

# Environmentalists Want Moratorium On Hog Farms

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She said people are encouraged to review the strategy and send in their comments.

The deadline for submitting comments is Jan. 19.

Comments should be mailed to: Denise C. Coleman, Program Analyst, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, ATTN: AFO, PO Box 2890, Washington, DC 20013-2890.

Written comments were not accepted at the meeting, although manilla envelopes were provided so that those with written comments could mail them to the program address.

Those who commented at the meeting were mostly from Pennsylvania, although a representative of the New York Farm Bureau commented.

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau held its annual convention at the same time, and a lay representative declined at the time to offer an opinion on behalf of the state farm organization.

However, PFB comments are to be submitted prior to Jan. 19. An outline of some of the concerns of the PFB were provided last week.

Comments made at the Union Deposit meeting seemed to reflect four different perspectives — those of non-farm residents of the Bedford County area against confinement swine facilities being built in their area; professional representatives of environmental groups with opposition to confinement swine facilities, among other things; professional representatives of agricultural and pro-agricultural groups; and the individual person, potentially subject to law.

Several commentators were from the Bedford area and expressed opposition to allowing any permits for any new facilities until research and federal regulations are

developed.

The Bedford area has received some media attention this past year or more because of battles between residents of urban sprawl and farming operators and businesses.

Some who have been following that and other situations around the country have expressed the opinion that the issue is mostly about odor — that, in an attempt to keep new residential and existing developments from being subject to malodors from farms (especially hog and poultry houses), opposition groups have become supported by those who either believe, or disingenuously perpetuate, extreme claims of health concerns and water supply safety being caused by such farming operations.

The Bedford controversy resulted in Senate Resolutino 91, an unenforceable request of the state Conservation Commission and others in state agencies to compile information about nutrient management, and confinement facilities and potential problems, and publish it for the general public's access.

Some involved with nutrient management issues in Pennsylvania said they considered such a document could only serve as a manual for battling proposed high-density livestock operations.

Others report that residents from the Bedford area have been traveling the state to different meetings to voice opposition to hog facilities and confinement housing.

The first speaker at the Union Deposit meeting was Karl Novak of Clearville.

He expressed opposition to the Unified Strategy because it doesn't go far enough in establishing site-specific permitting and mandatory planning for all.

He criticized Pennsylvania's Nutrient Management Act (6)

because it usurps local government's oversight of nutrient management planning for farms.

Novak also said that confinement hog facilities and high-density farming are not farms, but factories.

"Let's get one thing straight. These hog factories are not farms," Novak said.

"They are producers of massive quantities of toxic gases and massive quantities of waste laden with heavy metals, viruses and pathogens.

"Hog factories demonstrate little regard to their neighbor's

water supply, quality of water and quality of the air they breathe," Novak said.

"Hog factories are a blight on the environment and a massive threat to both the family farmer and the quality of life in the rural America.

"We must have federal regulations ... that protect all the citizens of this nation, because the state of Pennsylvania and other states have been negligent in promoting and promulgating comprehensive and effective regulations."

Novak was followed by Dr. Dave Brubaker, former executive

vice president of the PennAg Industries Association (an agricultural business advocacy and educational organization), who surprisingly left the job about a year ago to work for GREEN in Minnesota, but announced that he is now to be working out of New York for GRACE (Global Resource Action Center for the Environment) on its Factory Farm Program.

"I think the proposal is a good step forward. You're at least raising the issue. But, I think it's important to realize that animal factories are industries. They're

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