

# Midwest Environmental ADVOCATES

*pro bono publico*

## **New Factory Farm in Rosendale Threatens Significant Impact to the Environment**

*People Empowered Protect the Land (PEPL) of Rosendale and Midwest Environmental  
Advocates Urge Further Environmental Scrutiny for Rosendale Dairy*

October 29, 2008

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ROSENDALE, WI - In written comments submitted to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Midwest Environmental Advocates and concerned citizens of Ripon, Rosendale, and Pickett urged the DNR to fulfill its legal obligations by preparing an Environmental Impact Statement that analyzes the full impact of the proposed Rosendale Dairy on the community's land and water resources and air quality.

If approved, the new 8,000-head Rosendale Dairy will cause significant and permanent impacts to the environment, including the storage and land application of over 75 million gallons of manure and wastewater per year – making the operation the third largest “city” in Wisconsin in terms of biological waste production. Additionally, DNR's Air Dispersion Analysis shows that the livestock operation will emit high levels of toxic gasses such as ammonia.

“We who have the privilege of clean air, safe drinking water, and the beauty of natural resources have an obligation to protect this inheritance for future generations,” states Elaine Swanson, a Pickett resident and member of People Empowered Protect the Land (PEPL) of Rosendale. Living on a 50-acre wildlife sanctuary one mile from the Rosendale Dairy site, Swanson has seen changes the massive industrial complex has wrought on the landscape. “The quality of the air we breathe and the water we drink is jeopardized by this new factory farm. We urge the DNR to resist the political pressures brought to bear on the agency by agribusiness lobbyists and conduct a meaningful and thorough environmental review.”

The DNR analysis failed to conduct a thorough review of the possible cumulative impacts of the operation and the various alternatives available to the DNR and the dairy, both of which are required by the Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act.

“The DNR has taken several positive steps in this process, including withholding plan approval until the environmental review is complete and analyzing the potential emissions of hazardous air pollutants from the dairy,” says Jamie Saul, Staff Attorney with Midwest Environmental Advocates. “But the law requires a more extensive environmental review than the DNR has provided. We hope the DNR will fully examine the known and anticipated impacts that this facility will have on the community's environment and natural resources.”

DNR has faced considerable pressure from the proposed dairy's operators and the Dairy Business Association, who have sought to fast-track the environmental review and permitting process and claim that DNR has been too thorough in its environmental review. Rosendale Dairy has already begun construction on certain facilities that may still require DNR approval.

The DNR will be preparing a wastewater discharge permit for Rosendale Dairy in the near future, and the public is encouraged to participate in that process by submitting written comments to the agency when the draft permit is released. PEPL of Rosendale will request that the DNR provide an informational hearing so that the public may voice their concerns.

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### FAST FACTS

- The proposed Rosendale Dairy will be located on County Road M northwest of Rosendale, WI. According to public records, the operation will:
  - House 8,300 head of cattle, making the facility the largest dairy in Wisconsin;
  - Generate over 75 million gallons of manure and other waste per year, most of which will be stored in open lagoons before being spread on local fields. Only the cities of Milwaukee and Madison produce more biological waste.
  - Release more than three times the amount of toxic ammonia gas than is allowed by state law and the Federal Clean Air Act;
  - Require nearly 20,000 truck loads of traffic per year to bring in supplies and remove milk and manure (an average of 53 trucks per day);
  - Draw nearly 90 million gallons of groundwater per year from on-site wells.
- The Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act requires the DNR to prepare an Environmental Assessment (and, when required, a more thorough Environmental Impact Statement) for every agency action which may have a “significant impact on the quality of the human environment.” That review must include an examination of both short-term and long-term environmental impacts, including secondary effects and the cumulative effects of other nearby activities that would compound the impacts; and an evaluation of the alternatives to the proposal, including rigorous analysis of those alternatives that might avoid any of the adverse environmental impacts.
- Midwest Environmental Advocates (MEA) is the first and only non-profit environmental law center in Wisconsin. MEA provides legal and technical support to grassroots groups that are working for environmental justice in the Western Great Lakes region. For more information, visit [www.midwestadvocates.org](http://www.midwestadvocates.org) or call (608) 251-5047.
- People Empowered Protect the Land (PEPL) of Rosendale is an organization of concerned citizens seeking to protect their local environment, property values, and quality of life from the impacts of Rosendale Dairy and other factory farms across the State. PEPL promotes sustainable agricultural practices and supports a legislative moratorium on large-scale industrial dairies that have the capacity to cause lasting environmental harm.