

County's towns get help mapping protections for water

By Tony Ends
Editor

MONROE — Wisconsin's town supervisors have heard since 2004 what they can't do about permitting big livestock operations.

About half Green County's supervisors from 16 townships gathered to hear last week what they can do and why public health depends on it.

Green County Towns Association hosted the listening session Wednesday with the Town of Sylvester at the county justice center in Monroe.

It provided a sobering documentation of need, a basis for stricter rules and a model for enforcement.

Sylvester's Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) study committee, and a volunteer science team that advised them, shared 4 months of recent work.

Sylvester's town chair Anna Anderson and Terry Reed, another of Sylvester's three-member board, were also there.

"We summarized the technical literature from all over the nation," said Steve Apfelbaum, who led compilation of

Sylvester's 130-page CAFO health and safety risks report.

"We also looked at the land resources in Green County, how the land is conducive or not to contamination from CAFOs. Predictably, contamination is a much more serious problem in much higher concentrations of livestock," Apfelbaum said.

From 14 pages of maps identifying conditions that contribute to risk factors, Apfelbaum laid out basis for concern in the science team's report. The team presented the report last month to Sylvester Township.

Predominance of depth to bedrock less than 30 inches, presence of Karst geology including porous rock and fractures, shallow water tables, springs and creeks — all add up to great vulnerability to pollution. Overlay, upon overlay, red zones of vulnerability cover the map.

Using Wisconsin's own state setbacks from such features leaves very little area in Green County unaffected. They reveal that very little area is appropriate for heavy, near constant applications of tens of millions of gallons of a CAFO's liquid manure — without controls.

"Most of the land base has three to five restrictions based on the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection's (DATCP)'s requirements," Apfelbaum said.

Green County has four livestock operations with numbers beyond the 1,000-animal unit CAFO designation. Yet a dozen more livestock producers are expanding toward that scale.

A Nebraska family's proposal last summer to site its fourth CAFO with 5,800 cows in Sylvester helped stimulate study and discussion across the county. Their Pinnacle Dairy plan would generate, contain and spread as much as 95 million gallons of manure annually, northwest of Brodhead and south of Albany.

"We sent out letters to CAFOs and close-to-CAFOs about 2 months into the process," Jacob Marty told the county's supervisors. Marty, who farms with his father in Mount Pleasant, served on Sylvester's citizen study team. Other farmers, a biologist and a wetlands specialist rounded out the study team.

"We heard from one of the CAFOs, and we received no reports," Marty said. "So we looked more statewide. We found six studies that looked at the effect of CAFOs on property values; one out of the six found some basis for higher values. The other five found property values declined."

With the town's attorney, the citizen study committee fashioned protective amendments to Sylvester's basic siting law and initial health and safety ordinances. On a vote of 2 to 1, Town of Sylvester supervisors adopted the amendments last Monday, Feb. 15.

"Sylvester's livestock facility siting ordinance is not focused on any particular



Tony Ends photo

Senior ecologist Steve Apfelbaum presents findings of a 130-page Environmental, Human Health and Safety Risks report, whose compilation he led for the Town of Sylvester, to supervisors of Green County Towns Association last week.

operation," said Jen Reimer, who led the large-scale livestock facility siting committee. "We passed the siting law, which was amended Monday night, and we prohibited liquid manure from being spread aerially, and passed an animal waste transportation ordinance, for hoses and pipes along town roads."

Amendments to the livestock facility siting ordinance, based on the team of scientists' findings of facts about CAFOs, expands the document to 21 pages. Importantly, it includes two pages of tables that increase state DATCP or DNR setbacks from two-fold to, in some cases, 10-fold for 18 types of areas or features sensitive and vulnerable to pollution from CAFO wastes.

The tables also define seven prohibited areas and seven conservation options.

Town Chair Anna Anderson said the "Environmental, Human, Health and Safety Risks of CAFOs" report volunteers assembled for Sylvester was worth \$125,000 to the township in setting up the

protections from massive volumes of liquid manure.

The town's ordinances provide for an administrator, whose expenses will be billed to CAFO owners, and penalties.

"We also wanted to establish a storm water runoff ordinance," Anderson said, "but we can't do that because we have county zoning."

Visitors to the association's meeting last week encouraged towns to urge such health and safety protections of county supervisors. They asked towns to support county land and water conservation committee recommendations that Green County undertake hydro geological mapping to make siting all sorts of developments — not just CAFOs, and a moratorium on CAFO construction until a county study committee can do what the Town of Sylvester has accomplished.

Those measures are before a county finance committee. If supported there, they may pass on before the full county board for approval next month.

OBITUARY

Clarence J. Heidenreich

BRODHEAD — Clarence J. Heidenreich, of Brodhead, died Jan. 31, 2016, after a short illness. He was born Aug. 9, 1960, in Freeport, Ill., the son of Clarence (senior) and Evelyn (Liles) Heidenreich. He is preceded in death by his parents, one infant brother (Raymond), and sister Gloria Jean (McWane). He is survived by brothers Carl and Mike, and sister Terry.

His family and friends would like to thank the many caregivers and health professionals who made Clarence's final days comfortable, in particular, Agrace Hospice in Janesville and the UW-Hospital in Madison. To the many others who befriended or assisted Clarence during his short life, we thank you for your kindness.

A grave-side memorial service will be held at Greenwood Cemetery in Galena, Illinois. The date of the service is pending.



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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.

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