

Midwest Environmental
ADVOCATES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE May 26, 2000

Contact: Melissa Scanlan, Midwest Environmental Advocates, (608) 251-5047
 Sam Gieryn, Wisconsin Citizen Action, (608) 256-1250

FACTORY FARM PERMIT SETS PRECEDENT

**DNR REVISES FACTORY FARM PERMIT TO PROHIBIT MANURE
DISCHARGES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FEDERAL CLEAN WATER ACT.**

Kewaunee, WI Activists claimed victory today when the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) strengthened a WPDES permit for Pagel s Ponderosa Dairy in Kewaunee County by prohibiting all manure discharges from the facility, except under limited circumstances. The permit was the subject of two public hearings in Kewaunee. Local residents and statewide environmental and consumer groups had complained that the DNR s proposed permit was in violation of the Clean Water Act and not strict enough to prevent animal waste contamination of the Kewaunee River watershed.

After twenty-six years as a federal regulation, the DNR finally placed the effluent limit applicable to factory farms in a WPDES permit for Pagel s Ponderosa Dairy, said attorney Melissa Scanlan, Legal Director of Midwest Environmental Advocates. She added, Community organizing and legal advocacy do work. At a minimum, WDNR should include conditions in the WPDES permit to assure compliance with the no discharge limit. The proposed permit did not require monitoring or reporting of discharges of pollutants, but the final permit does.

Midwest Environmental Advocates, along with Wisconsin Citizen Action, the Sierra Club, WISPIRG and several other state organizations recently petitioned the EPA to object to the Pagel s permit and 15 other proposed DNR permits for factory-sized livestock operations in Wisconsin, based on similar deficiencies. Up to this point, the DNR has been bending over backward to let factory farms operate in Wisconsin without meeting the requirements of federal law, said Sam Gieryn of Wisconsin Citizen Action. We need to hold livestock factories to the same standard of care for our water that most responsible family farmers have practiced for years.

Next door to the Pagel s operation, neighbor Marge Wessely was pleased with the result. After numerous calls to the DNR concerning odors and water pollution from the ongoing expansion of Pagel s, Marge Wessely of Ryan, Wisconsin, decided to strengthen her voice through community organizing and legal advocacy. She formed the Concerned Ryan Neighbors, a group of 21 people living near Pagel s factory farm, and hired Midwest Environmental Advocates, to shape the permit the DNR was poised to issue to this factory farm. I m glad that local people were willing to take the time to speak their minds on this issue, said Ms, Wessely. We don t need factory farms spoiling the water for other farmers in the neighborhood or for the community as a whole. We will be watching to make sure this operation lives up to the requirement of no manure discharges.

###