

WELCOME TO FEEDLOT CITY, WISCONSIN

The Town of Gibson may become home to a 5,000 head beef feedlot, promoted by Dvorak Farms LLC to supply beef to Smithfield Foods, Inc., the world's largest corporate pork processor and *one of the nation's top ten worst polluters.*

COMING TO A 40-ACRE NEAR YOU

The 3.7 Million Dvorak Beef Farms, LLC Feedlot Would Include:

- **A Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation** - 5,000 head of cattle, or 3,680 animal units - an increase of over 35 times the current number of head at the facility.
- **A Freestall Barn Complex** - Four freestall barns each *longer than a football field* housing a total of 5,000 head of cattle.
- **A Power Plant** - An anaerobic manure digester that will produce methane gas, and then produce electricity to be sold on the energy market.
- **A Feed Storage Complex** - 23 silage bags about 960 feet long (or the length of three football fields each), not including the 17,970 lbs of dry corn and 19,800 lbs of wet distillers grain that will need to be stored at the site per day.
- **A Liquid Manure Pit** that is 142 by 150 feet and 15 feet deep.

HOW WOULD A 5,000 HEAD FEEDLOT AFFECT THE TOWN OF GIBSON?

Groundwater Depletion– 5,000 Thirsty Cattle

- *Quantity* - During hot weather, a beef cow (800-1200 lbs.) drinks between 15 and 22 gallons of water per day. During cold weather, a beef cow drinks between 8 and 11 gallons of water per day.¹
- *Are the Dvorak's underestimating its groundwater withdrawal?* Dvorak's Beef Farm, LLC states that each cow of various sizes at the facility will use only 10 gallons of water per day.

Groundwater Quality

- *Nitrate contamination* - The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has estimated that 90% of all nitrates in groundwater come from agricultural sources, and about a third of that comes from animal manure.²
- The DNR states that the West Twin River Watershed has the second highest risk of groundwater contamination potential in the Lake Shore Basin.³

Air Pollution and Foul Odors

- *Will the digester eliminate all odors?* - Dvorak's Beef Farms, LLC says the anaerobic digester they intend to install will solve all of the odor problems from the manure lagoon, but what about odors from the freestall barns, feed centers, and silage piles?

- *Will the digester work?* Manure digesters have a high failure rate - according to a 1997 report by the State of Michigan, over half of 81 digesters installed since 1971 are no longer in operation.⁴
- *Maintenance costs* - One case study found digesters too labor intensive for a farm with a small staff to handle.⁵

Smithfield Foods – A Local Nightmare

- *Large Multi-National Corporation* - Smithfield Foods owns companies in Virginia, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Texas, North Carolina, Missouri, Oklahoma, Illinois, South Dakota, Utah, Colorado, South Carolina, Mexico, Poland, France, and Canada.
- *Water Pollution Violations at Smithfield* - In 1997, a federal judge in Virginia fined Smithfield \$12.6 million for chronically dumping slaughterhouse wastes into the Pagan River in Virginia, a tributary to Chesapeake Bay, for almost 7,000 violations of the federal Clean Water Act.⁶

¹ Midwest Plan Service, *Beef Housing and Equipment Handbook*, MWPS-6, 4th Ed. (1987).

² WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, NITRATE IN GROUNDWATER - A CONTINUING ISSUE FOR WISCONSIN CITIZENS, 2 (The Nutrient Management Subcommittee of the Nonpoint Source Pollution Abatement Program Redesign, 1999) (*hereinafter* NITRATE IN GROUNDWATER) (on file with author).

³ WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, LAKESHORE STATE OF THE BASIN REPORT, 27 (2000)

(http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/gmu/lakeshore/lakeshore_main.pdf)

⁴ Jack L. Rozdilsky, *Michigan Biomass Energy Program, Farm-Based Anaerobic Digestion in Michigan: History, Current Status, and Future Outlook* (Sept. 1997) (www.michiganbioenergy.org/areas/anaerobic.pdf).

⁵ Stanley Weeks, Agway Cooperator, *What's Happening in Dairy Manure Management?* (Winter 1999) (www.agwayagproducts.com/cooperator/feb1999/manure.html).

⁶ Sierra Club, *The RapSheet on Animal Factories: Convictions, Fines, Pollution Violations and Regulatory Records on America's Animal Factories*, 14 (2002). (www.sierraclub.org/factoryfarms/rapsheets/operators.asp)

CITIZENS FOR RESPONSIBLE AGRICULTURE AND A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT (CFRACE)

- Smithfield has been prosecuted by citizens, farmers, and the government in at least six other major lawsuits in 2000-2001 alone.
- Although Dvoraks Beef Farm, LLC states that Smithfield will not own or control the feedlot, Dvoraks Beef Farm, LLC will enter into a contract to supply Smithfield's slaughterhouse with beef.

Water pollution

- Even if an anaerobic digester eliminates some odor, it will only remove 10% of the volume of the liquid manure and have largely the same nitrogen and phosphorus levels.
- Some of the land which will receive the liquid manure is located near tributaries to the Twin River and has a 6%-12% slope or greater, creating a risk of runoff to our public waters.

A Positive Economic Impact?

- Dvoraks Beef Farm, LLC states that the feedlot will only create 5-6 new jobs.
- The Town of Gibson estimates a meager \$9,000 in annual tax revenue, hardly enough to cover the damage to roads that might arise.
- Dvoraks Beef Farm, LLC says it will supply 5,000 head at \$850 each (finished weight) to Smithfield. Dvoraks Beef Farm, LLC also says that it will purchase grains and feed locally, but what happens when it is cheaper to get feed elsewhere?

Property Values – Nearby Land Values Will Decline

- There are five homes within mile of the site, and many more within one mile of the site.
- Studies have shown that property values near large feedlots tend to decline .⁷ Yet, Dvoraks Beef Farm, LLC contends that they expect an increase in the price of land in the area.

Traffic and Roads

- *Construction traffic* – Dvoraks Beef Farm, LLC admits traffic will increase considerably during

construction, primarily from trucks hauling concrete and building materials.

- *Normal traffic?* Dvoraks Beef Farm, LLC estimates: 2 trailer loads of wet distillers grain per day; 2 trailer loads of corn per day; 1 trailer load of calves entering per week; 2 trailer loads of fed cattle leaving per week, for a total of 37 truck trips in and out of the feedlot each week!

Will Local Farmers Benefit from an Industrial Scale Feedlot that Supplies Beef to Smithfield Foods?

- *Farmers' Lawsuits Against Smithfield Foods* - Farmers have sued Smithfield to get a fair price for their livestock under the Packers and Stockyards Act (PSA), a law designed to prevent price fixing by large monopolies like Smithfield.⁸
- *Captive Supply* - Large corporate meatpackers like Smithfield frequently use a procurement method known as captive-supply, which favors larger livestock producers.⁹
- *Price discrimination against small farmers* - Many small independent livestock producers feel that these contracts discriminate against them in favor of large producers because the contracts offer higher prices to larger producers.¹⁰

What's Next?

- *Permits Needed* – Dvoraks Beef Farm, LLC will need to obtain a Zoning Permit from Manitowoc County, and eventually a Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (WPDES) permit from the DNR and the public has a right to be heard before any permits are granted.

Support Sustainable Agriculture - It's Not Too Late to Stop the 5,000 Head Feedlot

Contact Chris Zeman at Citizens for Responsible Agriculture and a Clean Environment (CFRACE) at (920) 755-4123 or Sheila Mleziva at (920) 755-4181 or at nff@powercom.net.

⁷ Dr. William J. Weida, *Comments on the Potential Regional Economic Effects of Large Feedlots*, Department of Economics, Colorado College, 1 (Aug. 21, 2001) (on file with Midwest Environmental Advocates, Inc.); See also Mubarak Hamed, et al, *The Impacts of Animal Feeding Operations on Rural Land Values* (1999). (<http://www.cpac.missouri.edu/library/reports/landvalue-saline/landvalues.pdf>).

⁸ Smithfield Foods, Inc. *2001 Report to Shareholders*, 51 (2001).

⁹ Lynn A. Hayes, *Farmers and Ranchers Demand that USDA Enforce Law to Stop Packers' Control of Livestock Markets and Prices*, 3 (1999).

(<http://www.competitivemarkets.com/library/academic/ocmara12.htm>).

¹⁰ *Id.*