

LWVIL NATURAL RESOURCES POSITION: LARGE-SCALE LIVESTOCK FACILITIES

Support for strict regulation of large-scale livestock facilities on the state, regional and county levels.

Position in Brief: The LWV supports strict regulation of large-scale livestock facilities on the state, regional and county levels to include statewide environmental controls, public hearings prior to siting and regional and/or county control of siting.

LARGE-SCALE LIVESTOCK FACILITIES (1999): The League of Women Voters of Illinois supports strict regulations of large-scale livestock facilities on the state, regional and/or county levels to include:

- 1) Appropriate statewide environmental controls:
 - a) implement siting criteria to protect water sensitive areas;
 - b) require that all large-scale livestock facilities management plans be submitted to the appropriate agency and be available to the public;
 - c) require that rates of the most potentially damaging components (e.g., nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, heavy metals) be used as parameters for livestock waste application on crops to minimize land and water pollution;
 - d) require set back distances from bodies of water, wells for human consumption and residences necessary to protect public health;
 - e) require owners to provide bonding, insurance indemnity funds or other financial assurances to ensure that the owners, not the taxpayers, pay for the cost of cleanups from spills or closing of facilities;
 - f) require inspections more frequently than once per year to ensure compliance with environmental standards and practices;
 - g) extend current rules for lagoons to all types of waste handling facilities;
 - h) not distinguish between farm and non-farm residences in setback distances from facilities.
- 2) Public hearing to give notice of the intention to site a facility, determine compliance with state, regional and/or local criteria, and determine compliance with state environmental criteria.
- 3) Regional and/or county control of siting.

Background Delegates to the 1999 LWVIL Convention adopted by concurrence a position on large-scale livestock facilities developed and presented by the Jackson County League. Leading up to and following the concurrence, local Leagues held informational and roundtable discussions on the environmental and economic impacts of increased livestock production in Illinois.

LWVIL action The League became concerned in 2005 about risks to the set of regulations on Illinois' large-scale livestock facilities negotiated in 1999 and passed by

the General Assembly as part of the Livestock Management Facilities Act. The Illinois Livestock Development Initiative, an outcome of a Livestock Summit convened by the Governor in the Fall of 2005, could streamline environmental controls, change setback requirements, and limit public participation relating to the siting and operations of Illinois' large-scale livestock facilities. The Illinois League will continue to monitor initiatives and legislation impacting Illinois' large-scale livestock facilities.

In 2008 a large scale dairy was proposed to be sited in one of the most pristine areas of the state (just a few miles from the Apple River Canyon State Park).

Environmental groups and local citizens' groups working together opposed this mega-farm which would be the largest such confinement farm operation ever proposed in Illinois. Although the Jo Daviess County Board rejected the proposal, the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDA) approved the permit. Lawsuits were filed against the Illinois Department of Agriculture and the applicant. A preliminary injunction halting the project was issued by Associate Circuit Judge Kevin Ward and the Galena City Council passed a resolution asking for a moratorium on large Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) in Jo Daviess County. Controversy over the construction of the large-scale dairy farm continued into 2009. LWVIL and local Leagues will continue to monitor the progress and outcomes of this case and will support legislation promoting sustainable agriculture and protection of our environment as well as human health. It seems likely that more mega-farms will be coming to Illinois. They have been pushed out from other states leaving their damage behind. The best hope, environmental groups believe, is to change state law and return the power of siting to regional and/or local control.