

9704 W Raintree Dr.
Columbus, IN 47201
February 29, 2016

Members of the Bartholomew County Plan Commission,

These thoughts concern the proposed CAFO regulations. They are a follow-up to comments made by various people at the last Public Hearing.

1

Your decision is influenced by the decisions made by your predecessors over the last several decades. As was pointed out by one of the speakers at the last Public Meeting, Planning Commissions have for many years approved residential building on “agricultural” land.

This happened because agricultural land owners wanted to give or sell to their children, grandchildren, or relatives land on which to build a house. In some cases this was to have someone nearby to assist if there were medical issues, sometimes so they could see their grandchildren grow up, and sometimes because they needed some money.

It also happened because some agricultural land owners decided to turn some of their land into money by either developing a subdivision themselves, or by selling the land to a real estate professional that then developed the subdivision.

The cumulative result of such actions over many years is that Bartholomew County is no longer “rural”. Here is the contrast. Benton County is almost exactly the same size as Bartholomew County. It has approximately 6,500 non-city residents, or 22 per square mile. Bartholomew County has approximately 34,000 non-city residents, or 121 per square mile. Benton County is rural; Bartholomew County is not.

Your hands are tied by these past decisions. If the rural population density was low there would be room to have CAFO’S without them significantly impacting the health or property values of their neighbors. That option was taken away by prior decisions.

2

The Majority Report says nothing about the potential public health issues of CAFO’s. A quick perusal of the Internet reveals that numerous articles have been written about the various negative public health issues associated with CAFO’s. And the Minority Report has a long list of such articles. The Commission needs to consider these negative factors even though the Majority of the Study Commission ignored them.

I find it interesting that municipalities need to meet stringent rules regarding the treatment of human sewage to make sure that it does not cause health issues. CAFO operators assure us that the same amount of untreated animal sewage can be spread on or injected into the ground without any public health issues. That disconnect is very questionable.

3

In reading all the minutes of the Study Committee it appears that the Committee only visited 2 CAFO's – one being a 600 cow dairy operation and one being a hog operation. I am told that the operator of the latter said that 1,500 feet was “too close” a distance for a CAFO to be to a neighbor. Somehow the Majority members still recommended 500 feet!

The Minority Report contains an Appendix showing the results of visits to see what the smell was like for neighbors of a CAFO. The Minority members did some research. There is NO evidence that the Majority members did anything to find out if CAFO's have any negative impact on neighbors. I find their lack of interest in trying to look at all aspects of the issue APPALLING and evidence that they were only interested in issuing a report favorable to CAFO's

The Planning Commission needs to vote against the Majority Report recommendations and support an approach using the Purdue University model. Listen to the experts, not a report from some people who refused to look at any evidence or facts that contradicted their pre-conceived belief.

One last comment. A significant portion of my business career was spent reading thousands of reports that analyzed companies, economic, and social issues and then made recommendations based on the facts of each. These reports varied from very well done to ones where the reader had no idea how the author had come to his conclusion. The Majority Report and recommendations fall into the latter category.

Thank you for your time and consideration

Sincerely,

Terry Marbach

Elaine DeClue
17501 E Huffer Rd
Hope, IN 47246

Bartholomew County Plan Commission,

I am writing to voice my concerns over the proposed CAFO/CFO regulations. I attended one of the BZA meetings when Gelfius' proposed their 8000 operation. I have attended other meetings concerning CAFO's since then and have listened to many people voice their concerns.

Here are mine:

I am not anti-farmer— I am anti factory. I am surrounded by farmland and have lived out in this area for 36 years. I know I will smell manure and have dust from crops being planted and harvested. I know I might have to chase down cattle who have found a space in the fence. What I didn't know was that it was ok for someone to build a lagoon full of urine and feces (later to be used as fertilizer) and store thousands of animals in a building never to see daylight. That I would have to deal with possible contamination of our well and deal with overwhelming odors. That is not to mention all the truck traffic as animals are hauled in (and those that die in there are hauled out) and trucks haul out the manure, etc.... That I would no longer have fresh air to breath. That the value of my home and land would plummet— something we have invested in all our lives.

Some very intelligent people have shared their concerns and shared facts. You have had chemists, nurses, statistic guys, regular farmers and many concerned people testify before you (and I saw them at the BZA meetings also). As some people have pointed out these are not "country folks" but rather "city folks". But in our county they are surrounded by us—the country folks.

Like Mr Lienhoops daughter in law my family is also dealing with cancer. I could not imagine how I would feel if my son could not come home due to a CAFO being within a certain distance from our property. People fighting cancer and the doctors who are helping them are VERY specific about what they can do to help fight this disease— eat healthy (organic, no red

meat—a small amount of grass fed beef is ok). Organic grass fed milk, organic vegetables and fruits— I think you get the idea. My son has survived one year— we thank God every day. But his fight goes on— as does all people fighting cancer.

Nurses have shared the issues with antibiotic resistance that is in our hospital and all hospitals. They have shared with you the fact that these hogs are given the same antibiotics as people. They may not have it in their system when slaughtered but it is in their feces and urine that is then spread on our land where crops are raised and some animals graze. Could it leach into wells too?

I guess what I hope to convey is that this is not a “fight” between farmers and non farmers. Many if not most regular farmers do not like CAFO’s. I know no one— farmers included— likes to be told what they can and cannot do with their property. But when what they plan on doing affects so many innocent people then the people we elect to protect us (all) must take a stand.

I must admit that I was surprised that the people directly benefiting from CAFO’s do not have a conflict of interest. The person working for Farm Bureau Insurance , the grain elevator operator— are there others— benefit directly. Farm Bureau is VERY pro-CAFO and the person with the grain elevator has a lot to make with all the grain needed to feed thousands of hogs. I hear Mr Gelfius is not the owner of his hog operation (owned by someone from De-catur county) but that he benefits from free fertilizer (quite a cost savings) which is spread on his property and properties he rents or leases (he farms property surrounding our airport too) Is he waiting to see if he can get the 8000 hogs he originally wanted not just the 4000 that was ok’d?

Please take note that other states these farms are in are suffering the consequences. These factory farms are hurting our family farmers. The EPA cannot keep up with these farms and monitoring all the pollution (water and airborne) that they emit. Heavy metals, antibiotics and pathogenic bacteria have been found in water from these factories. We know that manure can carry e-coli, salmonella, listeria, Giardia and Cyrptosporidium accounting for 90% of human food and waterborne diseases. Manure spread on frozen land can accumulate over time and run off the property and get into sewer systems and wells. Ammonia, hydrogen sulfide and particulate matter are released into our air. Overexposure can cause nausea, headaches, respiratory failure, digestive disturbances, etc A great website is

factoryfarmmap.org

Please do not allow the profit of a few to affect the lives of many. Study all the information given to you. Look at it not as a fight of farmer vs city because that is not what this is. This is the right we all have to clean water and fresh air. Keep in mind the push to small farms— fresh pork, beef and chicken is now sold at our Farmers Market. Also eggs and produce. People care about what they eat and where it comes from. Read the Farm magazine that comes in The Republic newspaper. It shows just how many farmers in our county and surrounding counties are going back in time— to when meat came off a pasture, crops were grown without chemicals, and eggs picked daily from “happy chickens”. People do care about what they put into their bodies. Why put a factory in our backyards to have most of the products sent elsewhere and we are left with the bi-product? You represent all the people residing in the county— both farmers and non farmers. Please consider how many people will be affected by your decision. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Elaine DeClue

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elaine DeClue". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name.

From: David J. Baker dated Monday, February 29th 2016

For the Planning Commission Members - RE The CFO-CAFO debate.

The most important public issue raised in the public meeting on February 10th came from medical professionals concerning the dangerous gases that can seep into the ground water and escape into the air from manure. This can cause MRSA (commonly known as staph) in citizens who may have weakened respiratory systems.

Before any decisions are made by the members of the Bartholomew County plan Commission and the Bartholomew County Commissioners it is of paramount importance that a full examination of this danger to citizens is conducted.

Effluent and gaseous emissions from swine (Sus scrofa) manure storage systems represent a concern to air quality due to the potential effects of hydrogen sulfide, ammonia, methane, and volatile organic compounds on environmental quality and human health.

This examination should be carried out by a group of medical professionals and environmental engineers who may or may not live and work in the City of Columbus and Bartholomew County.

Yours truly,

David J. Baker

Email: bakerhd@gmail.com

Fellow of the British Cartographic Society

Fellow of the Royal Geographic Society