

WOODBURY COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AGENDA ITEM(S) REQUEST FORM**#12**Date: 8/11/2017Weekly Agenda Date: 8/15/2017**ELECTED OFFICIAL / DEPARTMENT HEAD / CITIZEN:** Ann Hardy**WORDING FOR AGENDA ITEM:**

Concerns with hog nurseries and confinements in rural areas

ACTION REQUIRED:Approve Ordinance ☐Approve Resolution ☐Approve Motion ☐Public Hearing ☐Other: Informational ☒Attachments ☐**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

We, rural residents, are opposed to factory farms in rural Woodbury Co. These unregulated SAFO's (Small Animal Feeding Operations) and CAFO's (Confined Animal Feeding Operations) are being built in rural Woodbury County with minimal oversight and just under the number of animal units required to be regulated by the DNR. This allows developers to circumvent the laws in place to protect rural residents and our environment. These facilities affect our property values, air and water quality, and our families quality of life.

The State Ag Exempt rules and DNR regulations need to be changed to allow for:

1. Tougher requirements
2. Further separation distances from residences, public spaces, waterways and from other CAFO's, no matter the owner.
3. More county input
4. More time for counties and citizen's to review the application
5. Stronger oversight by the DNR

Iowa Citizen's for Community Improvement (Iowa CCI) has already sent all the Woodbury Co. Supervisors a letter encouraging you to represent your rural residents by writing letters of support to tighten regulations at the DNR, as well as appealing, on our behalf, to our state representatives. We encourage you to represent us and take this action.

BACKGROUND:

Two SAFO's are currently under construction in Grant and Wolf Creek townships, with another nursery pending in Banner Township. The SAFO's in Grant and Wolf Creek are hog nurseries that are being built for 480 animal units. Because these nurseries are under the 500 animal units (AU) required for DNR oversight, there are NO regulations for separation distances from residences, public land use, or waterways. The only restrictions are for surface intakes of drainage wells, wetlands, or right-of-way of thoroughfare. These nurseries can be placed within an arms reach of a residence, park, or another hog confinement.

This oversight, intended to protect citizens and our environment, includes completing the Master Matrix and submitting a manure management plan as well as adhering to certain separation distances. Without effective oversight we are at higher risk for ground water pollution from spreading manure in the highly erodible soils of Woodbury County's rolling hills. These facilities require large amounts of water which puts our wells and aquifers at risk. Our air quality is affected by the smell of these facilities and the increased fly population. As a result of all of the above, our property values will drop.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

These factory farms receive tax breaks that other industries don't that aren't Ag Exempt, however, they significantly impact our rural roads. Seaboard Foods and Triumph Foods are large integrated pork producers that control production. If hog demand drops these small local developers who incurred the costs to build these hog nurseries and confinements will still have the building costs to cover without the production to cover their costs. What benefit if that to the rural economy? The big companies get the profits while the local developers absorb the risks and local residents pay the costs.

The costs to rural residents include:

1. Degraded road surfaces are caused by the traffic related running an industrial-sized operation on rural gravel roads.
2. Rural residents maybe forced to dig new wells due to ground water pollution or depletion of aquifers.
3. Lower air quality from animal wastes, dead animals, and increased fly population.
4. Reduced quality of life for rural residence and exposure to toxins from animal wastes, along with other agricultural chemicals.

As a result of the above property values are reduced. An UNI study estimates that the cost of these operations is 10% of property values.

IF THERE IS A CONTRACT INVOLVED IN THE AGENDA ITEM, HAS THE CONTRACT BEEN SUBMITTED AT LEAST ONE WEEK PRIOR AND ANSWERED WITH A REVIEW BY THE COUNTY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE?

Yes ☐ No ☒

RECOMMENDATION:

As rural residents, we recommend that the Woodbury Board of Supervisors educate themselves on these issues and represent our concerns by encouraging Iowa legislators and the DNR to tighten up regulations related to CAFO's and SAFO's. These regulations are designed to protect rural residents and family farms. Factory farms like these should be classified as industry not agriculture, and placed in industrial areas with the appropriate infrastructure because of their large scale.

ACTION REQUIRED / PROPOSED MOTION:

Please contact the DNR and state legislature and let them know your constituents' concerns and encourage tightening of guidelines for these facilities.