

Midwest Environmental ADVOCATES

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**Wisconsin Urged to Finally Address Growing Air Pollution Problem
Created by Livestock Factories**

Madison, WI – Rural residents, family farmers and conservationists are calling on the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) to protect public health and rural quality of life by establishing strong standards that adequately address the growing air pollution and odor problem caused by industrial-scale livestock operations.

Despite vocal opposition from many rural residents and family farmers, last year the Wisconsin Legislature passed Act 235, the Livestock Facility Siting Act. Under this law, local governments that impose public health and safety regulations on livestock operations are required to apply uniform, statewide standards in granting local permits for those operations, with limited exceptions.

DATCP has developed those proposed statewide standards that are now scheduled for public hearing for March 14th through March 24th.

The proposed standards currently include an “odor index” that new and expanding livestock operations must meet before receiving local approval. Odors and air pollution are typically only a problem with the largest livestock factories in Wisconsin.

While the proposed odor standard is not likely to be strong enough to solve all of the odor and air pollution problems generated by large livestock factories, it is at least a start towards limiting toxic air pollution from these facilities in Wisconsin.

The proposed standards are the result of a four month long collaborative effort between conservationists, farmers and scientists. Yet DATCP is already making plans to significantly weaken the odor requirements as the result of its meetings with agribusiness lobby groups.

“The largest livestock operations in Wisconsin have to start taking responsibility for the air pollution and odors they create for their neighbors, whether family farmers or rural residents,” said Andrew Hanson, staff attorney with Midwest Environmental Advocates. “That means effectively measuring the air pollution and taking real steps to reduce it.”

“Air pollution from livestock factories has made rural residents prisoners in their own homes,” said Russ Tooley, a Manitowoc County resident and member of Centerville Citizens for Air, River, and Environmental Solutions. “It’s time for Wisconsin to take a serious look at the livestock factory odor problems many people in rural Wisconsin have to live with every day.”

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Fast Facts

- Midwest Environmental Advocates is Wisconsin’s first and only non-profit, public interest environmental law center. Midwest Environmental Advocates provides legal representation and community organizing assistance to groups that are working for clean air, clean water and a clean government. For more information, go to www.midwestadvocates.org.
- According to DATCP, the odor index already provides Wisconsin livestock producers with more management flexibility than either the “Offset Model” used in Minnesota or the regulatory system for livestock air pollution in Iowa.
- The hearings for the livestock siting standards are scheduled as follows:
 - Jefferson - Monday, March 14, Community Credit Union, 100 N. Main St.
 - Green Lake - Tuesday, March 15, Heidel House, 643 Illinois Ave.
 - Richland Center - Thursday, March 17, Ramada White House, 1450 Veterans Drive
 - Manitowoc - Tuesday, March 22, UW - Manitowoc Center, 705 Viebahn Street
 - Wausau - Wednesday, March 23, Northcentral Technical College, 1000 W. Campus Drive
 - Eau Claire - Thursday, March 24, Chippewa Valley Technical College, 620 W. Clairemont Ave.
- For more information about the proposed statewide standards, go to the website of Midwest Environmental Advocates, Inc. at <http://www.midwestadvocates.org/archive/siting%20standards/index.htm>.