

Ohio Study Charts

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Already, the farms buy 71 percent of their corn for grain and 100 percent of their corn for silage locally.

Fiscally, the two counties in the study experienced very different situations. "I expected the outcomes to be much more similar, but we encountered a lot of differences between the two counties," Roe said. "That's good, because I think it makes this study much more informative for other communities who can make use of this data."

The two biggest fiscal costs local governments can incur with new dairies are those involved with road improvements — necessary for the heavy trucks traveling to and from the dairies — and the effect new property tax income can have on school funding from the state, Roe said.

"It can be a nightmare to understand how school funding works with the local property taxes," Roe said. "If things aren't set up properly, schools could lose up to a dollar in state funding for every dollar of new property taxes collected locally."

In these cases, all seven dairies entered into Tax Increment Financing (TIF) agreements to distribute the new tax dollars to specific governmental agencies. In four of the seven agreements, part of the tax

money was directed as "gifts" to local schools, which protects a school's state funding. Most of the rest of the tax money is directed toward road construction and maintenance.

"We asked other agencies, such as the sheriff's offices, local health departments and emergency management agencies, if they incurred extra costs due to the new dairies, and they reported none," Roe said. "Roads really are the biggest expense."

Roe and his team examined fiscal impacts over a 30-year period, the length of time often used for evaluating projects with long-term implications. In examining the best- and worst-case scenarios for a variety of fiscal costs and income, he estimated that the total fiscal impact over 30 years in Paulding County would amount to a gain of \$170,700, while the total gain in Van Wert County would total \$1.156 million.

Reasons for the large difference between the two counties include:

- Van Wert County was able to get a Community Development Block Grant from federal sources to fund \$72,000 of road improvements for one dairy.
- Because of the grant, Van Wert County incurred very little debt — just over \$23,000 — to sup-

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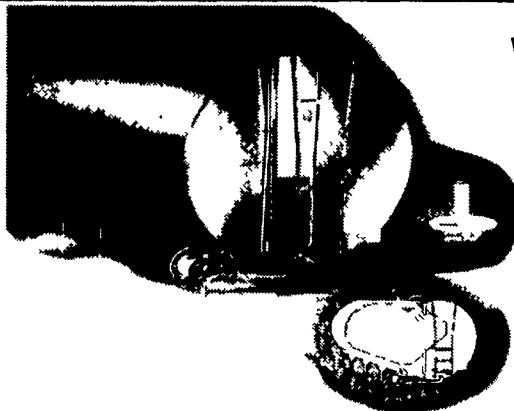
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