

October 6, 2006

David G. Pollick  
Health Commissioner  
Sandusky County Health Department  
2000 Countryside Drive  
Fremont, Ohio 43420

Dear Mr. Pollick,

I am writing this letter as a representative of the Sandusky County Citizens Protecting our Resources, LLC. **Our group is concerned about the potential health effects of the two mega-dairies proposed for Sandusky County and we have been working with all of our elected officials within the county to gain their support to suspend the permitting process until more information about these industrial operations is available.**

Our current concern is with the recent E. coli contamination of spinach from livestock runoff. As you know, the type of E. coli bacteria responsible for human illness and death is E. coli 0157:H7. According to the University of Florida fact sheet - the principal known reservoir for E. coli 0157:H7 is dairy cattle. According to recent studies, calves raised on pasture showed no signs of E. coli 0157:H7; whereas, every one of the *confined* calves had positive samples of this dangerous strain." A recent New York Times article disclosed that this particularly virulent strain of E. coli 0157:H7 does not come from "the intestinal tracts of cattle raised on their natural diet of grass, hay and other fibrous forage. No, 0157 thrives in a new - - that is, recent in the history of animal diets - - biological niche: the unnaturally acidic stomachs of beef and dairy cattle fed on grain, the typical ration on most *industrial farms*. It is the infected manure from these grain-fed cattle that contaminates the groundwater and spreads the bacteria to produce, like spinach, growing on neighboring farms."

According to our research, E. coli can stay alive for weeks and survives at low temperatures. During rainfalls, snow melts, or other types of precipitation, E-coli may be washed into creeks, rivers, streams, lakes, or groundwater. This is a disaster waiting to happen and we believe that it is not a matter of if it will happen, but when it will happen.

Our concern about the type of E. coli bacteria in the manure from the mega-farms is exacerbated by the fact that the manure will not be confined to the mega-farms. As you may be aware, the two proposed mega-dairies will house a combined 4,300 dairy cows and these cows will produce a half-million gallons of manure each day. This wet manure will be stored in open lagoons; these lagoons will be relieved of their growing volume by removing the manure, transporting it on local roads, and spreading it on surrounding farm fields. Not only will the manure pose a potential health threat on the immediate mega-dairy site but it has the potential to contaminate several sites within Sandusky County.

We understand that the mission of the Sandusky County Health Department is to "Promote a healthy community and protecting residents from health risks; Preventing disease, disability injury, and premature deaths; Defining health priorities determined through community health assessments; Monitoring the health status of the community; and developing a health policy that supports and encourages improved health status."

Sandusky County Protecting our Resources, LLC is requesting that the Sandusky County Health Department take the following actions, which are in line with the stated mission of the Sandusky County Health Department mission:

- 1- Work with the Sandusky County Commissioners to obtain funds to test the surface water both downstream and upstream of the proposed mega-dairies, before they are built. This testing should be considered part of the infrastructure cost of installing a mega-dairy.
- 2- Allocate funds to conduct a full test of the sub-surface water at houses within a 1.5 mile radius of the proposed mega-dairies. If funds are currently not available, we are requesting that these funds be earmarked in the 2007 budget.
- 3- Contact Vreba-Hoff Dairy of Wauseon (the driving force behind the two dairies proposed for Sandusky County) to determine if E.coli 0157:H7 is present in the manure the cows are producing at their currently operating mega-dairies. Also, determine what steps are being taken by Vreba-Hoff to ensure that the manure spread on the fields surrounding the dairies does not reach the fields where foods such as tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, etc. are being grown for human consumption. Contamination often occurs due to extreme weather conditions, over-spray, over-application or similar circumstances.
- 4- Work to stop all new mega-dairy installations and all expansions of currently existing mega-dairies until more information is obtained about the health effects on the people living near these operations or people within the water shed of these operations.

We appreciate your sincere attention to this important matter.

Best Regards,



Judy Reino, President  
Sandusky County Citizens Protecting Our Resources, LLC.  
119 S. Main Street  
Gibsonburg, Ohio 43431

Cc: Brad Smith, Sandusky County Commissioners