Rd., Mishicot	3/31/2023	1502	994
SIEMERS HOLSTEIN FARM	Dairy	Manitowoc	14421 Mineral Springs Rd., Newton	6/30/2022	4232	4232
SOARING EAGLER DAIRY	Dairy	Manitowoc	10219 Cty Rd. F, Newton	9/30/2020	1868	1868
STRUTZ FARM INC	Dairy	Manitowoc	13104 Lakeshore Rd., Two Rivers	7/31/2019	1953	1953
TWIN CITIES VUE	Dairy	Manitowoc	3416 Stone Rd., Manitowoc	12/31/202	1643	1634
UNITED VISION DAIRY	Dairy	Manitowoc	12434 Tannery Rd., Mishicot	5/31/2021	1783	1414
WOLFGANG DAIRY LLC	Dairy	Manitowoc	11812 Palm Grove Rd., Reedsville	9/30/2019	1652	1652
B&D DAIRY	Dairy	Marinette	4304 N 5th Rd., Pound	9/30/2016	9675	9317
COLEMAN PONDEROSA	Dairy	Marinette	N2823 23rd Rd., Coleman	6/30/2022	1956	2010
FENDRYK BROTHERS	Dairy	Marinette	W9075 Cty Rd P, Crivitz	9/30/2018	2160	2278
VAN DE WALLE FARMS	Dairy	Marinette	W8303 22nd Rd., Crivitz	9/30/2021	2691	2784
BLASER FARMS INC	Dairy	Oconto	9267 State Hwy 22 E, Gillett	8/31/2015	2136	1222
O HARROWS FARM	Dairy	Oconto	6401 Company Lake Rd., Oconto Falls	4/30/2021	6845	3055
PETERSON'S DAIRY LLC	Dairy	Oconto	6336 Goatsville Rd., Lena	6/30/2022	1687	1068
SUNRISE DAIRY LLC	Dairy	Oconto	13674 County Rd M, Suring	10/31/2019	3390	3390
TRIPLE C DAIRY	Dairy	Oconto	8716 CCC Rd., Oconto Falls	3/31/2016	1753	1239
ZAHNS FARMS LLC	Dairy	Oconto	11620 Hwy H, Gillett	5/31/2017	10730	5382
ALLEN VANDEHEI	Dairy	Outagamie	N8322 County Rd. Y, Seymour	3/31/2016	1820	
BIRLINGS BOVINES LLC	Dairy	Outagamie	N8128 Town Hall Rd., Black Creek	3/31/2020	2733	3078
LANDL FARMS LLC	Dairy	Outagamie	N870 County Rd. GG, Kaukauna	7/31/2021	1203	1203
MEADOW VIEW DAIRY	Dairy	Outagamie	N8759 County Rd. Y, Seymour	2/28/2022	636	242
NEIGHBORHOOD DAIRY	Dairy	Outagamie	W926 Van Asten Rd., Kaukauna	4/30/2020	1503	1496
ROHAN DAIRY FARMS	Dairy	Outagamie	N7832 Village Rd., Bear Creek	8/31/2020	1567	1522
SCHUH VIEW DIARY	Dairy	Outagamie	W2540 CTH S, Kaukauna	9/30/2020	2165	2165
SEVEN OAKS DAIRY LLC	Dairy	Outagamie	W229 County Rd. ZZ, Kaukauna	3/31/2020	1344	1187
SUGAR CREEK FARM	Diary	Outagamie	N6848 County Rd. D, New London	2/28/2022	1826	1776
TIDY VIEW DAIRY LLC	Dairy	Outagamie	N3569 Vanden Bosch Rd., Kaukauna	7/31/2020	10199	10677
VERHASSEL FARMS LTD	Dairy	Outagamie	W873 Golden Glow Rd., Kaukauna	8/31/2020	4370	4370
BETLEY FARMS LLC	Dairy	Shawano	W1630 Redwood Dr., Pulaski	3/31/2022	3904	2893
GREEN VALLEY DAIRY	Dairy	Shawano	N5365 Hintz Rd., Krakow	10/31/2020	5169	5289
KRUEGER DAIRY LLC	Dairy	Shawano	W8371 Oak Ave., Shawano	10/31/2018	2085	3455
MATSCHKE FARM INC	Dairy	Shawano	N9035 Rover Rd., Shawano	8/31/2023	5685	8047
SCHMIDTS PONDEROSA	Dairy	Shawano	W3773 Old Dump Rd., Bonduel	4/30/2021	2004	1930
STRASSBURG CREEK	Dairy	Shawano	N7339 Regina Rd., Wittenberg	10/31/2018	1377	1390
TAUCHEN HARMONY VALLEY	Dairy	Shawano	N3397 S Broadway Rd., Bonduel	3/31/2020	1750	1750
ANETEVKA FARM	Dairy	Sheboygan	N2671 Faas Rd., Oostburg	3/31/2022	1237	1237
DRAKE DAIRY INC	Dairy	Sheboygan	N8870 Drake Court, Elkhart Lake	3/31/2018	3212	1908
GOESER DAIRY INC	Dairy	Sheboygan	W7325 Hwy 67, Plymouth	9/30/2016	2066	1765
HANKE FARMS INC	Dairy	Sheboygan	N6368 Willow Rd., Sheboygan Falls	12/31/2021	2545	1769
HICKORY LAWN DAIRY	Dairy	Sheboygan	N2957 Hickory Grove Rd., Cascade	3/31/2022	1500	1500
HIGHLAND CROSSING	Dairy	Sheboygan	W3194 Playbird Rd., Sheboygan Falls	3/31/2015	1373	1373
JC MAURER & SONS	Dairy	Sheboygan	W7560 Grogen Rd., Elkhart Lake	6/30/2021	3053	3053
MAJESTIC MEADOWS	Dairy	Sheboygan	N5853 Meadowlark Rd., Sheboygan Falls	11/30/21	1720	1320
QUONSET FARMS LLP	Dairy	Sheboygan	W3018 Wilson Lime Rd., Oostburg	12/31/2016	1241	1242
ROCKLAND DAIRY INC	Dairy	Sheboygan	W4705 County Rd. D, Random Lake	3/31/2018	3673	1973
CROSS FARMS LLC	Dairy	Winnebago	7022 Cross Rd., Winneconne	5/31/2020	2447	2394
OMRO DAIRY LLC	Dairy	Winnebago	N3603 Vanden Bosch Rd., Kaukauna	9/30/2020	3587	3763
THISTLE DAIRY LLC	Dairy	Winnebago	3006 Lone Elm Rd., Van Dyne	2/28/2022	3717	3734

Source:

2017 <https://www.batchgeo.com/map/938027604384db87b15b1482436f4d98>

2019 <https://batchgeo.com/map/e397c77c92fa65a77eae1e365cbc9b45>

entering the dairy section at a large grocery store, such as Festival Foods, a consumer is bombarded with potential milk choices. An environmentally-conscious consumer might choose to select an organic milk brand like Organic Valley or Horizon Organic. On the surface, both these brands appear nearly identical, but they are not.



Organic Valley is a farmer-owned co-op with farms in Wisconsin. The cows raised on these farms are in extremely good health and are allowed seven months of pasture time each year. The average herd size is only 76 cows, with an average of only 3 cows per acre. Moreover, all farms in the Organic Valley system follow CROPP which is a strict program adhering to humane animal handling practices.

In contrast, Horizon Organic is owned by Dean Foods which is a multibillion-dollar company that owns brands like Land O'Lakes and Silk. In fact, Horizon Organic is the largest producer of organic milk in North America. Unlike Organic Valley, dairy cows raised on farms in the Horizon Organic system are not as healthy and only receive up to 4 months of pasture time each year. Making matters worse, Horizon Organic owns 11 corporate farms with cowherds ranging from 1000 to 2000 cows. Furthermore, Horizon Organic does not follow CROPP guidelines.



Making food choices is becoming more important than ever in this age of industrial farming. If more consumers follow the suggested actions in this article, then their choices can do more to influence farming practices that are more sustainable and environmentally friendly.

### ~ Food Sources Mentioned in Article ~

#### Full Circle Community Farms CSA sign-up:

- Website: <https://www.fullcircle.farm/>

#### Farmers Markets in the Green Bay Area:

- On Broadway Farmers Market, Leicht Memorial Park, 128 Dousman St.  
Wednesdays, May 27 - September 30, 3 - 8 PM
- Green Bay Downtown Farmers Market, South Washington St.  
Saturdays, June 6 – October 31, 7 AM – 12 PM

#### Local Grocery Stores:

- **Oneida Market:** 501 Packerland Dr Ste B, Green Bay
- **Down to Earth Nutrition:** 2331 Velp Ave, Green Bay
- **Healthy Way Market:** 216 S. 3rd Ave, Sturgeon Bay, WI

#### Trust Local Foods Contact Information:

- E-mail: [trustlocalfoods@gmail.com](mailto:trustlocalfoods@gmail.com)
- Phone: 920-687-1800

#### Lamers Dairy:

- Address: N410 Speel School Rd. Appleton, WI 54915
- Website: <https://lamersdairyinc.com/>
- Phone: 920-830-0980

## A Massive (and purposeful) Regulatory Failure of CAFOs

By Lee Luft

As a lifelong Wisconsin resident whose extended family members were/are dairy farmers, I have a very high regard for the hard working folks who provide the quality milk products that so many of us enjoy. My experience with dairy farming was likely similar to others who grew up in the Midwest, small herds grazing in pastures, red barns, and devoted farm families. I had never heard the acronym “CAFO” (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation) before moving to Kewaunee County in 2008 but from what I had read, CAFOs were simply very large farms that are permitted by the DNR and required to follow specific regulations.

In the years that followed, Kewaunee County became the source of media attention related to contaminated private wells, manure spills, and polluted surface waters. Families living near CAFOs began speaking out about their concerns for health, safety, and quality of life. The risks imposed when thousands of cattle are concentrated at one location were becoming more fully understood and debated. Who knew that a 5,000 animal dairy CAFO produces as much waste as the City of Green Bay and that with over 70,000 cattle in Kewaunee County in 2005, there was a need for farms here to apply liquid manure equal to the human waste from several large cities such as Milwaukee, Minneapolis, and St. Louis — combined?

At this same time understanding the geology in Kewaunee County and other parts of Northeast Wisconsin was growing. Significant portions of Northeast Wisconsin are known to have Karst geology which generally indicates shallow soil depths covering fractured limestone bedrock. This is a geological makeup that is highly susceptible to groundwater contamination from surface applications of fertilizers and manure. Still, from my 40 years of experience as a businessperson in Wisconsin, I knew the Wisconsin DNR to be tenacious in their monitoring and enforcement of water quality regulations and yet, our water concerns continued to grow, why? Why were carefully conducted private well tests indicating nearly one-third of the wells tested as unsafe and why was every waterway in Kewaunee County on the EPA’s endangered waters listing?

While attending some of the DNR hearings for new CAFO expansion permits here in Kewaunee County, I heard firsthand from those who live near a CAFO and who must survive without clean, safe water. I heard about new wells that had to be drilled but were soon re-contaminated while at this same time the DNR continued to approve every single CAFO expansion request — even in the parts of our county with the shallowest soils and cracked bedrock. This was so unlike the DNR I had known as a businessperson.

After I became concerned enough to run for the Kewaunee County Board of Supervisors and to serve on the Kewaunee County Land and Water Conservation Committee,

it was more clear than ever that our problem was not the lack of proper written farm regulations, it was the almost total lack of monitoring and enforcement of those regulations. DNR documents detailing the actions that the department took after some of the more egregious spills and runoff events confirmed that a great majority of those incidents were being reported by residents and not DNR personnel. In addition, the DNR follow-up was often slow and even when properly documented, there were no penalties for actions that in other industries might result in very significant fines and curbs on future business practices.

Some of us began to surmise that a consistent lack of monitoring and enforcement by the DNR and the EPA had provided very little incentive for farms to make the changes to their business model that would reduce the incidence of manure runoff and spills. It was if, as the driver of an automobile, you knew with almost 100% certainty that even in the unlikely event you were pulled over for a violation; you would never get more than a warning.

A 2016 State of Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau report confirmed what we thought we knew. The Wisconsin DNR had issued notices of violations of state environmental laws in only 33 of the 558 instances in which such a notice was required (a 94.1% failure rate). Even when notices of violations were issued, in over 50% of the cases the notices did not address all the violations for which a notice should have been issued. Of 1,900 reports required to be submitted by CAFO permittees, only 36 had been recorded as being received and 17 Wisconsin CAFOs were issued or re-issued CAFO permits without ever being inspected to determine if the farm was in compliance with existing regulations as required.

More concerns emerged when in 2018 Wisconsin's Attorney General, Brad Schimel, appointed former dairy industry lobbyist Anna J. Wildeman to lead the environmental protection unit of the Wisconsin Department of Justice. The DOJ unit responsible for bringing charges against entities accused of environmental degradation would now be led by a former lobbyist for the Dairy Business Association — one of the most powerful lobbying groups in Wisconsin.

As better well testing became more commonplace, the magnitude of the groundwater contamination and the connection between large CAFO herd concentrations and groundwater contamination became clear. That connection has been well documented in studies by Drs. Mark Borchardt and Maureen Muldoon. There was no longer any doubt that the lack of reasonable care for our land and water, on the part of those entrusted with that responsibility, was a key contributor to the recent ground and surface water contamination in Kewaunee County.

As Judge Jeffrey Boldt said after four days of testimony from the DNR, a large Kewaunee County CAFO, and dozens of Kewaunee County residents, "...the proliferation of contaminated wells represents a massive regulatory failure to protect groundwater in the Town of Lincoln (Kewaunee County)."

Today the Wisconsin DNR is "under new management" and the outlook for Wisconsin's irreplaceable waters is improving. Dedicated DNR staff are now encouraged to take the steps that could have lessened the past damage to our waters. We and our children will be better for it.

#### **About Lee Luft**

*Luft is a three-term Kewaunee County Board Supervisor and a three-term member of the Kewaunee County Land and Water Conservation Committee and a three-year member of the Wisconsin DNR/Kewaunee County Compliance Workgroup*

#### **Previous media coverage...**

##### ▶ **Clean Water Eludes Many Wisconsinites**

*Green Bay Press-Gazette 11/9/15*

##### ▶ **Failure at the Faucet**

*Green Bay Press-Gazette 11/16/15*

##### ▶ **Wells Found Unsafe for Drinking**

*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel 12/21/15*

##### ▶ **Green Bay Scales Back Manure Rules**

*Green Bay Press-Gazette 8/2/16*

##### ▶ **DNR Tests Tainted Water in Kewaunee County** - WBAY 10/27/16

##### ▶ **Living Near CAFO Reduces Property Value, DOR Rules** - Green Bay Press-Gazette 12/2/17

##### ▶ **Cattle Battle** - Milwaukee Journal Sentinel 2/6/18



## **The Action in Clean Water Action Council**

By Dean Hoegger

### **Memberships. Have you renewed or joined in 2020?**

**Thank you to the many members who already renewed their membership for 2020. To check your membership status, look at your mailed newsletter address label or the e-mail with the digital newsletter for your last renewal year. You can mail your membership donation or join CWAC with the enclosed form, or go online to <http://www.cleanwateractioncouncil.org/membership/>**

As you may know, our spring banquet and fundraiser was cancelled in April and is a significant source of operating funds. Joining, renewing, or making an additional donation will be much appreciated. We are seeking donations for our intern scholarship fund to pay summer and fall interns in the amount of \$2250. Can you make a donation? We still need \$1950 to cover this expense.

### **Read below about the actions we have taken in the last three months.**

**Be sure to contact us if an environmental issue arises in your community. CWAC is here to support citizen action.**

### **LEGAL ACTIONS**

***CWAC promotes ordinances to ban pavement sealants containing PAH.***

We are disappointed that the Wisconsin Senate did not act on the bill to ban pavement sealants containing PAH this spring after being passed by the Assembly. So, there will be no action until the 2021 session.

Children growing up near pavement treated with sealants containing PAH are thought to have a 14 times higher lifetime cancer risk. Thank you to all the organizations, individuals, and local government officials who helped promote a state-wide ban. We will now need to act locally just as Green Bay, Sturgeon Bay, Manitowoc, Sheboygan, and other cities did. If your city, village, or town is not protected by a ban, contact us to help make that happen. If the state legislature does pass a ban in 2021, it is likely not to take effect until July, 2022.

### ***CWAC promotes ordinances to ban manure spraying.***

CWAC continues to offer presentations to residents and town officials. Thus far, at least 17 northeast Wisconsin towns and cities have passed a ban. If your town has not passed an ordinance, contact us to help get a ban and protect your family from this health threat.

For more information on this concern, go to our website for Priority Issues: “Ban Manure Spraying.” <http://www.cleanwateractioncouncil.org/issues/spray-irrigation/>

### ***CWAC comments on water pollution permits and compliance.***

We monitor for new permit notices and hearings and publish those in our *Weekly Update* and at times attend hearings and/or submit comments. We also make oral and/or written comment on administrative rule changes such as the hearings for the livestock siting ordinance rule changes. Please monitor the e-mailed *Weekly Update* for permit renewals, variances, and hearings for rule changes. Past approved variances have included much higher levels of mercury in wastewater effluent.

One such variance request was referred for a possible appeal or legal action:

- Wisconsin Power and Light Edgewater - Generating Station, 3739 Lakeshore Drive, Sheboygan. Proposed Arsenic Variance: Even though the DNR has determined that a water quality-based effluent limitation of 0.2 ug/L for arsenic is needed to protect human health in the Lake Michigan, Sheboygan County, they agreed upon an initial limit of 2.5 ug/L for the new permit.

Since the last newsletter, we reviewed EPA pollution permit data for the communities of Adell, Cedar Grove, De Pere, Green Bay, Manitowoc, Maribel, Oostburg, Plymouth, and Sheboygan and were pleased to find most companies were in compliance. We did, however, make several referrals to the attorneys at Midwest Environmental Advocates including this one:

- Greymont Western Lime for Clean Air Act ongoing violations for sulfur dioxide emissions since 2008. They are located at 101 James Street, in Green Bay. It is estimated that nearly 10,000 people, 34% of whom are under 18 years old, live within a mile of the facility.

Our interns will begin working with the law clerks at MEA to monitor more companies this summer.

### ***CWAC Monitors for fertilizer sales compliance.***

State statute 94.643 requires fertilizer retailers to not display lawn fertilizer containing phosphorus. This bill was passed in 2009 to protect inland waters and the Great Lakes from phosphorus runoff. Phosphorus contributes to algae growth and in some cases dead zones, which are areas in lakes lacking oxygen due to decomposing algae. Retailers can sell the product when the consumer states it is for a new lawn or a soil test shows a need for phosphorus. When checking for phosphorus, look at the middle number, as in 6-4-0, which indicates the product contains 6% nitrogen, 4% phosphorus, and 0% potash.



A dozen retail outlets were checked for compliance. Unfortunately, we found several violations including a display of 10-10-10 at the Door County Cooperative and an offer of the same fertilizer at the Brussels Milling Company for use on a lawn. Martin Hardware, Fleet Farm, and Menards in Green Bay also display Milorganite, 6-4-0. While technically Milorganite is not defined as fertilizer, the consumer should be aware that it does contain phosphorus. These have all been reported to the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection.

There are other concerns regarding Milorganite. The name suggests it is a product one might use for organic gardening, and the package advertising states it is for gardens and lawns. The consumer should know that it is only organic in the sense that it is not a chemical fertilizer; rather it is the solid waste from municipal sewage and may contain chemicals of concern to the organic gardener including PFAS.

### ***CWAC monitors for plowing violations.***



Plowing violation in Kewaunee County.

Our staff has been monitoring plowing setbacks from streams in the Green Bay watershed in Door, Brown, and Kewaunee Counties and has submitted a half dozen violation complaints to the appropriate soil and water agencies. Two violations still exist in Brown County after being reported last

spring. A greater enforcement effort may be needed.

The plowing or cultivation setback is only five feet from the stream bank, a very modest distance. Violations create a greater risk of soil and nutrients entering the watershed and finding their way to Green Bay and Lake Michigan. Contact us if you observe a suspected violation.

## **EDUCATIONAL EFFORTS IN THE COMMUNITY**

### ***Health Forums***

Contact us if you have suggestions for topics or speakers. **We are seeking sponsors for individual health forums at the \$150 level.** Let us know if you will be a sponsor or can find a business sponsor. Past presentations included topics on indoor air quality, reducing breast cancer risk, toxic chemical exposures and endocrine disrupting chemicals, diet and health, safe lawns, climate change, and more! Our April presentations, "Safe Lawns: Why go organic and how to do it!" and "Fluoridation Prospectives," were cancelled due to the pandemic. We look forward to bringing in presenters again when it is safe to do so.

### ***Presentations and Exhibits***

We are disappointed to say that five of seven spring presentations were cancelled. We are currently working to make these presentations available as online recordings, and we can schedule them as live online presentations.

Presentations include Citizen Action to Protect the Waters of Northeast Wisconsin, The Health Threat from Coal Tar Pavement Sealants, The Health Hazards of Burn Barrels, Microplastic Pollution from Clothing, Communities on the Road to Zero Waste, The Hazards of Manure Spraying, and more. The presentations can be tailored to your group's geographic location, age, and available time. Also, contact us if you would like us to promote or co-sponsor your event or presentation.

We look forward to exhibiting again when it is safe to do so. Farmer's markets, an exhibit opportunity in the past, is currently limited to "essential businesses" only.

### ***CWAC serves on Congressman Gallagher's Save the Bay committee for the Lower Fox River watershed.***

CWAC continues to serve on the committee's education and outreach subcommittee and we will attend the June virtual meeting.

### ***Outreach through Newspaper and Radio***

CWAC sends press releases to local media and is often contacted to comment on developing environmental issues.

### ***Website Updates***

We continue to update articles on the website:  
[www.cleanwateractioncouncil.org](http://www.cleanwateractioncouncil.org)

### ***CWAC provides interns with valuable experiences.***

We provide our interns with valuable experiences and strategies for managing a non-profit organization. We invite them to attend area conferences and meetings, providing them with networking opportunities in environmental fields, encourage them to research and write for our newsletter and website, invite them to attend board meetings, and to represent CWAC at meetings with partner organizations.

We are partnering our interns with law clerks at Midwest Environmental Advocates to monitor pollution permits.

As previously mentioned, we are seeking additional donations or sponsors for intern scholarships which are at the \$500 or \$750 level.

### ***Attendance at conferences and meetings with other environmental groups.***

Conferences and meetings have gone online unless outright cancelled. We continue to participate in these as our schedule allows.

### ***Get Our Weekly Update by e-mail.***

Each Tuesday we e-mail the *CWAC Weekly Update* with actions, alerts, events, and the latest information on topics of concern. Send your postings by Monday evening. If you are a member with an e-mail address and you are not getting the *CWAC Weekly Update*, check your spam folder before e-mailing us to request to be put on the mailing list. If you are reading this newsletter as a non-member, e-mail us at [contact@cleanwateractioncouncil.org](mailto:contact@cleanwateractioncouncil.org) to be placed on the free *Weekly Update* list. E-mails are sent via BCC to protect your privacy.

**Not receiving the Update? Send us an e-mail request. It is sent out once a week via BCC e-mail.**

### ***CWAC's Non-Profit Status***

To learn more about our non-profit status and financials, go to the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions, and then go to Credential Search for Clean Water Action Council: <https://www.wdfi.org/ice/berg/Registration/OrganizationCredentialSearch.aspx>



Please follow us on Facebook.  
Click here for our page: [Facebook](#)

## **Meet Our Summer Interns**



**Melina Groleau** is a senior at UWGB studying Marketing and Supply Chain Management. She learned about the internship with CWAC through the EMBI (Environmental Management and Business Institute) sustainability certificate program. She has had a passion for sustainability for several years and is excited to be a part of an organization that promotes sustainability and protecting the environment.



**Abrahm Hill** will be entering his third year at UWGB and is double majoring in Chemistry and Environmental Policy. He is also on the Men's Soccer Team. He is from Rochester, Minnesota, and enjoys hiking, reading, and watching old videos of the Daily Show with Jon Stewart in his free time. After graduation, Abrahm hopes to attend law school and hopefully become an environmental lawyer.

**HEARINGS:**

WDNR

A PUBLIC HEARING IN THE MATTER OF THE WISCONSIN POLLUTANT DISCHARGE ELIMINATION SYSTEM (WPDES) PERMIT No. WI-0061794-04-0 JULY 1

**Permittee:** B&D Dairy Farm, LLC, N4304 5th Rd., Pound, WI 54161

**Facility Where Discharge Occurs:** B&D Dairy Farm, LLC, W7251 E. 6th Road, Pound

**Receiving Water and Location:** Little Peshtigo River, Lower Peshtigo River, Little River, Middle Peshtigo River and Thunder River Watersheds, Lake Michigan Basin

**Details:** A WPDES permit was issued to regulate the discharge from a livestock operation in accordance with the effluent limitations, monitoring requirements, and other conditions on the management and utilization of manure and process wastewater specified in the permit. The hearing will go sections 2, 3.5, and 3.6 of the Permit in regards to groundwater monitoring systems and the reasonableness of omitting from the Permit provisions to accommodate projected growth of the herd to 19,590 animal units during the permit term.

**Hearing Date, Time, & Location:** July 14, 2020 at 8:30 AM. Oconto County Courthouse, 301 Washington St. Oconto, Wisconsin 54153

<https://dnr.wi.gov/files/pdf/calendar/BDDairyFaDNR190004HRGNOT.pdf>



**FARMERS MARKETS:**

(Please check local pandemic restrictions)

**Wednesdays, May 27 - September 30, 3 - 8 PM**

\*Markets end at 7 PM in September

On Broadway Farmers Market

Leicht Memorial Park, 128 Dousman St., Green Bay

**Saturdays, June 6 - October 31, 7AM - 12PM**

Green Bay Downtown Farmers Market

South Washington St., Green Bay

**Saturdays, Through May, 12PM - 2PM**

Mobile Market on Military

1505 W. Mason St., Green Bay

**Thursdays, June 18 - September 24, 3 - 8PM**

\*Markets end at 7 PM in September

Definitely De Pere Farmers Market

George Street Plaza, De Pere

**Tuesdays, June 12 - September 25, 4PM - 7PM**

Howard Farmers Market

Howard Village Center, Howard

**Saturdays, July 4 - October 31, 8AM - 12:30PM**

Downtown Appleton Farmers Market

100 W. College Ave., Appleton

**Saturdays, June 13 - October 17, 8AM - 12PM**

Future Neenah Farmers Market

135 W. Wisconsin Ave., Neenah

**Saturdays, June 6 - October 31, 8AM - 12:30PM**

Downtown Oshkosh Farmers Market

400 & 500 Blocks of North Main St., Oshkosh

**Saturdays, June 20 - October 3, 8AM - 12PM**

Shawano Farmers Market

235 S Washington St., Shawano

**Saturdays, May 23 - October 31, 8AM - 1PM**

Downtown Manitowoc Farmers Market

Quay Street Parking Lot, 720 Quay St., Manitowoc

**June 10 & 24, July 8 & 22, August 5 & 19**

**Wednesdays, 5PM - 9:30PM**

Night Market 920

Quay Street Parking Lot, 720 Quay St., Manitowoc

**Saturdays, June 6 - October 31, 8:30AM - 12PM**

Sturgeon Bay Farm and Craft Market

Market Square, Sturgeon Bay

**OTHER EVENTS:**

**June 20 & August 22, 4 - 6PM**

Yoga and Wine with the Alpacas

LondonDairy Alpacas and the Alpaca Threads Gift Store

6827 State Hwy 147, Two Rivers, WI

LondonDairy has teamed up with Balance on Buffalo in Manitowoc, WI. Participants will do 45 minutes of yoga surrounded by our friendly and curious alpacas, and then sample several South American wines, exclusive to us in Manitowoc County. Heather from Balance on Buffalo will weave you gently in and out of yoga poses for 45 minutes in this gentle yoga class. This is an ideal class for those new to yoga, as well as the experienced student who enjoys this gentle approach to their practice. No experience in yoga, alpacas, or wine is required. Please bring a yoga mat or yoga/beach towel and water

*continued on page 20 >*

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

bottle. This event will be held rain or shine. Outdoors with sunny weather with the ability of going indoors if need be. Register here: <https://www.travelwisconsin.com/events/animals-agriculture/yoga-and-wine-with-the-alpacas-177363>

**June 21, July 19, August 16, 9AM - 3PM**

### Maribel Cave Tours

Cherney Maribel Caves County Park,  
County Road R, Maribel, WI

Guided, underground walking cave tours of Maribel New Hope Cave. The cave is electrically floodlighted and is suitable for all ages. See water worn river passageways, stalactites, flowstone, a giant rock column, and unique geologic rock formations. It is the largest cave in Manitowoc County. Donations only.

Information: 920-683-4189 or 920-860-6123

**July 25, 9AM - 12PM**

### Owl Fest

Woodland Dunes Nature Center,  
3000 Hawthorne Ave., Two Rivers, WI

Join us for an exciting morning learning about Wisconsin owls! Enjoy kids' activities, nature walks and a kids' owl hooting contest. Meet live owls and raptors at presentations by Wildlife of Wisconsin. This event is great for families, but all ages are welcome.

Information: 920-793-4007

**August 20, 5:30 - 8:30PM**

### Farm to Table Dinner

Mahler Park, 1536 South Park Ave., Neenah, WI

Toast the sunset at this elegant open-air dining experience. Awaken the senses with farm fresh culinary delights prepared by talented local chefs. For more information, please visit: <http://www.neenah.org/sunset-dinner/>

## SAVE THE DATE!

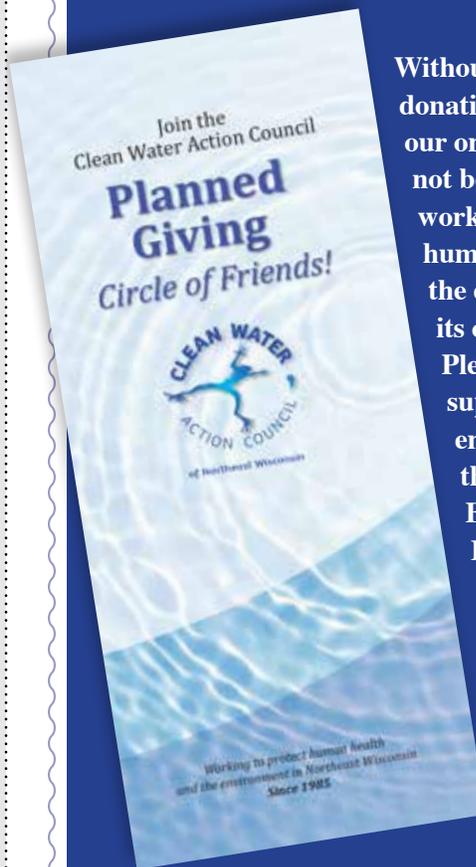
**Saturday, September 26, 5:00 - 9:00 PM**  
**CWAC Annual Banquet and Silent Auction**

- Originally scheduled in April -

If the pandemic conditions are favorable for holding the banquet, our Fall newsletter will be mailed the first week of September with the details and a registration form.

We are accepting silent auction donations. If the banquet is not held, we will have online sales instead.

## Join Our Planned Giving Circle of Friends



Without planned giving donations or legacies, our organization would not be able to do the work of protecting human health and the environment at its current level. Please consider supporting our endowment fund at the Greater Green Bay Community Foundation with a gift in your will or bequest.

Contact us for a  
Planned Giving  
Brochure

## Have you renewed your membership?

See your newsletter label  
or e-mail notice  
which indicates the last year  
that you donated.



# Rodale Partners with Indigo Ag on Regenerative Agriculture

By Dave Verhagen

The Rodale Institute, for generations a leader in organic and sustainable farming, has partnered with Indigo Ag to launch the Teraton Initiative.

A teraton, is literally, one trillion tons. The project aims to pay farmers to sequester over one trillion tons of carbon dioxide in their soils. Removing that much CO<sup>2</sup> has the potential to reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide levels to near what they were at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. Recent studies estimate that a quarter of all CO<sup>2</sup> emitted since the dawn of industrialization is from the soil. Modern farming practices have reduced carbon levels to just one percent on average. If farmers worldwide were to raise those levels to just three percent (a low average for organic farms), it is estimated that over a trillion tons of carbon dioxide could be sequestered in the soil.

The Teraton Initiative is far from the first effort to pay farmers for sequestering carbon dioxide. There are many players in the business, backed by corporations and governments wanting to do something about climate change. Yet new research is throwing into question just how effective soil sequestration can be.

Core samples of soil to a depth of two meters have shown that measuring how carbon is distributed throughout the soil is not as simple as earlier studies suggest. And the thousands of variations in soil types appear to make uniform measurements currently used meaningless. None of the studies have been long term and thus the studies are but a snapshot of what is a living ecosystem.

Nonetheless, the Teraton project would be negligent to ignore the sale of carbon credits on behalf of participating farmers. Indigo Ag itself is surveying soil carbon levels on tens of thousands of acres to a depth of one meter to help clarify the issue. It will take years for the scores of studies underway to create a workable database with the scope to identify the most salient factors needed for an accurate measure of soil sequestration.

Indigo began over a decade ago with botanists and soil scientists surveying crops around the world. They canvassed fields in drought areas to seek out the

patches where few plants prospered amid the parched crops. The microbial populations surrounding the roots of the hardier plants were cultivated and compared against the microbial communities surrounding the less hardy plants. Within the plants themselves, microbes were also compared. The same process was applied to pest infestations and areas with other plant pathologies.

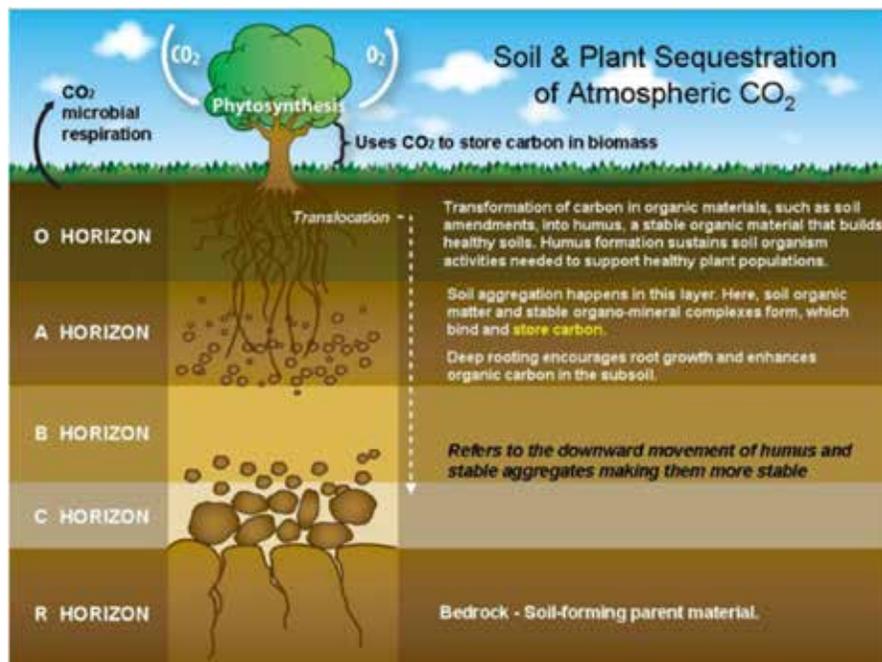
Over time, microbes were identified that could be applied to crops that improved yields and provided greater hardiness. At the same time, it was recognized that to cultivate healthy microbial populations in the soil, farmers would have to build a healthy soil environment for the microbe-plant relationships to flourish.

Here in Brown County, Wisconsin, the Lower Fox Demonstration Farms Network has worked with numerous large dairy farms to employ no till, green cover practices and rotational grazing on large dairy farms (CAFOs). Few farms have embraced the full program being promoted by the project, but those farms that have are being notably successful. Sediment runoff is being greatly reduced, soil conditions are improving, and farm profits are up.

The last point is crucial, as farmers are in crisis. One in ten Wisconsin farms went out of business in 2019. The disruption of demand for dairy products resulting from the pandemic is making 2020 even worse for farmers. Opportunities that increase income for farms of all sizes are critically needed.

One of the biggest problems with our current agricultural economy is over production. For some time, farmers have produced more milk and crops than can be sold. Prices are low due to oversupply, and the only answer farmers hear from their lenders and industry advisors is to grow bigger and produce more. Which of course, exacerbates the core problem.

Successful farms in the Lower Fox Demo projects do report lowered total milk production and lower gross income. But at the same time, they report never having made so much profit. No-till, cover cropping, and rotational grazing all reduce their expenses. Less reliance on herbicides and pesticides saves money. Less tilling and field work saves diesel fuel, equipment, and requires fewer employees. A dairy farmer's biggest expense is silage, and with grazing



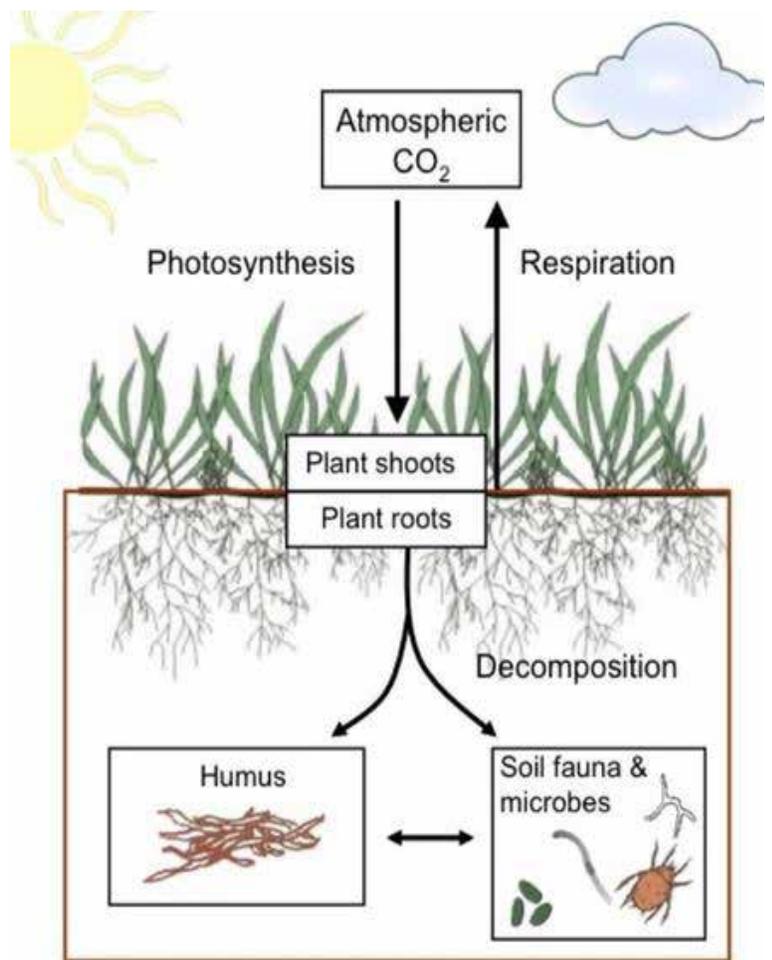
the young stock from April through November, their biggest expense is slashed.

Projects like the Lower Fox Demonstration Farms show that sustainable farming practices can not only work for the farmer, but they can work for society as well. The Teraton Initiative takes the concept further and recognizes the farm as a holistic business which can develop enhanced revenue streams just as Big Ag corporations do for themselves.

The Rodale Institute has reason to promote the Teraton Initiative beyond climate change. Indigo Ag brings modern biotechnology in support of Rodales' vision of regenerative practices. The project combines regenerative farming practices with Indigo's biotech to weave a very attractive financial package for farmers. The increased income potential is a critical incentive for the business of farming to move away from Big Ag practices and try something "new".

To be clear, Indigo Ag is by definition a member of the agricultural industry. But they have resisted calls to open themselves up to investors and be traded on the stock markets. In an interview on CNN, their CEO defends remaining privately held, explaining that the pressure applied by shareholders might deter Indigo from its mission of making regenerative agriculture the worldwide norm as fast as possible. Indigo has already contracted for over eighteen million acres worldwide. CNN has dubbed them the company most likely to produce fundamental change in its industry.

There are research and marketing components within the Teraton Initiative to move the state of the art practice forward. It is the kind of approach needed to move farming away from twentieth century extractive strategies and into a twenty-first century integrative approach. Adding Rodales' support will only help accelerate the effort.



Soil Carbon Storage: Carbon balance within the soil (brown box) is controlled by carbon inputs from photosynthesis and carbon losses by respiration.  
*Courtesy of Carleton College.*



No till beans in corn residue. *Courtesy K-State Research and Extension*

## **\*\*CAN YOU MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TO THE SILENT AUCTION?\***

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**Sales will occur online if the banquet is canceled due to COVID 19 concerns.**

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