

Published September 3, 2006 in the *Des Moines Register* in response to the August 14 article "Time to Take Stand on Zoning for Livestock," which is pasted below.

## **'Farmers' organizations are destroying farmers**

The Register is right to support local control of siting hog factories ("Time To Take Stand on Zoning for Livestock," Aug. 14). That has long been the sentiment of the majority of Iowans and political demand of two organizations I belong to, Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement and the Sierra Club.

The Register mentions that the "influential" Farm Bureau may sue to prevent the DNR's authority for siting hog factories. We can thank the Farm Bureau and the Iowa Pork Producers for opposing every attempt at holding corporate agribusiness accountable for the pollution and social havoc wreaked in many rural neighborhoods by industrial livestock production.

We can also thank the Register and most legislators who fall for the notion that these organizations truly represent farmers. If they did and were so influential, how could they have allowed a few corporate hog corporations to replace many thousands of diversified family farmers across the United States?

Local control goes only so far. Banning hog factories from one area means they'll just move somewhere else. Hog factories need to be shut down over the next 10 years so we can have family farmers raising hogs responsibly again.

This will happen only if Iowa's congressional delegation champions a new farm bill that requires corporate agribusiness to pay the true cost of the corn and soybeans that feed corporate hogs, not prices equivalent to those during Great Depression. Of course, the Farm Bureau will oppose that, too.

George Naylor,

Greene County farmer; president of the National Family Farm Coalition,

Jefferson.

Published August 14, 2006 in the Des Moines Sunday Register:

## **Time to take stand on zoning for livestock In fall elections, public must insist on change.**

REGISTER EDITORIAL BOARD

The need for Iowans to demand local control of zoning for livestock has never been more urgent.

Action by a bipartisan legislative panel last week shows continuing and blatant disregard for balancing the interests of the industry and the environment — even after two straight years of record construction of livestock confinements.

The Iowa Administrative Rules Review Committee voted Tuesday to formally object to a rule that gives the Iowa Department of Natural Resources limited discretion to decide where proposed large-scale operations may locate.

The objection means the committee disputes whether the rule is in keeping with state law, which invites a legal challenge. But the rule still will take effect Aug. 23.

The 2006 Legislature had moved to block the rule, but Gov. Tom Vilsack vetoed the bill.

The rule is important because it lets the DNR assess the suitability of a proposed site using more than state regulations, which permit construction even when problems are likely.

Considerations will include:

- Whether there are plans to spread manure on frozen ground. Storage capacity should be large enough to get a facility through the winter without having to spread manure, which is likely to run off into streams.
- Proximity to public places, such as tourist attractions. This could mean manure-application fields could not be as close as state regulations now allow.
- High concentration of facilities in a watershed. If new sites would mean too much manure in a watershed, the DNR could direct producers to find another location to spread it.

A representative of the influential Iowa Farm Bureau Federation said the group may yet decide to sue. It will watch whether DNR Director Jeff Vonk keeps his promise to block few confinement plans.

It should be equally interested in whether the DNR uses the rule to protect the outdoors.

Meanwhile, other Iowans should be fed up with having so little say in where confinements can go and whether their quality of life will be affected.

That's what a newly formed organization — Iowa Network for Local Control — hopes to change. Chair Chris Murphy, a stay-at-home mother of four, lives about half a mile from a site west of the Iowa Great Lakes where New Fashion Pork of Minnesota had proposed locating a hog confinement. After a public outcry, the company recently announced it was dropping those plans.

But that's no guarantee New Fashion Pork or another operation won't try again to locate in the popular tourist area, reigniting the controversy.

"We believe that people just have not been educated about this issue, and once they are educated, I am sure most people would be in favor of local control," Murphy said, adding there is strong interest in a moratorium. "I don't think it's asking too much to have county input on the location of these sites."

It's not too much to ask.

But it will take a ground swell of Iowans telling candidates for governor and the Legislature to allow counties to zone for livestock just as counties can zone for other industries. There is no better time than the weeks leading up to November elections to make that expectation clear.

Chris Murphy

**Learn more**

- For more information about the Iowa Network for Local Control, contact Chair Chris Murphy, (712) 832-3113, harper@ilechsi.com or P.O. Box 435 ,Okoboji, IA 51355.

- **Click here** to read the new rule giving the DNR limited flexibility in siting proposed large-scale livestock operations.

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