

CAFO moratorium wins Green panel's backing

By Tony Ends
Editor

MONROE — Supervisors on the land and water conservation committee voted 4 to 1 last week to recommend Green County adopt a moratorium on permitting Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations.

The vote accompanied the committee's recommendation that Green County undertake

a 2-year mapping project of area hydro geology to protect water.

Green County's legal counsel will work with County Land Conservation Agent Todd Jenson to describe the number of animals capped in the moratorium, its duration and to name a study committee for developing health and safety protections from CAFOs for Green County.

Residents and property owners of Decatur, Sylvester, York, Clarno and Exeter townships, Monticello and Brodhead municipalities, too, all urged moratorium adoption at the meeting. They numbered more than 30 and also urged:

-Bonding in amounts independently derived for CAFOs in the event of environmental catastrophe and bankruptcy;

-Residency requirements for CAFO owners, also requirements CAFOs purchase set percentages from the local economy;

-Protections cited in a recent 130-page environmental and health impact report scientists developed for the Town of Sylvester; and

-Time to allow the hydro-geological study to be developed and county staff to determine how to use it to protect water from nitrate and other contaminants.

Only Gordon Klossner, supervisor for a district representing mostly Albany, opposed the moratorium and the hydro-geological mapping for Green County. "I think we're getting into a legal morass," Klossner said. "I think we have all the rules we need."

Randy Bader of Carousel Farms, who is trying to help Pinnacle Dairy of Nebraska site a 5,800-cow dairy on property he owns in Sylvester Township, defended CAFOs.

"Wisconsin is the dairy state. We've lost a lot of cows in this state. Pinnacle Dairy is more a big outfit for everybody; they're to feed people," said Bader, adding that one large monitored dairy livestock operation was better than 100 small unmonitored dairy farms.

T.J. Tuls, of the family operating two CAFOs in Nebraska and one in Rock County that wants to add a fourth in eastern Green, also defended Pinnacle Dairy's proposal and CAFOs.

Tuls has attended town and county meetings since his family first started last August soliciting manure spreading commitments in Sylvester and Decatur townships to build Pinnacle.

"Management for Pinnacle Dairy will live in Green

County. I live in Bradford Township (in Rock County), and my cousin who will manage Pinnacle Dairy will live here," Tuls said. "A 100-cow dairy is not monitored the way we are; we're watched like a hawk."

"We work with about 10 farms over in Rock County, and we'll do about the same here. We use a local vet; all our Bobcats come out of Janesville. We do stay as local as possible; it's not economical to pull things from long distances."

Rural residents and farmers from around Green County for their part wondered where CAFO construction would end, how balance in concentration and growth and safety can be achieved.

One noted that if 15 to 20 CAFOs is what Green County can support, there will be at least 93 football fields of cement, presumably to contain tens of millions of gallons of liquid manure. The county has four CAFOs; Pinnacle would become the fifth, and would be twice the size of Spring Grove Dairy, the county's largest.

Jenson told the land and water conservation committee last Thursday he had met the day previous with DATCP and DNR engineers to work out an agreement with Pinnacle Dairy to install nine water monitoring wells around the proposed site for the CAFO.

DNR staff rejected Pinnacle's waste permit plans and specifications Jan. 22. They identified three areas Pinnacle Dairy facility engineer Ronnie Williams had not addressed in submissions over 2 months.

The DNR required the additional well monitoring to verify that the wet site is safe to construct 20 acres of liquid manure containment of 95 million-gallon capacity.

Conservation panel backs hydro-geological tool to protect water

By Tony Ends
Editor

MONROE — Land and Water Conservation Committee members voted 4 to 1 last week to recommend state hydro-geologist Madeline Gotkowitz map geology affecting Green County's water.

Proposal to work with the state Geological and Natural History Survey over several years to produce a hydro-geological survey now passes before Green County finance committee. Finance committee members meet next on March 1.

"This is a model for county conservation staff to use," Gotkowitz said, in presenting the 11-page project proposal to county supervisors on the committee last week. "Putting this data together into an atlas doesn't change your water quality or availability of water. "It doesn't take the place of site specific investigations for a city, or farm, or cheese plant that wants to expand a development, or livestock operation, or processing. It is a tool to be used by county staff."

Seven elements — well data base, depth to bedrock map, water elevation map, bedrock type determination, groundwater recharge rate assessment,



MADELINE GOTKOWITZ

groundwater contaminant susceptibility map, and Karst geology map (of closed depressions where surface water runoff drains internally), are all part

of this proposed tool for Green County.

If undertaken, the maps, digital files and a report describing the hydro-geological setting in Green County and methods used to map its sub-terrain would result. This would be completed and made available electronically in December 2018, with staff beginning work this summer and fall.

State maps presently used to advise local staff on some of Wisconsin's geological features affecting local water supply do exist. Yet on a statewide scale, they reflect no more than a 1 to 1 million reliability, Gotkowitz explained to Green County's conservation committee.

"That allows an accuracy of about 1,700 feet, 2/5 of a mile. The scale at which we'll be working in this proposal for Green County will be more like

1 to 100,000, which gives an accuracy to about 170 feet," she said.

Total cost for the several years' work to produce the maps, hold hearings and informational meetings on the reports and atlas, and put the work out to peer review is \$131,000. The Geological and Natural History Survey has agreed to let about \$27,000 of Gotkowitz salary be used as project match. That drops the price tag to \$104,000.

Only Gordon Klossner, whose district comprises mostly Albany Township, voted against recommending the Green County Board of Supervisors undertake the proposal.

County Supervisor Betty Grotophorst, who is not on the land and water conservation committee, attended the meeting in support of the study last week. She later noted that with 36,800 people living in Green County, total cost of the study, which can be spread out over 3 years comes to about \$3.50 per person.

The county can ask its 16 townships, two cities and villages to share the expense, Grotophorst said. It can also seek grant funding to pay for the research, mapping and water protection tool's development.



Dining & Entertainment

The BRUNCH BOX

Daily Specials

Monday – Meatloaf with mashed & gravy
Tuesday – Tacos • Soft Tacos • Taco Bowls
Wednesday – Ham Steak & Rosti's
Thursday – Chef's Choice
Friday – Fish • Lasagna Dinner

Specials subject to change.

Open Every Day 6 a.m. – 2 p.m. • Friday until 8 p.m.

2107 1st Center Avenue, Brodhead, WI • 608-897-9292

University of Wisconsin Marching Band Concert

The University of Wisconsin Marching Band will be performing on Monday, March 7 at 7:00 p.m. at Parkview High School in Orfordville. The performance will include 80-90 minutes of amazing music and fun as only the legendary Mike Leckrone and the UW Band can provide.

The Parkview Band Parents committee is planning an evening of family fun that will include a dinner, concession stand, silent auction, and much more. Tickets may be purchased at Parkview Jr/Sr High and Parkview Elementary offices during school hours or at Farmers and Merchants Bank in Orfordville. Concert cost is \$10 for students and senior citizens and \$12 for adults.