

Date: _____

Ohio Department of Health
Director of Health, Alvin D. Jackson M.D
PO Box 118
246 North High Street
Columbus, OH 43215

In re: Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs)

Dear Dr. Jackson:

As set forth on your website, the Institute of Medicine defines public health as: *"A coordinated effort at the local, state, and federal levels whose mission is fulfilling society's interest in assuring conditions in which people can be healthy."* I am a resident of Sandusky County and am contacting you today because I believe that the increasing number of CAFOs in the State of Ohio is seriously jeopardizing the conditions in which people of the State of Ohio can be healthy. CAFOs are being issued permits which result in large concentrations of animals creating huge volumes of waste that is often held in storage pits until this untreated waste containing hormones and antibiotics is spread throughout the local area. This manner of disposal of these huge volumes of waste may taint private wells and public waterways, and increases the possibility of E-coli: 0157:H7 contamination.

Sandusky County currently has no CAFOs, but two applications are pending with the ODA which are proposed to collectively hold 4300 cows. As a resident of Sandusky County, I get little satisfaction from our local health department as they indicate their hands are tied because it is not within their control to create laws to enforce air and water quality standards. They are unwilling to take any preventative measures. They are, however, willing to work with the Ohio Department of Agriculture and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources in the event an issue arises after the CAFOs are up and running. This "wait and see what happens mentality" does not result in assuring conditions in which people can be healthy. Why not put forth an "ounce of prevention and create a pound of gain"? We are not looking for answers after something happens. We are looking for solutions now to prevent any negative impact on our health as a result of CAFO operations.

What can the local health department do now to ensure healthy conditions for all citizens of Sandusky County? They indicate no testing is currently done for E-coli: 0157:H7 contamination. At a minimum, given the connection between E-coli and dairy cows, testing for E-coli contamination seems crucial, yet is it not current done nor is it planned to be in the future. What about air and water quality standards? Can't minimum standards be established so the CAFO operators know there are standards established by which they must comply?

If this can't be done at the local level, can this be done at the State level? What preemptive measures can be taken at the local, State or Federal levels to ensure healthy conditions for all citizens of Sandusky County? We cannot afford to just sit back and wait to see what happens. We must take affirmative action now to ensure healthy conditions for the residents of this State.

Sincerely,

