

Ashland County Agricultural Ordinance Advisory Group  
Thursday August 10, 2017, 6:00 –8:00 PM, Ashland County Board Room

#### Agenda Items

1. Revised Scope of Work, Timeline, and Meeting Schedule
2. Discussion of Bayfield County Large - Scale CAFO Operations Ordinance and applicability in Ashland County
3. Review agricultural ordinance options and other topics identified in prior meetings
4. Discussion and Possible Action on Agricultural Ordinance Options
5. Next Steps

**Members Present:** Todd Berweger, George Bussey, Riley Jolma, Richard Ketring, Charles Ortman, Caryl Peck, Todd Rothe and Naomi Tillison

**Members Absent:** Cortney Remale

**Others Present:** Jason Fischbach, Tom Fratt, Amy Tromberg, and Brian Anderson, Cheryl Ash, Joe Bates, Kevin Brewster, Dorota Bussey, Sara M. Chase reporter with the Ashland Daily Press, Imelda Dickinson, Rodney Dymesich, Thomas James, Philomena Kebec, Tom Kriskovich, Sarah Martines, Ros Nelson, Michael E. Ollanketo, Morgan Peck, Mary Ellen Riehle, Joe Rose Sr., Joe Russo, Steve Smith, Darryl Warren, and Deborah Zvosec

- In addition to the eight work group members present and three supporting county staff there were twenty-one additional people present. Fourteen members of the public provided verbal public comment.

#### Verbal Public Comments:

1. Tom Kriskovich – dairy farmer in Marengo area. He is on his way out, we need young farmers. Can't make it too difficult for young/ next generation farmers, not enough money. Losing more farms every year. We have a large amount of small farms with guys who do it as a full time job. Farms do generate a fair amount of money in the area.
2. Rodney "Rod" Dymesich - Bayfield County, Town of Eileen, grew up on the farm. Live one mile from proposed swine CAFO in Bayfield County. Out-of-state agribusiness are cutting corners, not following rules. He found himself signed up on their Nutrient Management plan, spreading operation at 10,000 per acre on red clay, but he has never been contacted by Reicks View Farms / CAFO operation. Agribusiness is a business, so that is what you need to tailor your ordinances to. Diseases transfer very easily from swine to human. Ordinances should be tied by the size of the farm.
3. Sarah Martines - Bayfield County. Bayfield County really struggled with an ordinance. Really urge solidarity against the 1,000+ animal units up here, we are the keepers of the Great Lakes. If you're polluting, shame on you. She thinks that the operations ordinance protects us from Big Ag.
4. Ros Nelson – Mellen. Not too familiar with this, but wants to support small sustainable farming and protect our water, Ashland gets its drinking water from Lake Superior, we need to protect this watershed. Anything we can do to help small farms, she hopes there is some creative thinking going on with this. This is what people are looking for. Be the hero now, protect the water.

5. Cheryl Ash - Bayfield County. Set up an ordinance to protect your land, your water and your people. If we allow one CAFO in more will come. Look at the facts about what is happening in the State of Wisconsin already, it's not pretty. Use ordinances to protect this area and our water.
6. Steve Smith - vacationer with a Bayfield place, lives in Minneapolis. They come for the pristine water. This manure runoff could be detrimental to the tourist trade. Don't give up this pristine water.
7. Philomena "Phoebe" Kebec – resident of Ashland, family has lived here for generations, she is a Bad River tribal member. She has two kids, her job as a parent is to make sure they have a safe place to live. CAFO possibility threatens their safe place to live. Health risks, including anyone who is here or who goes to MMC would be at risk. Encourage committee to adopt similar to Bayfield County Operations Ordinance. Ban aerial spraying while none of that is going on, protect us from this before it even starts as it puts particles into the air we breathe.
8. Mary Ellen Riehle - moved to Ashland in November 2016 to be a water protector. Wants a 6 month moratorium on CAFOs, wants solidarity with Douglas and Bayfield Counties. Need to work together to protect the water. Aerial irrigation is not an option, increases negative health effects and is dangerous.
9. Kevin Brewster - Bad River Watershed Association (BRWA), a non-profit. They are a group of citizens who are concerned about this, tapped into agencies and funding also concerned with this. They also work with Northland College. Asks that we be comprehensive to deal with the existing problem in the background. They have two seasons of surface water studies which show some elevated levels. See where we are for contamination now, elevated with rainfall. Ortman asked him to come to the LCC and bring findings.
10. Deborah Zvosec - Bayfield County. Shared that her friend grew up in southern Minnesota on a farm and that CAFOs have come in on both sides of her father's farm. The implications and effects of living next to these CAFOs are huge – air quality issues, traffic of large trucks hauling supplies in and waste out, diseased or dead animal parts moved by coyotes, hormones and antibiotic steroids are stolen and resold on the black market, etc.
11. Joe Russo - Bayfield County, Finn settlement by Sioux River. He has attended a number of Bayfield County meetings, what really stuck with him was when the representative from Reicks View Farms said they were coming up here for one main reason, they have contaminated it in Iowa, and are looking for a clean place.
12. Darryl Warren - Ashland, agriculture his whole life. Difficult to listen to the CAFO / non CAFO and fear is the largest thing he hears that isn't true, fear is worse than reality. Everyone says non CAFO, no farmer alive wants that much more paperwork, more BS, more expense. What we produce as a farm is expensive and margins are tiny /minimal. Why does anyone do this? (Farm) Then leave farming? Then no food, need common sense. 27 years ago started in this business and had 114 dairy farms that he went to, he recently quit and was down to 13 dairy farms, this is everywhere. Need regulation, but need common sense regulation not emotional. Can't just say "this isn't allowed," he asks work group to please bring in common sense, don't go just by emotion. This is his

whole life, and some of the fears are not true to anything he has seen in his whole life. There are three sides to every story.

13. Ros Nelson *again*. There is no upside to large scale farming, talking about the enormous industrial animal factories, it can ruin land, water etc. Error on the side of caution.
14. Rob Dymesich *again*. Inquired if we have been in contact with any other counties that have these large CAFOs and what ordinances they would have enacted now that they have hindsight. Want to keep the balance of local real farms.
15. Tom Kriskovich *again*. Look into how to maintain a smaller farm. How to improve and maintain what we have now!
16. Morgan Peck – 300 cow dairy farm by Highbridge. The Ashland Daily Press letters are mostly anti-CAFO. A lot of people are misinformed about what happens on a farm. They have the least amount of antibiotics now, animals far more productive and comfortable now. No CAFO in our area yet. Technology will show us the way on a lot of problems, if we close the door it won't. The farmers in our area feel beat up. No manure storage ran over with the heavy rain /flood last year, but the city sewage facilities ran over. We are all in this together.
17. Sarah Martines *again*. Wants to clarify the antibiotics research was for the pigs not dairy. For the swine CAFO they said they use antibiotics when they wean piglets and when they ship any animals out, when they are stressed.
18. Steve Smith *again*. Sounds like there are responsible dairy farmers here, might feel like it but they are not being targeted by anti-CAFO. He is part of Farms Not Factories, not targeting people here with local farms, targeting FACTORIES.
19. Joe Russo *again*. Would like to share a comment from a past Bayfield County meeting – the DNR representative said there was such a limited number of inspectors that they can't cover the ground that is needed to inspect. Even when at a farm, it can be hard to find someone who speaks English.
20. Tom Kriskovich *again*. Reicks CAFO wanted to get out of disease pig area, now they are getting close to having a vaccine for that. A CAFO was built in Ladysmith at about the same time. Asked about the status on Reicks? Fischbach replied that a siting license would be required, not sure if they are even pursuing that, no application submitted and WPDES permit pending an environmental impact statement.
21. Charles Ortman– Ashland, Advisory Group. Different CAFO industries (pig vs. dairy vs. chickens etc.) are very different, we need something that will cover all of that. The farmers in Ashland County have been working with Land Conservation, there are other issues such as lawn fertilization, city sewer etc. but dairy farmers are just under the microscope right now. Need to work with where our pollution is coming from now too, would like to look at other things after this. Farmers are using best practices and have regulations and reams of paper they are doing already.
22. George Bussey – Ashland County, Advisory Group. Submitted a written comment with the suggestion to apply Bayfield County Operations Ordinance, but to farms that would GROW by more than 1,000 animal units from this this ordinance date forward, this would help grandfather in our current farms.
23. Richard Ketring– Ashland, Advisory Group. Impressed by the number of farmers present! Finds it difficult to get farmers together to share information and get

perspectives. Wants to continue a conversation with the farmers at the table. A multi-faced problem, not solved by just passing a few ordinances, need the community coming together and working together. We have regulations that ask farmers to do things without any ability to fund it, biggest fear is that current farms are lured into a new system with too much debt. Wants us to be on the forefront of small farms support, not anti-farm, and wants our farms to have support and funding. CAFO's are about controlling the market, and would push out the small farm.

24. Joe Rose Sr. - Bad River Band of Lake Superior Ojibway and on Land Conservation Committee (LCC). Would like to make an announcement, there will be a meeting of the LCC on Friday, August 25<sup>th</sup> at 9:30am at the offices on Sanborn, anything further to say please attend that meeting.

- Ortman asked public for any more comments. Ketring moved to close public comments. Rothe seconded the motion. Motion carried.