



Spring, 2011

www.crawfordstewardshipproject.org

BOOK REVIEW

review by Carol Dagnon
CAFO: THE TRAGEDY OF INDUSTRIAL ANIMAL FACTORIES Daniel Imhoff, Editor

By now you probably know that the animal products you eat don't come from animals raised on bucolic green pastures. And also that the industrial factories they are "grown" in pollute our water and air, and that they are inhumane, merciless systems. But perhaps you sigh and think that the system is a necessary evil in order to have food that is cheap, efficient, and healthy. That's where CAFO will set you straight. This book is a collection of illuminating essays by some 30 notable authors on one of the most important environmental and ethical issues of our

time: the rise of Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations, or CAFOs, where increasing amounts of the world's animal products are produced. Of particular note is the "3 Big Lies" section of the book, briefly summarized as follows:

Lie #1 Industrial Food Is Cheap. Factory-farmed animal products are incredibly expensive when the hidden social and environmental costs are factored in. These include massive taxpayer subsidies to Big Ag, air pollution so great as to be a leading contributor to greenhouse gases, and water pollution that is causing contamination and dead zones in bodies of water all over the planet, including wells where people get their drinking water. This

is in addition to the decline in property values and noxious odors they inflict on people in their immediate neighborhoods.

Lie #2 Industrial Food Is Efficient. If factory farming is efficient, we must redefine efficiency, because it is largely

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WISCONSIN'S "INLAND OIL" PROBLEM

By Rob Horwich

The Gulf oil spill and its ramifications let us see how far our government has strayed with the oil industry, letting them write the laws. The Gulf of Mexico and its shoreline, its people, economy and wildlife continue to pay the price.

Wisconsin doesn't have oil, but due to the 2004 Livestock Siting Law, also largely written by the factory farm industry it governs, our own "oil spills" are moving in. Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) are on the rise, with 200 in operation and 50 permits in process. But it is more insidious, leaking from all directions, slowly without many of us seeing, feeling or smelling it. It makes the news only in small doses here and there and then it dies down. Crawford Stewardship Project has been gathering the bad news of our "inland oil" spill and our government has no idea how they are opening the floodgates for all of us to breathe and drink pollutants...or do they?

It is very difficult to gather the information about which CAFOs are violating the law in Wisconsin because:

- The state does not monitor our waters routinely so only if CAFOs are reported in violation does it reach the DNR and the news,

cont. WISCONSIN'S INLAND OIL page 2

SO YOU WANT TO HELP...

First, thank you to all our present and past volunteers.

Do you know that 80 CSP supporters have volunteered on various efforts over the past 3 years? Give yourself a pat on the back and take note of these opportunities.

EVENT ORGANIZER

Organize 3 events this warm season with help from Jane Holzhauer who organized a great line-up of presentations and films in 2010. A written guide for organizing events takes you step by step and Edie Ehlert is also available to help out.

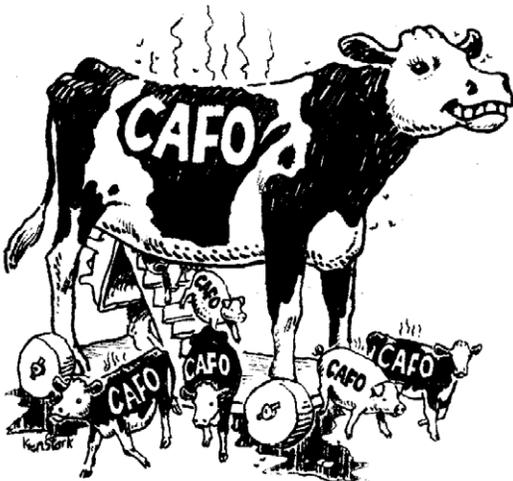
TECHNICAL JOB

If you like basic technology, we sure can use your help. We need one or two people to take video, show films and powerpoints, and take photos at events and meetings. Rob Horwich will advise and work with you.

NEWSLETTER COORDINATOR

We put out two newsletters a year. Job is putting the pieces together, working with Edie, writers, layout person, printer, and collating organizer.

Let us know if you can help out on these efforts or have other skills to offer.



Cartoon by Ken Stark

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- There is no unified placement of the data for the public to check the CAFOs;
- The DNR website lists all of the CAFOs. Violation information is listed in the various DNR offices and can only be gathered by citizens scouring files.

Nevertheless the news is filtering in slowly and we have some important data to report.

BY LAND

In Michigan, a community environmental group has been monitoring their two county areas. You can access the data at NOCAFOs.org if you want the whole story. In the two county region of SE Michigan (on the Ohio border) — Hillsdale and Lenawee counties — there are 25 CAFOs. Within a 10-year period from 2000-2009 they have a dismally perfect record of violations. 100% of the 25 CAFOs in that area have been in violation at least once and many have

numerous violations. Collectively, those 25 CAFOs have accumulated a total of 1,077 violations for an average of 43 violations per CAFO. One CAFO has incurred over \$400,000 in fines. This is a conservative estimate since it is only those violations that have been documented by the federal and state agencies.

BY WATER

An article by Steve Furay about Valley Stewardship Network's (VSN) Water Monitoring Program (See common-breath.com/?p=970) describes the good work VSN is doing training citizen water monitors. Also stated is, "...the New York Times reported on the contamination of over a hundred wells in Brown County, Wisconsin, due to agricultural runoff from the local dairy cow factories. Water tests had shown widespread contamination from E. coli bacteria in the

region." We have heard from other sources that in the past the water taps in Brown County were flowing with brown manure laden water.

Unfortunately, it has become the job of citizen monitors to detect and report pollution as the DNR has so few resources and operates under political pressure to give water discharge permits to all CAFO applicants. No application has ever been turned down.

BY AIR, LAND AND WATER

A New York Times article on June 29, 2010 reported that "An alarming number of human pathogens have become resistant to one or more medicines, undermining the ability of doctors to treat patients effectively." Overuse of antibiotics in farm animals is contributing to the problem, stimulating the emergence of resistant bacterial strains that can infect people. On this topic, Katie Couric reported on CBS Evening News which can be seen on the Pew Charitable Trust's website (saveantibiotics.org/newsroom/Couric_Jul2010.html).

The report noted that a survey of farmers in four states (Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma) showed that over 70% of farmers are feeding animals antibiotics continually for increased growth and so they won't get sick. This, despite concerns from the Federal Drug Administration, Center for Disease Control, and Department of Agriculture

farmers to stop this practice. But the CAFO industry is fighting to maintain this over use as evidenced in a congressional hearing where scientist Stuart Levy reported that he documented the problem 30 years ago in a scientific experiment. He fed chickens a continuous diet of low level of tetracycline antibiotics and after one week the E. coli in the intestines of the chickens was resistant to tetracycline. After 3 months they were resistant to other antibiotics as were the farm workers and community members as well.

If we think the oil spill was bad, CAFOs will be having enormous effects on our water and air quality and may affect our health by taking away major tools of our health care workers to cure us of diseases. One participant at the hearing testified that pediatricians would be horrified if a school class fed all of their children a steady diet of antibiotics to keep them healthy. That won't be necessary because if farmers continue the practice it may render all our effective antibiotics impotent to help us when we are in need.

ACTION

Despite the dire situation, change is resulting from consumer, environmental, farm, health, and citizen action. Joining with others in the state to demand local control of livestock siting, creating statewide monitoring around CAFOs, supporting citizen groups to challenge CAFO applications, supporting sustainable farming and farm policies, and changing our buying habits all contribute towards building healthy communities and local economies.



January 8, 2011 CSP Planning Meeting brought forward plans and strategies for the year. The group included board, staff, water quality monitors, committee chairs, and volunteers. Photo by Rick LaMartina

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TALK THE TALK: A DOZEN TALKING POINTS ON CAFOS IN SW WISCONSIN

By Edie Ehlert

When you approach or are approached by someone who is interested in why you care about CAFOs in Southwest Wisconsin, it's nice to have words at your command and a few facts for backup. By request, here are some reasons CSP uses when talking to legislators or called-in inquiries.

- **Water Pollution** Millions of gallons of liquid manure on the landscape often leading to pollution of streams, lakes and well water. In Michigan where the Sierra Club Water Team did water quality monitoring around CAFOs, 100% of the CAFOs polluted the neighboring watersheds. Karstic geology, such as in SW Wisconsin, is particularly vulnerable. And once ground water is polluted here, it will be polluted likely forever because we have an aquifer that does not flow and flush itself.
- **Air Pollution** At the least, the quality of life of neighbors is seriously reduced. No more evening barbecues, gardening with joy. At the worst, serious respiratory illness results. Workers are also hit hard, with at least 25% developing permanent respiratory illness.
- **Property Values Reduced** Residential property values lower from 10-90% depending on how close property is to a CAFO. Who would choose to live in a place where the stench can be so bad as to make you gag?
- **Little Local Control** The Wisconsin Livestock Siting Law, largely written by the CAFO industry, has stripped local governments

and citizens of most of their rights to determine local economic development. No other industry on the rural landscape is given such a complete legal advantage over other economic ventures.

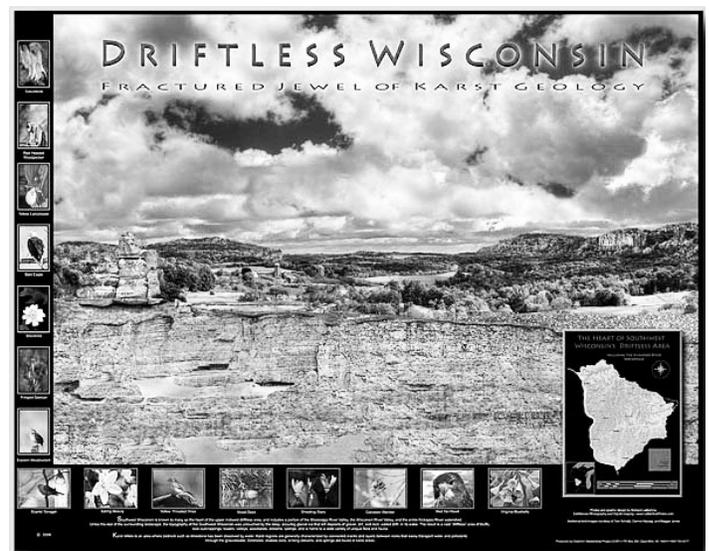
- **Economic Deterioration** Incompatibility with other rural economic ventures including family farming, farmstead businesses, tourism, basically any venture that includes the need for high quality air and water.
- **Farm Economy** Local farming builds local economy and community with farm related businesses and a direct interest in the land and local resources. Once built, CAFO feed is largely trucked in, animals trucked out, and low paid immigrant labor used. This scenario robs communities of local economic, environmental, and social benefits.
- **Road Repair** Local governments pay for the extensive road repairs from CAFOs.
- **Lack of Enforcement** Industry claims that CAFOs are the most "regulated industry in the state". They fail to say that monitoring and enforcement are minimal. For example, in the NE part of the state where there are 95 CAFOs, the DNR has just 3 staff people to monitor the operations.
- **Cheap Food** Industry claims of cheap food leaves out the fact that we all pay to support their profits. Citizens foot the bill in hundreds of billions of dollars in taxpayer subsidies, medical expenses, insurance premiums,

declining property values, and mounting clean up costs.

- **Production Efficiency** "Bigger is Better" is a myth perpetuated by the industry. Do not confuse high production with efficiency. The reliance on a heavily subsidized system to produce feed, large amounts of capital to dominate markets, and lax enforcement regulations to deal with waste disposal all are essential to making this industry "efficient." Market controls leverage an unfair advantage over smaller producers and cloud a more holistic view of efficiency. In other words, diverse family farms are far more efficient in sustainable use of the land, growing food, and feeding the local economy.
- **Good Food** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimate that contaminated meat

and poultry related infections make up to 3 million people sick each year, killing at least 1000. And these figures are likely under reported. And confinement increases infectious bacteria such as E. coli and Salmonella, which cause these diseases. Add that CAFO meat is often contaminated with hormones and antibiotics from the feed that gets passed on to consumers and washed into the water system, and we understand why consumers want to have CAFO meat labeled as such.

- **Animal Welfare** The crowded conditions and confinement restricts movement for animals. Often they cannot even turn around. This causes intense distress for animals and increases disease potential. Pasturing is more humane, sustainable, and less polluting.

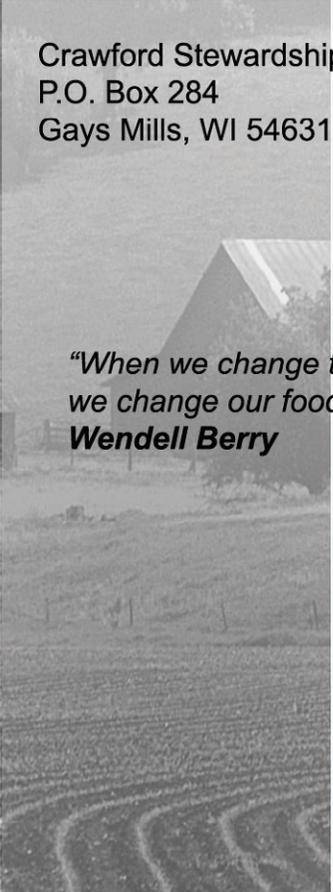


This beautiful, artistic and graphic display of our precious karst geology was created by local photographic artist Rick LaMartina. It measures 22" x 28" and you can have yours for \$16 plus shipping for \$5. Send orders postpaid to CSP, PO Box 284, Gays Mills, WI 54631. Allow 2-4 weeks for delivery. Makes a great gift and conversation item.

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*"When we change the way we grow our food,
we change our food, we change our society, we change our values."
Wendell Berry*

Calendar

Thursday, May 5, 7 pm CSP Supporters Gathering. An informal evening to offer guidance to CSP, watch a CSP powerpoint, enjoy great local snacks, and share social time with other supporters. Gays Mills Community Building, 212 Main St., Gays Mills.

Saturday, May 21, Birding outing. Join birders for an early morning outing on the lower Kickapoo. Location to be announced. Cosponsored by Kickapoo Initiative & Crawford Stewardship Project.

Watch for Karst Presentations to resume in spring.

Employment Opportunity

Crawford Stewardship Project is looking for a motivated person to help us with our mission to support sustainable agriculture and control factory farms. Position is for 12/hr/wk. Skills needed include: an ability to coordinate projects and volunteers, good communications skills, good computer skills and your own home computer, Strong interest in environment and local resources. Send resume to csp.county@gmail.com by April 22, 2011, See our website: www.crawfordstewardshipproject.org

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thanks to taxpayer-funded subsidies that these operations can purchase corn and soybeans below what it costs to grow them, thereby reducing operating costs. By contrast, many small farms that produce much of their own forage receive no government money. Further, the energy required for livestock production far outweighs the energy that the food itself provides. A 2006 UN report summarized it this way: "In simple numeric terms, livestock actually detract more from total food supply than they provide . . ." This is exacerbated with CAFOs, where corn and soybeans are brought to the animals in the factory, compared to animals that directly forage on pastures. CAFOs are also vertically integrated, meaning they have a direct relationship with slaugh-

terhouses and marketing operations, which creates an anti-competitive advantage over independent producers. CAFOs may claim efficiency, but the playing field is far from level.

Lie # 3 Industrial Food Is Healthy. Everything about cramming massive numbers of animals together in tight spaces is decidedly unhealthy. Air and water pollution, increased antibiotic resistance, and transference of *E. coli* and *Salmonella* infections to people through contaminated food and water are not signs of a health-promoting industry. Also, CAFO workers suffer from numerous medical conditions, including respiratory illness associated with poor air quality, which affects people in the neighborhood as well. And then there's the food itself. Diets high in

animal products are linked to chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and obesity. The fat of factory animals also has higher concentrations of contaminants, which comes from their feed, than that of pastured-raised animals. It doesn't have to be this way. Imhoff's CAFO offers visions of a humane, safer, and environmentally sane way to produce our food.