

Midwest Environmental ADVOCATES

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Contact: Andrew C. Hanson Glenn Stoddard
608-251-5047 ext. 2 (w) Garvey & Stoddard, SC
608-628-2429 (c) (608) 256-1003

Tremel Family Files Complaint Against Stahl Farms in Federal Court

Luxemburg, WI – Today a rural Wisconsin family in Kewaunee County filed a federal lawsuit against Stahl Farms, a 900 cow livestock factory, for polluting a nearby stream and the family’s drinking water well.

“As far as we can tell, Stahl Farms is still polluting,” said Judy Tremel. “They haven’t stopped, and they’ll continue unless we go to court to get that operation cleaned up.”

“Since the contamination in March, we installed a new well that provides safe drinking water, but we will have to test and monitor the well because it’s hard to feel safe when we see Stahl Farms continue to spread manure across the road,” Judy Tremel added.

The federal lawsuit stems from the continued pollution of tributaries to School Creek by Stahl Farms in the Town of Luxemburg, and the contamination of the Tremels’ drinking water well with what appeared to be liquid manure in early March of this year. Every member of the Tremel family, including then-seven month old infant, Samantha, became seriously ill from exposure to the contaminated water.

The Tremels are represented by the nonprofit environmental law center of Midwest Environmental Advocates, Inc., and the law firm of Garvey & Stoddard, SC.

The Tremels gave Stahl Farms 60 days to implement corrective actions to prevent future discharges of animal waste and other pollutants to nearby streams and groundwater.

“Unfortunately, Stahl Farms has not taken acceptable action to address the sources of pollution at its facility,” said Andrew Hanson, attorney with Midwest Environmental Advocates. “As a result, the Tremels had no choice but to go to court to protect their health, their children, and their water.”

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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 to protect air and water resources. For more information, go to www.midwestadvocates.org.
- Stahl Farms is a Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation ("CAFO") Of the almost 17,000 livestock dairy farms in Wisconsin, 109 are classified by the WDNR as CAFOs, or dairy livestock farms that have 700 or more milk cows.
- DNR records indicate that Stahl Farms has been discharging animal waste from its feedlot and waste spreading fields on an intermittent basis for more than 20 years, despite receiving thousands of dollars in financial assistance from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture to prevent the pollution.
- The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources issued a discharge permit to allow Stahl Farms to expand its CAFO in July of 2003, despite the long history of pollution.
- After Stahl Farms spread animal waste near the Tremels' home in late February of this year, the Tremels' well became unsafe for human consumption. Test results showed that the well became contaminated with 2,500 colonies of *E.coli* bacteria and 9,800 colonies of fecal coliform bacteria.