



*Friends of Responsible Agriculture*



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Missouri Citizen's Group Requests Hearing as DNR Considers Approval of Industrial Hog Farm in Callaway County

*Greenlighting of large-scale facility by state agency would threaten nearby waterways with millions of gallons of discharge waste; put environment and community health at-risk*

**FULTON, MO—September 24, 2014**—With nearly 1,500 signatures of opposition submitted during its just-concluded public comment period, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) is now on the clock to decide whether to approve or reject a “no-discharge” operating permit for a large, industrial-sized hog facility proposed directly on three Callaway County ponds. The concentrated animal feeding operation (CAFO) is proposing to house more than 10,300 animals, including 7,600 sows, and 2,700 gilts, endangering air and water quality, and creating potential public health risks for surrounding neighbors and properties. The operation is sited on property owned by Darren Horstmeier, who currently operates eight large hog barns at the same location.

The permit application was submitted by Iowa-based Eichelberger Farms under the recently registered corporate name, Callaway Farrowing, LLC.

The citizen's organization Friends of Responsible Agriculture (FRA) has requested that MDNR deny the CAFO permit out-of-hand given multiple problems with the application and the substantial local opposition to the facility. Missouri state law requires that MDNR determine the impact of the proposed facility on water quality before proceeding to grant an application. To support MDNR's deliberations, FRA has also asked the agency to set a hearing date for concerned citizens to present oral testimony and additional scientific and engineering information for MDNR to consider before it makes its final decision.

“The State of Missouri has a responsibility to not only protect every community member's right to live in a healthy and safe environment, but also make smart choices for future generations,” says local farmer and president of Friends of Responsible Agriculture, Jeff Jones. “If the DNR looks at the basic facts of this permit, they'll see that it's the wrong plan in the wrong place by the wrong people done the wrong way.”

According to FRA and its partners -- the national nonprofit organization Socially Responsible Agricultural Project (SRAP) and Missouri Rural Crisis Center -- the MDNR should immediately dismiss the permit application due to the inappropriate siting of the facility. The Callaway Farrowing application details that the CAFO facility will be located directly above three existing ponds -- a direct conflict with Missouri's Clean Water Law.

“If MDNR follows the law and their good judgment, they'll reject the application based solely on the bad idea of siting the facility near these existing ponds,” said Jones.

Callaway Farrowing did not provide any explanation, clarification or acknowledgement of the pond use conflict in their MDNR application. Additionally, MDNR has not investigated the proposed site or conducted a site visit to investigate the proposal to build a CAFO over numerous water features.

“It’s reckless to site an industrial-sized hog facility requiring deep pit storage for literally millions of gallons of manure directly over a water resource,” says SRAP regional coordinator and farmer Terry Spence. “Unfortunately, we see risky tactics like this in other states far too often. The Missouri DNR needs to step in with a sensible solution before long-term damage occurs in Callaway County.”

In addition, the Callaway Farrowing permit application failed to include documentation required by law and it underestimated a number of significant factors, including wash water volume, sow mortality, compost facility size for dead animals and barn-washing water usage.

In the event MDNR approves the permit application, FRA and its partners are recommending that the agency require Callaway Farrowing to seek a site-specific, “no-discharge” permit based on the special conditions at this site. Under a site-specific permit, MDNR could require the CAFO to take additional precautions, such as install groundwater monitoring wells, offering Missourians some level of protection from further damage to the state’s fragile water quality.

“There are no excuses. MDNR has the authority to take action in Callaway County and it should,” says Missouri Rural Crisis Center’s Rhonda Perry. “The exchange of private profitability for the endangering of our rural environment and health is not a trade-off we can live with.”

Photos of the Callaway property at issue are available upon request.

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#### **About Socially Responsible Agricultural Project**

Socially Responsible Agricultural Project provides free, professional assistance to communities working to protect themselves from factory farms and their impact on local communities and populations, and to those who are trying to reclaim agriculture by producing and marketing sustainable agricultural goods. More information can be found at [www.sraproject.org](http://www.sraproject.org).

#### **About Friends of Responsible Agriculture**

Friends of Responsible Agriculture was formed by concerned citizens to share and communicate concerns related to the operation of concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) in Missouri. Information and news about FRA can be found at [www.facebook.com/friendsofresponsibleagriculture](https://www.facebook.com/friendsofresponsibleagriculture).

#### **Missouri Rural Crisis Center**

Missouri Rural Crisis Center is a nonprofit organization founded in 1985. It is a progressive, statewide membership organization that works to empower farmers and other rural people. The mission of MRCC is to preserve family farms, promote stewardship of the land and environmental integrity, and strive for economic and social justice by building unity and mutual understanding among diverse groups, both rural and urban. For more information, please go to <https://www.facebook.com/VoteNoAmendment1MO>