

## **Overview of Animal Management**

Agriculture remains the biggest polluter of water and air, which is increased with large scale commercial farming. The EPA as part of the Clean Water Act, delegates to the state to identify waters that are impaired and prepare Total Maximum Daily loads a measure of the level of pollution that can occur without impairing the beneficial uses of water. The state is then required to develop plans to reduce pollution to the acceptable level. More recently, farm practices have been brought under scrutiny. Concentrated Animal Feed Operations (CAFOs) are now required to have National Pollution Discharge Elimination Systems (NPDES) permits based on the size and nature of the operations.

CAFO has become part of the common language synonymous with “Factory farming” as a way to refer to very large concentrated animal operations. AFO is an animal feeding operation if animals have been, are, or will be stabled or confined and fed or maintained for a total of 45 days or more in a 12 month period and the crops, vegetation, forage growth or post-harvest residues are not sustained in the normal growing season over any portion of the lot of facility. EPA estimates that there are 450,000 AFO’s in the US with about 15% designated as CAFOs. CAFOs and AFO have increased concerns for increase in both air and water pollution. Pew Trust review of CAFO impacts describes higher incidence of certain behavioral concerns including asthma, neurobehavioral issues, from exposure to toxic compounds, depression, anger, fatigue confusion, and increase in neuropsychiatric memory, mood and visual field performances. Property values drop around large scale feeding operations as do local purchases and tax receipts. Concentration of agricultural operations tends to remove a higher percentage of money from rural communities than when smaller farm operations exist. For additional information on Animal Management please see the entire Chapter from LWVUS Agriculture Update on the webpage.

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