



## Crawford County CAFO Moratorium Paves the Way for Water Protection Efforts

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**Madison, WI**—A temporary halt to the construction or expansion of large livestock facilities in Crawford County will give the county time to review the latest scientific research on CAFOs and their impact on the health, safety and welfare of local residents. County officials will then determine whether additional protections are necessary to address the health and safety risks posed by CAFOs.

The Crawford County Board of Supervisors voted to enact the one-year moratorium at a December 17th board meeting which drew more than 80 concerned citizens. The moratorium applies to agricultural operations housing more than 1,000 animal units—the equivalent of 700 dairy cows, 1000 beef cattle or approximately 2,500 hogs.

Health and safety issues related to CAFOs—manure runoff, drinking water contamination, air pollution, and road hazards—have been a source of growing concern among southwest Wisconsin residents. In early 2018, the Crawford County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution acknowledging the County's susceptibility to groundwater contamination due to the fractured, or 'karst', bedrock that underlies much of the area. Grant, Lafayette and Iowa Counties share similar geology and have undertaken a comprehensive groundwater study (SWIGG) to better understand nitrate and bacterial contamination of area wells. A similar study, known as the Driftless Area Water Study, will begin gathering information on well water contamination in Crawford, Vernon and Richland Counties later this year.

Concern about the detrimental health effects of CAFOs is also growing at the state and national levels. Crawford County's CAFO moratorium comes on the heels of a recent announcement by the American Public Health Association calling on all levels of government (federal, state, and local) to impose a complete moratorium on new and expanded CAFOs until the true health hazards of these operations can be properly assessed.

Forest Jahnke of Crawford Stewardship Project says, "We're grateful to the Board of Supervisors for taking the time to plan for the future by ensuring that local agricultural practices protect water resources and are more resilient in the face of extreme weather events."

Adam Voskuil, Midwest Environmental Advocates Staff Attorney, adds, "The County Board has the authority to enact measures that protect the health and safety of local residents. This moratorium is a commonsense measure that gives county officials time to gather the information they need to make decisions that are in the best interest of their constituents."

*Midwest Environmental Advocates is a public interest law center that works to defend public rights, protect natural resources, and ensure transparency and accountability in government. Learn more at [midwestadvocates.org](http://midwestadvocates.org).*

*Crawford Stewardship Project works to protect the environment of Crawford County and neighboring regions from threats of polluting and extractive industries, to promote sustainable land use, environmental justice, and local control of natural resources. Learn more at [crawfordstewardship.org](http://crawfordstewardship.org).*

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