

Oversight of Manure Distribution at Confined Animal Feeding Facilities

Background

Ohio is home to a very vibrant and productive agricultural sector, but today's industrialized livestock production systems bear little resemblance to farms we may remember from decades past.

Confined Animal Feeding Facilities (CAFFs) house large numbers of livestock in confined areas where they are

intensively fed in order to maximize productivity and minimize costs.

Concentrating such large numbers of animals in close confinement not only accumulates massive manure stores, but often also requires animal management practices such as supplementing their feed with antibiotics and industrial scale exhausting of manure-tainted air.

Problem

Ohio relies primarily on the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) to regulate large industrial style livestock facilities.

Although the fundamental structure of their regulatory structure is sound, several loopholes and basic deficiencies exist.

As industrialized livestock facilities have grown, they have come to require an enormous investment of time and equipment to properly manage the manure distribution.

To answer this management challenge, third-party contractors, known as "manure brokers," have evolved to fill the void. The ODA has responded by developing a training program for these brokers called the Certified Livestock Managers program (CLM).

These brokers now distribute many thousands of tons of livestock manure annually, but the regulatory program has little leverage to enforce proper behavior.

Solutions

Short-Term

- » Insist that the ODA adopt a set of appropriate civil penalties for CLMs who violate adopted Statutes, Administrative Code Provisions, or Best Management Practices.

Medium - Longer Term

- » Strongly urge that the ODA reduce the allowable rates for manure nutrient application, especially in areas where watersheds are already impaired by excessive nutrients from industrial livestock facilities.
- » Strongly urge state agencies (ODA, ODNR, and OEPA) to develop a plan to require nutrient management plans of all medium, large, and major CAFFs (especially in watersheds already impaired by nutrients from livestock facilities).
- » Will you support requiring the Ohio Department of Health to conduct studies examining the public health risks associated with practices common at industrial livestock facilities?