



Ohio Farmers Union

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OFU Questions CAFOs Impact to Future of Ohio Ag

COLUMBUS, OHIO – Ohio Farmers Union (OFU) today challenged government leadership in Ohio to aggressively confront the shortcomings in the concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) permitting system. OFU expressed concern for the lack of scientific, long-term studies of the impact large-scale livestock facilities have on surface and ground water, air quality emissions and surrounding communities.

In a Statehouse news conference calling for a moratorium on the further development of CAFOs, OFU President Joe Logan said: "We hope this call for a moratorium will prompt legislative, education and government agency leadership at the federal, state, and local level to work together to craft well-designed studies, implement policies to safeguard Ohio's citizens and natural resources, and develop common sense solutions to the challenges posed by CAFOs."

Ohio Farmers Union believes that further research is necessary to evaluate the effects that CAFOs have on any condition that might have significant environmental impacts. OFU urges the Ohio Department of Agriculture to cease new permit approvals of CAFOs in Ohio until such specific issues are addressed.

"We believe that a comprehensive study is necessary in several areas, including a study to assess the effects of liquid manure application, especially on the fracture-prone types of soil commonly found in Ohio where the effects can be amplified by extensive subsurface drainage systems which can turn potentially beneficial manure into surface water contaminants," continued Logan. "Ohio Farmers Union believes larger livestock farms can operate without damaging the environment, but that changes may be needed in the manure handling process to better stabilize nutrients and assure adequate distribution. We continue to encourage all producers to use good management practices."

The Ohio Farmers Union believes that the traditional family farm model of agriculture is preferable to the industrial model. "Ohio's agricultural landscape is being rapidly transformed from one featuring thousands of family farms to one with dozens of industrial-sized livestock production facilities. Family farms, where a core family-unit owns the land and animals, and actually provides the majority of the labor, better assure that the well-being of workers, the environment and livestock are considered," said Logan. "Family farms have fed our nation for centuries. These same family farms can continue to power Ohio's future if we give them an opportunity to incorporate recent advances in technology and engineering."

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For more specific issues that OFU advocates, view their producer-formed policy at their Web site: www.ohfarmersunion.org. Digital audio is available at OFU's online newsroom. To arrange an interview with OFU leaders or someone who lives near and is affected by a CAFO, contact Maria Miller Gordon, director of communications at 614-221-9520, 419-523-5300 or m-gordon@ohfarmersunion.org.