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May 2008

Volume I Issue I

Welcome to the first semi-annual CSP newsletter. We hope to give you an overview of events concerning large scale animal confinement operations in Crawford County. We really need your help to sustain this long term effort. Please look over the action plan on page 3 to see where you can fit in.

DECISION REVERSED!!!

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The Wisconsin Livestock Facility Siting Review Board voted on April 18 to reverse Crawford County's decision to allow the expansion of a hog confinement facility near the Wisconsin River in Wauzeka, WI. The Board reviewed the application for facility expansion prepared by Roth Feeder Pigs, Inc., found portions of it to be internally inconsistent, and expressed concerns with regard to the nutrient management data submitted by Roth.

A challenge to the County's decision to issue a license to the Roth facility had been brought by Midwest Environmental Advocates on behalf of twenty-eight affected neighbors who live or own land within two miles of the facility. The challenge asserted that portions of the application submitted by Roth did not meet the state standards for nutrient management, which put local drinking water and the lower Wisconsin River watershed at risk for nitrate, phosphorous, and bacteria contamination.

Concerned neighbors and members of the Crawford Stewardship Project worked hard gathering information and presenting compelling testimony on the environmental and public health risks associated with this hog facility to the Crawford County Land Conservation Committee, who nonetheless voted to approve the expansion in January.

While the decision of the Board is binding on Crawford County, nothing prevents Roth from re-applying for local approval under the Livestock Siting Law. The County itself has the option of appealing the Board's decision to circuit court. In addition, Roth must acquire a wastewater discharge permit from the Department of Natural Resources, which is mandatory for all livestock operations that house 1,000 animal units or more on site.

Crawford Stewardship Project formed in July 2007 in response to a permit application for the first CAFO in Crawford County. Thirty-three concerned citizens attended the first organizational meeting in July and formed committees to:

- Research
- Educate
- Network
- Investigate and monitor the first CAFO application
- Develop CSP as a viable organization



This is the "confined" of the Confined Animal Feeding Operations

Research

There are volumes on the social, environmental, economic and human health hazards of CAFO's. The problem was in condensing information into easily accessible format for education and in choosing the best information for challenging the county permit. Our presentation to the county board of this information was over 2000 pages of expert testimony from engineers, nutrient management specialists, and soil scientists on the Roth application, and peer reviewed articles from prestigious scientific journals on the threats of similar operations to public health and safety.

Education

We stimulated a public discussion with informational meetings and regular letters to the editor. Realizing the potential for polarization from confrontational tactics, we strove to listen to all opinions and to keep the debate civil.

We mailed out 2,200 letters to absentee landowners of Crawford County apprising them

of the situation and asking for support. Hundreds of individuals responded by writing letters to the county board and local papers and by contributing money to help with our expenses.

CSP and Valley Stewardship Network co-sponsored two presentations by a hydrogeologist and a soil scientist on the effects of livestock operations on groundwater quality focusing on the karst geological formations common in Crawford County. The presentations were attended by over 150 people.

The next presentation in May will bring farmers to speak on their successful alternatives to large scale livestock operations.

Networking

CSP benefited greatly from the experience, data and encouragement of Valley Stewardship Network, Russ Tooley of Centerville Cares and Toni Ends of the Town of Magnolia. Legal assistance and advice from Garvey McNeil & McGillivray, S.C. and Midwest Environmental Advocates was invaluable.

By January, we were receiving phone calls for our help from individuals in other parts of the state threatened by CAFO's. We attended by invitation the April 5 Environmental Impacts of Large Livestock Operation in Wisconsin conference in Madison to share our expertise.

Investigate and monitor the first CAFO application

Our experts in soil and manure management, hydrogeology, engineering, and medicine reviewed the applicant's plan and its potential health effects on residents of the County. Their objections caused the Land Conservation Committee to require the applicant to slightly amend his plan, but most of the concerns were not addressed.

Although we objected to the WI Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), the County, and the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) that no County or WDNR permits were obtained and that there are no documented engineering inspections being done as the buildings are being built, the applicant continued construction.

The November public hearing held by

Crawford County was attended by nearly 200 people the majority of whom spoke eloquently against the application.

In January, the Land Conservation Committee voted to approve the license for the CAFO in Crawford County. The next step for AV Roth, the applicant, is to submit an application to the WI DNR for a discharge permit. To date, this has not been done in spite of the fact that we believe the facility is nearing completion. We are concerned that recent developments at the state level may eliminate the individual DNR permitting process and public hearing for CAFOs, but are still hopeful that we will have an opportunity to express our concerns both in written and oral comments to the DNR.

And in April-an unexpected win. See first page.

We are assisting Valley Stewardship Network in monitoring surface and ground water quality around the proposed CAFO site.

Organization

The Coordinating Committee of 8-10 dedicated volunteers met weekly from August through December to plan and coordinate the activities of CSP. The organization is physically decentralized, with each of us working from our homes.

Crawford Stewardship Project is now incorporated, with the Coordinating Committee becoming the board of directors. We are looking into non-profit organization status.

ACTION PLAN

Educate the public on CAFO issues

- √ Continue the series of public educational events
- √ Continue PR campaign to keep the issue in front of the public

Resist CAFO permit applications in Crawford County

- √ Continue to support neighbors of the first CAFO in their legal initiatives
- √ Research legalities surrounding all applications

- √ Pursue all legal avenues open to CSP to oppose this first CAFO

Monitor CAFO environmental effects in Crawford County

- √ Collect air and water quality data near proposed CAFO

Promote sound land use planning decision in Crawford County

- √ Research zoning options to limit CAFO's
- √ Initiate Karst geological and soils study of Crawford County to determine vulnerability to groundwater contamination
- √ Monitor County and Town planning surveys and publish results

Form state/ regional coalition to initiate public policy change

- √ Lobby environmental groups to address the CAFO issue
- √ Amend the rules of the Livestock Siting Law
- √ Pursue federal enforcement of the Clean Air and Water Act
- √ Promote sustainable alternatives to CAFO production

Improve communications to our membership on all current issues

- √ Create website and list serve
- √ Regular newsletters
- √ Enlist the help of more members in action teams

Strengthen CSP as an organization

- √ Develop fundraising plan
- √ Grow the membership

*By most definitions;
this is a factory and
not a farm!*



Contact CSP via phone (608-735-4277) or email (csp.county@gmail.com) to volunteer to serve on one of the listed Action Teams. You will be contacted by the appropriate chairperson to enlist your skills.

Our Mission

It is the mission of the Crawford Stewardship Project to protect the environment of Crawford County by confining CAFOs in the County to areas where they will do no harm, and to promote methods of agriculture that are safe, humane, profitable, and environmentally sustainable, while preserving economic opportunities for all citizens.

Our Vision

The Crawford Stewardship Project, judged by any standard, is widely and consistently regarded as a model of outstanding public participation, and as a provider of clear channels for citizens to positively protect the natural resources of their County.

This vision will be realized when:

- Crawford County protects the interests of its citizens by assuring that no CAFOs are located in the County which would adversely impact the health, welfare or quality of life of its residents.
- The County ensures the economic well being of all landowners through the use of zoning which protects property values and economic opportunity for all citizens.
- The need for local communities to determine their own future course is protected and encouraged by laws of the State
- CSP is a model of effective influence on State and local government.
- Our well informed citizens are able to make clear choices on issues that involve the health and safety of citizens of the County and are able to democratically influence decision making on these issues by their elected officials.
- A positive working relationship has been forged between CSP and other groups with similar missions throughout the state.
- Sustainable types of farming are increasing in the County.
- The DNR and Crawford Conservationist enforce the standards of the State and Federal environmental laws as they pertain to CAFOs within the County
- Representatives maintain high ethical standards in their day-to-day activities.
- CSP members are satisfied with communications, participation opportunities, the quality of leadership and the outcomes of their initiatives.

Currently, contributions are not tax deductible, but they are still very much needed and appreciated. Make checks to Crawford Stewardship Project.

Save a tree and a stamp. Email CSP your name and email address and receive your next newsletter by email.

Thank you to our contributors

We wish to express our appreciation to these people who have made our work possible through their generous donations.

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There are many profitable ways to raise hogs humanely, and without destroying our air, water and our quality of life.



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