

Dairylea, DFA Voice

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ards for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs).

Dairylea and DFA's Northeast Council joined the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives (NCFC) and National Milk Producers (NMP) in submitting comments to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) outlining their concerns that if enacted the increased federal regulation of animal feeding operations (AFOs) will place significant burdens on farmers.

The organizations continue to work together to provide their members with representation on legislative issues at all levels.

"These new regulations put the burden of proof and the burden of cost on America's already financially-taxed agricultural operators/farmers," said Dairylea's President Clyde Rutherford. "We would like to see legislative policy that provides for expanded technical and financial assistance when more stringent regulations are to be enacted."

The proposed changes to CAFO policy would be the first made since the passage of the Clean Water Act in the early 1970s. Among the key changes are modifying the definition of a CAFO, elimination of the 25-year/24-hour storm permit exemption, land application of manure and assessment of direct hydrological

connection to surface water.

Dairylea and DFA's Northeast Council believe that the proposed legislation exceeds congressional authority as outlined in the Clean Water Act (CWA) and is not justified by reliable water quality data.

"The regulations currently proposed by the EPA have exceeded the intent of the CWA and are not needed," said Lew Gardner, DFA's Northeast Council chairman.

"The EPA needs to conduct further research to collect reliable water quality data and to more accurately identify the economic costs associated with implementation of the proposed regulations."

Gardner added that the cooperatives support retaining the current method of defining a CAFO and full implementation of current rules before expanding the scope.

"Our members and other operators have made substantial investments in environmental protection over the past decades," said Gardner.

"Many have done so through voluntary, incentive-based programs. These successes can be attributed to regulations currently enforced."

The EPA will consider the input received during its comment period and is to release final regulations on December 15, 2002.

"We are grateful for the opportunity to comment on this important legislative matter," said Rutherford.



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