Technical Work Paper on Social and Community Impacts

Prepared for the Generic Environmental Impact Statement on Animal Agriculture and the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board

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Table of Contents

List of Figures

Social and Community Impacts

Executive Summary

The Social and Community Impacts Team was charged with the following data collection tasks:

- Updating the Social/Community literature summary completed in 1999, and identifying on-going research relevant to social and community impacts.

- Collecting and analyzing qualitative data in the form of case studies on the social and community impacts of animal agriculture.

Update of Literature Review and On-going Research

On-going research was reviewed and incorporated into an update of the literature review completed in June 1999. Proceedings of annual meetings and professional societies where researchers typically present emerging areas of research were reviewed, as were refereed journals. There were 38 additional citations identified related to different types of animal production and changes in animal agriculture. The number of citations located in this review points to a continued academic interest in the social and community impacts of change in animal agriculture, community conflict, and local food systems.

Social and Community Impacts of Animal Agriculture

Clearly the most persistent theme in the research is that changes in animal agriculture in Minnesota do have social and community impacts. These impacts are uneven due to context and an individual's physical and social proximity to animal agriculture, and can be perceived as either positive or negative depending on one's position. Community conflict does exist, and seems more related to context than does impact on individual quality of life, which has a greater relationship with proximity to animal agriculture.

Interviews and personal contacts presented five recurring themes - changes in animal agriculture, quality of life impacts, community interaction, future of animal agriculture, and changes in population dynamics.

The most dominant theme is change in the structure of agriculture, and animal production specifically. Producers feel they need to "get big or get out" of animal agriculture. They point to vertical integration and contracts as two of their limited options to continue as producers. Nearly everyone agreed that animal agriculture is visually disappearing from the Minnesota landscape, and what remains is more concentrated and industrialized. Both small and large producers suggest there has been a reduction in shared production practices of farmers. Yet networks of farmer-to-farmer contracts have increased

cooperation and shared production practices in that area of the swine sector. Membership in FFA and 4-H has declined in most areas, and the number of animal exhibits at county fairs has declined. The focus of high school agriculture programs and these youth organizations has moved away from animal production.

Among producers who have expanded their operations, including those that have constructed CAFOs and entered into contract production, most consider industrialization of animal agriculture to be a positive influence on their farming operations and their personal and family quality of life. It allows them to continue farming in the face of narrowing profit margins, or allowed another family member to join the operation. Producers in their mid-50's and older who have not made changes in their operations expressed concern with the amount of debt taken on by young farm families to expand and build new confinement buildings. Although these older producers didn't see their own quality of life impacted by changes in animal agriculture, they did express a sense of loss for what they view as a way of life they feel cannot be returned to. For younger producers with small and mid-sized operations who are not engaged in contract production, the expansion of other operations has impacted them by tightening their access to markets with equitable prices. This has negative quality of life impacts as they are often balancing an off-farm job with animal husbandry responsibilities and time with their families.

Those whose home property neighbors a large scale animal production facility (almost always a confinement operation) have the greatest reduction in quality of life. Odors, noise, increased truck traffic, health problems, and concerns about well-water safety curtail their ability to enjoy their home and conduct day-to-day activities. While the problems may not be constant, there are specific times or days when odors, noise, or other intrusions from the production facility interfere with daily activities, decreasing their quality of life.

Community members not involved in animal agriculture, or not directly effected because of the location of their property, do not feel animal agriculture or changes in animal agriculture impact their quality of life. They may hear about it in stores and coffee shops, read about it in the newspaper, or even smell odor from a facility as they drive through the neighborhood. But since it does not have a direct bearing on their lifestyle it does not become something that they're concerned about. The media analysis points to a declining visibility in animal agriculture over the past decade, further dividing these 'bystanders' from those who consider themselves stakeholders in animal agriculture.

Community interaction has been impacted by change in animal agriculture. Those who speak out against expansions feel significant risk. Producers who often feel they have no other option but to expand find themselves excluded from neighborhood functions and their church community. Also noted is a widening gap within the farming community between those who are taking an industrialized approach, and those trying to maintain their operation without making changes.

One of the most troubling findings is the prevalence of an economic determinism expressed both by producers of all sizes and other community stakeholders. The perceived lack of choices about food provision systems negates alternative opportunity structures.

Changes in population dynamics in rural areas are not necessarily a result of change in animal agriculture, but do influence rural community life. Increased nuisance complaints from 'new-to-rural' residents; increased attention to neighborliness by producers; decreased opportunities for farm operators to be involved in community functions; an aging farm population; decline in rural churches; and new immigrant populations were all noted.

This research also explores changes in community social capital. The most apparent change in social capital is a decreasing level of individual and community trust in core government institutions at the state, and in some contexts the local level. These institutions - the MPCA, local planning & zoning and elected officials - are seen as responsible for perpetuating a hostile and inequitable community climate. Policies developed are viewed by both producers and other stakeholders as exacerbating problems at the local level rather than resolving them. The lack of responsiveness and responsibility of the key agency with authority to mediate conflicts delegitimizes the state as an effective authority. The absence of trust in these key institutions raises significant issues for the future role of public agencies in fostering or abating social tensions and community fragmentation in agricultural areas.

Contexts with the greatest perceived disparities between large and small producers, or between producers and other stakeholders (neighbors and others) had the least unity in shared vision for the future. Small and middle-sized producers shared notions of "get big or get out" and a fatalistic or inevitable view of the future. Large producers and those who are vertically integrated, operating under production contracts, or who own one or more confinement buildings share a different vision of the future. They look toward a continued role in further industrialization of animal agriculture as part of a production and profitability paradigm. There is also a potentially larger cleavage in the shared vision of local communities. In some locations there did not appear to be a role for a changing animal agriculture within the broader community vision for the future. This was particularly the case in contexts influenced by urban areas.

Opportunities for community dialogue regarding local issues are another indicator of social capital. Formal opportunities for community dialogue in respect to local issues surrounding change in animal agriculture were not identified in the research. The media analysis suggests local residents are increasingly using letters to the editor as a means of public dialogue, although a review of these items indicates this dialogue has become personalized in some contexts. Other opportunities for publicly expressing individual opinions are confined to hearings on specific projects where time is limited or the number of comments restricted.

Informal community dialogue has broken down in some communities, and there are

differing levels of community conflict in different contexts of this examination. The contexts with the highest level of conflict are those influenced by growing urban areas and with the highest populations. This has impacted the bonding social capital in local communities to varying degrees.

This study shows support for increased attention to understanding the changes taking place in livestock agriculture and the demographic transition taking place in rural Minnesota communities. This restructuring process will necessitate identifying ways to expand livestock production, while at the same time respecting neighbors, demonstrating the connections between livestock and community well being, and protecting the natural environment. Public forums should be convened for the purpose of openly discussing livestock expansion and acceptable alternative production strategies. There is also a need to institute better coordination among agencies at the state and local level. More financial support will allow state agencies to increase their responsiveness to local issues and their presence in rural communities where changes are rapidly occurring. More programs are needed to help small and mid-size producers fulfill environmental stewardship responsibilities when using practices other than confinement facilities to raise animals. One of the ways to avoid conflict among rural residents, rather than simply managing it, is to work with producers to set up marketing alternatives for small-sized and non-confinement raised animal products. Finally, further examination of the relationship between production and processing in Minnesota is warranted.

Policy Recommendations

The following recommendations for public policy are based on the research findings. This combination of recommendations seeks to balance community and agricultural interests; provide opportunities for ongoing discussion at the local level; and address the need for responsiveness and coordination within and between state and local institutions. These recommendations are best implemented through existing institutions that have credibility in rural Minnesota and not by creating an additional set of agencies or organizations.

1. **Explore with producers, community leaders and other local stakeholders ways to expand livestock production that (1) demonstrates the connection between livestock and community viability, (2) respects neighbors and their quality of life, and (3) protects and enhances the natural environment.**

2. **Initiate discussion groups, policy seminars, and conferences for producers, community leaders, policy makers, and other state and local stakeholders, where the many issues of livestock expansion can be discussed and mutually acceptable alternatives developed.**

3. **Institute improved responsiveness, local presence, and better coordination among state agencies at the most local level through state initiatives and increased funding for staff activities.**

4. **Develop more programs to assist small and mid-size producers who are not using confinement animal production systems to fulfill environmental stewardship responsibilities.**

5. **Working with producers, establish and promote marketing alternatives for small-sized producers and those not engaged in contract production.**

6. **Initiate a comprehensive examination of the meat and poultry processing industries in Minnesota, identifying the connections between production, processing, and social and community impacts.**

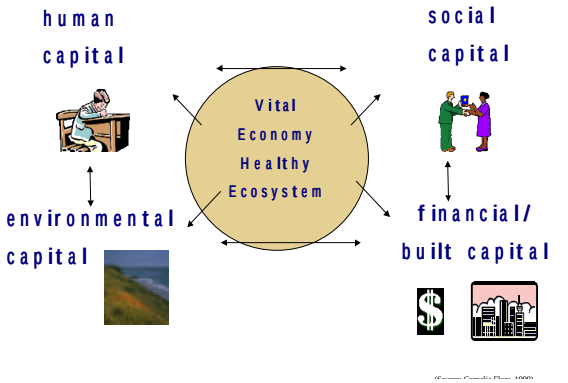
Introduction

Animal agriculture has historically been critical to the economy of Minnesota and has contributed to the vibrant culture of many of the State's rural communities. Today, however, rapid changes are taking place in animal agriculture. These changes are having a significant effect not only on those directly involved in agriculture, but also on rural communities. The purpose of this technical work paper is to identify the impacts that changes in animal agriculture have had on social and community well being in rural Minnesota.

What is community well being? Within this paper community is defined in a geographic sense, as a group of people who see themselves as members of a specific locale. Community well being is defined as the levels and balance of bridging and bonding social capital found within a community.

Social capital is the trust, mutual reciprocity, and sense of shared future between individuals, and the ability to work constructively for the good of the community. It forms the fabric of family life and community dynamics. Indicators of bonding social capital include the quality of relationships between community and family members, and individual and collective responsibility to solving community related problems. Indicators of bridging social capital include community links to outside groups and knowledge. Opportunity for community dialogue, such as the chance to express one's opinion about a community concern with the sense that it will be respected, is also key to the presence of strong social capital.

Figure 1. Community Capitals at Work



Social capital exists alongside other forms of capital in the community that can be combined and invested to create new resources, such as human capital (the skills, knowledge, health, and leadership abilities of local people), environmental capital (ecosystem health and community attachments to the local environment), and economic capital. Social capital is more abstract than human, environmental, or economic capitals and is not as readily visible. Nonetheless, the presence of social capital is crucial in that it can lower transaction costs of new development, contribute to other forms of capital, and enhance the flexibility of a community.

We find two types of social capital in communities - bonding social capital and bridging social capital. Where there is bonding social capital there are a few families and people who run everything in town. There are other families with strong ties, but without

significant power. Those without power will continue to receive benefits if they don't rock the boat. Ties to the outside are limited, and controlled by a gatekeeper or boss. This is a patron-client relationship of tight, exclusive networks, high boundary maintenance, and a single answer approach to problem solving. Where there is bridging social capital there are a lot of different groups who are connected or networked, and also connected to the outside with multiple ties. These are open, flexible, permeable boundaries, where there is a legitimization of alternatives. In places where there is low bridging and low bonding social capital the rich solve problems through financial capital. The poor have few options. This often occurs in rural areas. Where there is low bonding social capital but high bridging social capital community change is driven by goals of outsiders, often mediated through local bosses. Where there is high bonding social capital but low bridging social capital the community resists change and groups within the community often don't cooperate or trust each other. And where there is high bridging and high bonding social capital, community change is driven by community-determined goals and linked to external resources.

In order to determine the impacts of changes in animal agriculture on community well being, this study focuses on assessing the relative strength of social capital indicators. To avoid duplication of work with other research teams involved in the Generic Environmental Impact Statement it does not include indicators designed to measure economic growth, environmental stewardship, or political participation.

The Social and Community Impacts Team has undertaken five specific tasks, the results of which are presented in this technical work paper.

1. Literature Review

A review of the latest literature on social and community impacts and issues related to animal agriculture produced since June 1999. This review included extension and experiment station publications that pertain to Minnesota animal agriculture. It also includes the most recent peer reviewed work, as well as work that is not peer reviewed (e.g. conference and working papers).

2. Identification of On-Going research

By reviewing the most recent research from Land Grant Universities and other sources, on-going research in this area of the social sciences was identified. Researchers previously identified in the literature summary were contacted for an update of their activities. Their work has been reviewed and incorporated into the updated review of the literature as pertinent, and a list of ongoing work developed.

3. Community Case Studies

Six counties were selected for in-depth case studies to assess the impact of changing patterns of animal agriculture in terms of social capital. The case studies explore the points of view of the different actors to determine the multiple impacts - positive and negative - of changes in animal agriculture on rural communities in these six counties.

4. Coordination with Other Research Teams

Due to considerable overlap among teams, these activities were coordinated with the Land Use Conflicts and Regulation and the Role of Government Teams. This coordination included collection of information from individuals at the local level and secondary data analysis.

5. Identification of Policy Implications

Using the implications of the literature review, the on-going research, and the qualitative analysis of the case studies, policy implications were identified.

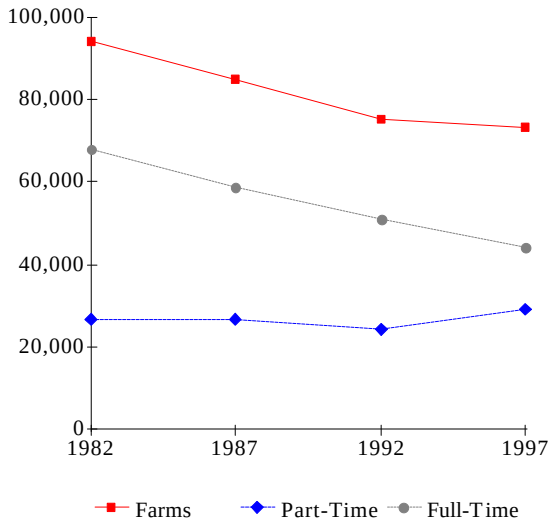
The paper begins with an overview of the changing structure of animal agriculture in Minnesota. A brief sketch of the six case study counties is then provided, followed by presentation and discussion of the research findings. The document concludes with a set of proposed policy recommendations, and an update of the literature review and on-going research.

Section 1:

Structural Change in Minnesota Agriculture

Beginning with the Great Depression there has been an almost constant pattern of change in agriculture throughout the nation, marked by a decline in the number of medium-sized producers. Over the last two decades this change accelerated, with two distinct trends - rapid decrease in the number of small farms, and production concentrated in fewer farms with increased levels of production[1].

Figure 2. Change in Farms and Farmers in Minnesota, 1982-1997



Source: USDA Census of Agriculture 1982-1997

Changes in agriculture since the 1980's are evident in Minnesota (Figure 2). While the total number of farms declined 22 percent from 1982 to 1997 (from 94,382 to 73,367), the number of full-time farm operators decreased 35 percent (from 67,742 to 44,047). Over the same period there was a 10 percent increase in the number of part-time farm operators increased (from 26,640 to 29,320).[2]

The rate of these fifteen-year changes is not uniform. The decline in number of Minnesota farms remained fairly constant from 1982 to 1992, but slowed between 1992 and 1997. From 1982 to 1992 the number of full-time farmers shows a pattern of decline similar to the decline in farms. But unlike the slowdown in farm change, the number of full-time farmers continued to decline at the same rate from 1992 to 1997. And while the number of part-time farmers changed little from 1982 to 1992, between 1992 and 1997 there was an increase in this group.[3] Taken together, this suggests the loss of Minnesota farms is slowing, but farms are increasingly likely to be operated by an individual whose principal occupation is not farming.

While there has been change in almost all sectors of animal agriculture in Minnesota, these changes are not uniform across all species. Since the 1980's there has been increased concentration in production of dairy, swine, and even in the previously

[1] Albrecht, Don E. 1997. "The Changing Structure of U.S. Agriculture: Dualism Out, Industrialism In." *Rural Sociology*, 62(4): 474-490.

[2] USDA Census of Agriculture, 1982; 1987; 1992; 1997.

[3] Ibid.

industrialized poultry industry. Yet this is not the case in the beef cattle industry. And while inventories of swine, beef and poultry have increased, the dairy cow inventory decreased. Each of these animal sectors has unique trends and characteristics in terms of change.

- Between 1982 and 1997 the number of farms in the state with dairy cattle steadily and rapidly declined. There were 24,178 dairy farms in 1982, with an average herd size of 35 cows. By 1997 there were only 9,603 dairy farms, and the average herd size had increased to 56 cows. While the total inventory of cows did decrease, the decline was not as rapid as the decrease in farms due to the increasing concentration in this sector. In 1982 and 1987 there were no dairy farms in the state with 500 or more milk cows. In 1992 there was only one farm with over 500 milk cows in Minnesota. Five years later in 1997, 29 Minnesota farms had a herd of over 500 cows.[4]

- In Minnesota the swine industry has traditionally relied on family farm production as part of a diversified farming strategy. But between 1982 and 1997 the number of farms raising hogs decreased dramatically, from 20,813 to 7,512. This decline was constant from 1982 to 1987, and from 1987 to 1992, but accelerated from 1992 to 1997. And while the total number of hogs on those farms did not change substantially from 1982 to 1992 (4.5 million in 1982; 4.7 million in 1992), this also changed from 1992 to 1997. By 1997 there were 5.7 million hogs on Minnesota farms - one million more than five years before, and on 5,613 fewer farms.[5]

- The number of Minnesota farms with beef cattle decreased by 24 percent from 1982 to 1997 (from 20,435 to 15,528). Since that time the number of beef farms has not significantly changed. And while the inventory of beef cattle decreased from 1982 to 1987 (from 467,732 to 360,153), it steadily increased to 409,184 by 1997.[6] Beef is the hardest of the primary Minnesota animal species to industrialize. They are ruminants and are valued at point of sale, unlike dairy and eggs. This is the one species where the number of Minnesota producers is not decreasing at the same time that herd sizes are increasing.

- Transformation and expansion in the poultry sector began in the 1950's in Minnesota, change that we see continuing into the 1980's and 90's. From 1982 to 1992 the number of farms selling broilers decreased steadily from 1,411 to 679. From 1992 to 1997 this decline slowed, decreasing to 621 farms. While the number of broilers sold increased steadily from 22.5 million in 1982 to 36.8 million in 1992, sales had decreased back down to 28.5 million by 1997. Unlike broilers, the number of turkeys sold maintained a steady increase over the fifteen-year period. Twenty-eight million turkeys were sold in 1987; 37 million were sold in 1987; 44 million were sold in 1992; and 47 million turkeys were sold in 1997. At the same time the number of farms selling turkeys steadily decreased over this period, from 463 in 1982 to 359 in

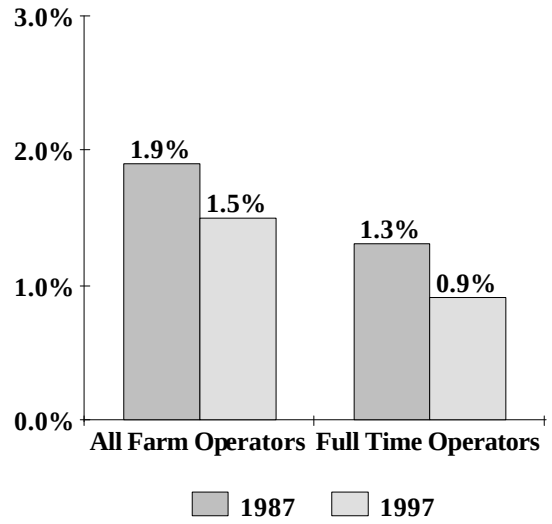
[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

1997.[7]

Figure 3. Farm Operators as a Declining Proportion of Minnesota's Residents



Source: Analysis based on USDA Census of Agriculture, 1987 & 1997, US Population Census 1990 & 2000

These changes in animal production reflect a process of restructuring that has important implications for producers and farm communities. Farm operators are a declining percentage of Minnesota's residents. As Figure 3 indicates, in 1987 farm operators made up just under two percent of the total population of the state. By 1997 this declined to 1.3% of the population. Full time farm operators are an even smaller percentage of the total population, and by 1997 had declined to less than one percent of all Minnesota residents.[8] Further illustrating the declining presence of full time farmers in Minnesota, Figure 4 depicts change by Minnesota County in the number of full time farmers over the past decade.

But these changes do not take place in a static context. At the same time animal agriculture has been changing, Minnesota's population has been growing and changing as well. Of the upper-Midwestern states, Minnesota experienced the highest rate of growth from 1990 to 2000 - twelve percent. Our neighboring states of Wisconsin, Iowa, South Dakota, and North Dakota saw smaller increases in their populations - 9.6, 5.4, 8.5, and .5 percent respectively.[9] While Minnesota's population increased, the pattern of growth over the past decade was significantly different than the pattern of growth during the 1980's. During the 1990's Minnesota experienced a 'rural rebound', experiencing population growth in rural unincorporated areas where there had been a loss in population the previous decade. There was also increased population growth in urban areas located outside of the central cities. And while farm operators and their households were historically the majority of residents in rural unincorporated areas of the state, this has changed as well. As the rural population grew during the 1990s, the percent of these rural residents who are not engaged in farming has also increased.

The changes in animal agriculture and population described here have important implications for the well being of Minnesota residents and their communities. Different

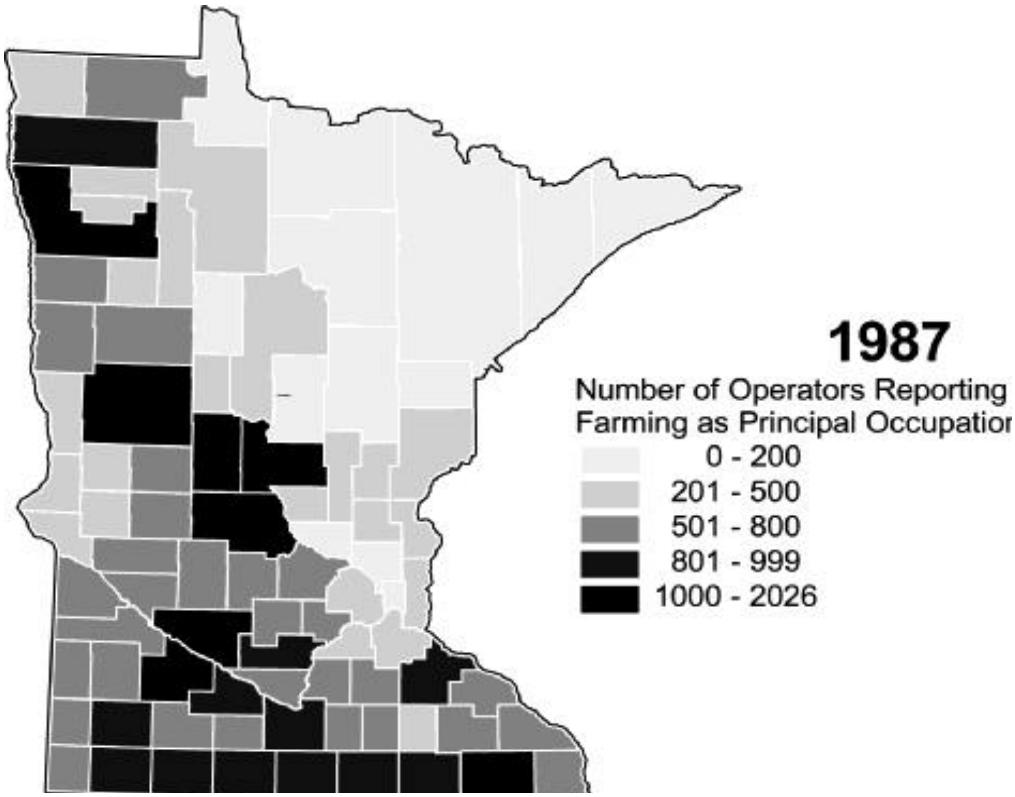
[7] Ibid.

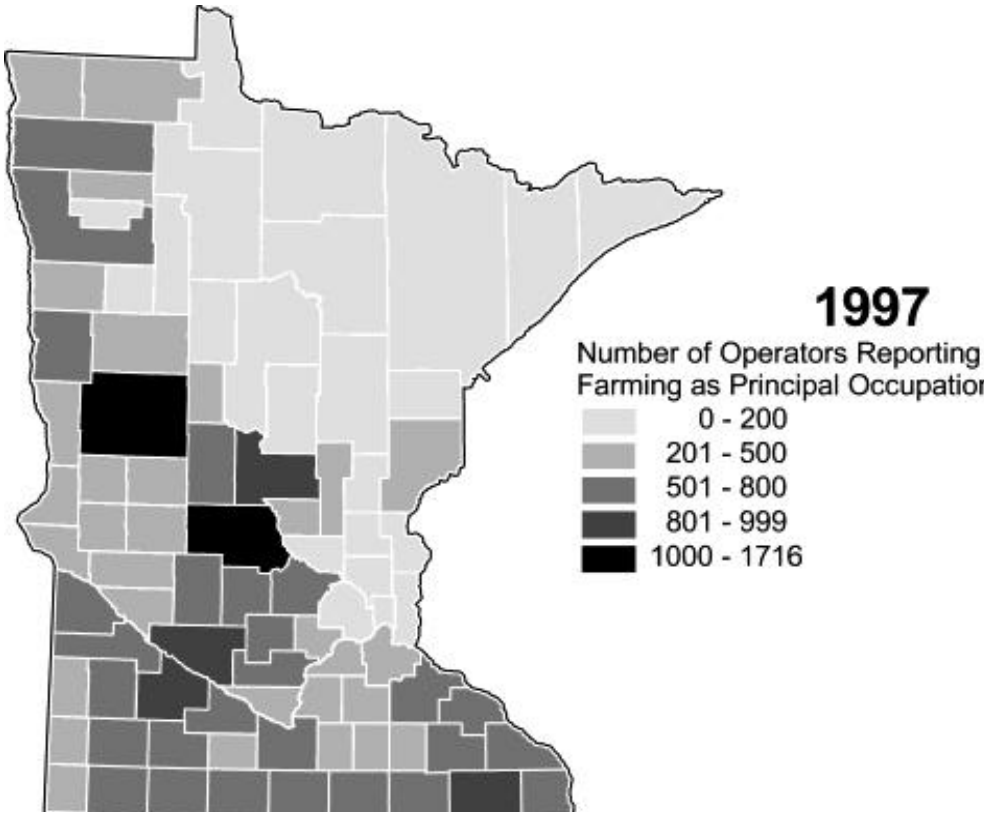
[8] USDA Census of Agriculture, 1987; 1997.

[9] U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

structures of ownership and control of animal agriculture may affect farmers' interactions with each other as well as with the broader community. Changes in animal production practices may impact household quality of life. Community and neighborhood conflicts may emerge in the context of restructuring in animal agriculture and change in non-farming households. All of these affect the amount of social capital within communities.

Figure 4. Full-Time Farmers in Minnesota 1987-1997 (**Source**: USDA Census of Agriculture 1987; 1997)

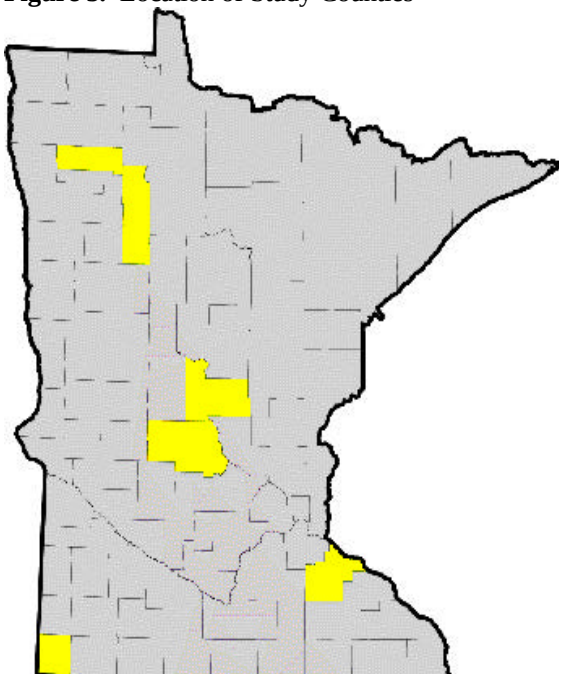




Section 2:

Context of Case Study Examination

Figure 5. Location of Study Counties



Research activities of the Social and Community Impacts Team were conducted primarily (although not exclusively) within six Minnesota counties – Rock, Goodhue, Stearns, Morrison, Clearwater and Pennington. Locations of these counties are identified in Map 3.

These contexts for examining social and community impacts of animal agriculture were selected in conjunction with the Land Use Conflicts and Regulation Team in a process that included several criteria. Table 1 provides a summary of these perameters.

Predominant Species - Each of the six case counties has either a predominant or rapidly increasing species, the impact of which was selected for primary examination[10].

Number and Change in Producers and Inventory of Study Species - All counties selected had a decrease in the number of producers for the study species from 1987 to 1997, which is consistent with the state trend. This change, however, ranges from less than one percent to more than 40 percent. The study species inventory remained the same or increased in all counties over the same period, again with a wide range in change (from no change to a 44 percent increase). This provided a range of change in both inventory and producers from which to examine social impacts.

Recent Expansion in Facilities for Predominant Species - Five of the six counties have had recent expansion of facilities within the species selected for study. These expansions provide a situation in which to examine local community conflict or opposition.

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[10] Although dairy is the predominant species in Stearns County, poultry was selected for investigation as it was determined to be more important in this area than any other area of the state that would provide reliable case analysis. Additionally, there is an overlap with the Morrison County poultry sector. Even though dairy is the most integral part of the agricultural economy in Stearns County it was found to be central to other counties as well, including Goodhue County where it was selected for examination. This was less frequently the case with poultry.

Ownership Structure - Four of the six counties have predominantly family owned operations within the species examined, although in Rock County there are networks of family producers within swine production. In the case of broilers in Stearns and Morrison Counties production is almost exclusively through contracts.

Community Conflict - Four of the counties selected have had moderate community conflict regarding animal agriculture. In five of the counties there have been civil lawsuits filed related to construction or expansion of animal facilities in the past five years. Over the same period there were MPCA odor complaints in five of the six counties, ranging by county from 1 to 13 complaints.

County Feedlot Inventory - Four of the six counties are delegated counties with a county feedlot inventory in place. Two are not delegated counties, and do not have a feedlot officer or inventory in place.

Geographic Location - And finally, it was important that the context of this examination include counties from different geographic locations of the state. The six case counties include two from northern Minnesota, two from central Minnesota, and two from southern Minnesota.

Table 1. Summary of County Study Criteria

	Stearns County	Morrison County	Goodhue County	Rock County	Pennington County	Clearwater County
Predominant species	Dairy	Poultry	Dairy	Swine	Beef	Beef
Primary species selected for study	Broilers	Broilers	Dairy	Swine	Beef	Beef
Number of producers for study species 1997	45	47	352	188	119	273
Percent change in number of producers for study species 1987-1997	-0.8%	-26.6%	-28.3%	-40.5%	-13.1%	-17.0%
County inventory of study species 1997	8,859,329*	10,897,550*	26,602	149,178	3,386	10,529
Percent change in study species inventory 1987-1997	+41.8%*	+26.9%*	No change	44.2%	3.9%	21.6%
Recent expansion in facilities	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Ownership structure of study species	Contract	Contract	Family	Family/ Networks	Family	Family
Community Conflict	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Moderate	Low
Geographic area	Central	Central	Southeast	Southwest	Northwest	Northwest

* For broilers this figure reflects annual sales and change in annual sales

Source: USDA Census of Agriculture, 1987 & 1997; Telephone interviews conducted with county-level agency staff.

As the study criteria suggests, each county has unique characteristics in terms of animal agriculture. This diversity extends to characteristics of population, economic well being,

and characteristics of farms and farmers. Of the six counties, Stearns saw a population increase from 1990 to 2000 that was consistent with the state statistic, while Rock, Pennington and Clearwater saw little population change (Table 2). Stearns and Goodhue Counties, based on their location and size of their largest community, bring urban issues to these contexts of examination. Median county income and level of poverty are also very different in each study county, ranging both above and below the state statistic. Goodhue County provides the highest standard of living in terms of economic indicators, with a median income above the state average and the lowest percentage of the population living in poverty among the case counties. Clearwater County represents the opposite end of this spectrum with the lowest median income and the highest percent of population living in poverty within the counties examined.

Table 2. Population Characteristics by County

	Minnesota	Stearns County	Morrison County	Goodhue County	Rock County	Pennington County	Clearwater County
Population 2000	4,919,479	133,166	31,712	44,127	9,721	13,584	8,423
Population change 1990-2000	+12.4%	+12.1%	+7.1%	+8.4%	-0.9%	+2.1%	+1.4%
Largest community and population	Minneapolis 382,618	St. Cloud 59,107	Little Falls 7,719	Red Wing 16,116	Luverne 4,617	Thief River Falls 8,410	Bagley 1,235
Median household income*	$41,591	$38,806	$31,100	$43,192	$34,775	$31,848	$26,177
Percent of population living in poverty*	8.9%	8.5%	13.3%	6.8%	7.9%	11.2%	19.1%

* U.S. Census Bureau 1997 Model-Based Estimate

Source: US Census of Population, 2000

When characteristics of farms and their operators (Table 3) are considered, additional differences between study counties are identified. While all counties saw a decline in the number of farms and the number of full time operators over the past decade, the range of this change suggests that not all counties are experiencing this trend similarly. Among the contexts for this examination, Clearwater County appears to be experiencing the greatest loss in farms and full time farmers, losing nearly twenty percent of its farms and nearly one-third of its full time farmers over the past decade. Stearns County appears to be the least impacted with a 6 percent decline in farms and a 14 percent loss of full time farmers.

Table 3. Farm and Farmer Characteristics by County

	Minnesota	Stearns County	Morrison County	Goodhue County	Rock County	Pennington County	Clearwater County
Number of farms 1997	73,367	2,982	1,808	1,489	704	528	570
Change in number of farms 1987-1997	-14%	-6%	-5%	-12%	-16%	-10%	-18%
Farm operators with farming as principal occupation 1997	44,047	1,984	1,011	848	489	301	287
Change in number of farm operators with farming as principal occupation 1987-1997	-25%	-14%	-20%	-19%	-27%	-24%	-31%

Source: USDA Census of Agriculture, 1987 & 1997

In summary, this research examines social and community impacts of animal agriculture in six unique contexts. Context is important to the research, as changes in animal agriculture cannot be viewed as taking place in a vacuum. Local context appears to be a factor in how changes in animal agriculture impact individuals, institutions, and communities, a connection that is further addressed in the research conclusions section of this technical work paper.

Section 3:

Impacts on Social and Community Well Being

Methods of Study

The research to assess social and community well being employed several methods for identifying community impacts to assure inclusion of a cross section of the population and enhance scientific validity and reliability. Data was derived from original and secondary sources. Original data was gathered from personal interviews and county level roundtable discussions. Secondary data was gathered through an analysis of media accounts. Secondary data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the USDA Census of Agriculture, historical documents, and previous research was used to supplement the findings.

Interviews and Roundtable Discussions

Interviews were first conducted with 12 key informants from each of the six identified case study counties. Key informants in this group included extension educators, feedlot officers, and planning and zoning officials. Following each interview key informants were asked to provide names of producers, community leaders, and other county residents who could inform the research process. The format of these interviews is included in Attachment 1.

The second stage of data collection was a series of four roundtable discussions with community members to talk with residents about their views on changes in animal agriculture in their respective communities. The primary goal of these roundtables was to identify key issues related to animal agriculture in each location and their local social impacts. Roundtables were organized in cooperation with the Land Use Conflicts & Regulation and Role of Government GEIS teams.

Four of the counties were clustered together into two roundtables: Morrison and Stearns were combined, as were Pennington and Clearwater. This decision was made in order to treat these neighboring counties as one context due to significant overlap in the commodity species being investigated in that region. A roundtable discussion was also held in Goodhue County, and one in Rock County. Participants from Pipestone County were included in the Rock County roundtable as they were included in the Land Use Conflicts & Regulation Team's examination.

Roundtable invitees included a cross section of community leaders, agricultural specialists, producers, community activists, county and township officials, faith communities, and institutional representatives (e.g., from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, University of Minnesota Extension Service, etc.). Invitees were sent an introductory letter explaining the nature of the research and requesting their attendance at

the roundtable, followed by a reminder telephone call. This yielded a total attendance of 60 persons in the four roundtables. Attempting to expand the research sample, roundtable participants were asked to provide further names of potential contacts for face to face interviews.

A standard set of questions was used to guide the discussion in all four roundtables. A copy is included in Attachment 2. All dialogue at the roundtables was tape-recorded, transcribed, and thematically analyzed.

Contacts were subsequently made with invitees that did not attend the roundtables, those whose names where generated during these meetings and those whose names were generated in the key informant interviews that were not included in the roundtables. These individuals were asked to participate in one-on-one interviews. The purpose of the interviews was to delve more deeply into the impact of animal agriculture on their respective communities.

Face to face interviews were conducted with 60 individuals including animal agriculture producers, neighbors of animal agriculture producers, community leaders and other residents of the selected case study counties. These interviews ranged in length from 45 minutes to 2 hours, and for the most part took place in personal homes, barns and machine sheds, coffee shops or agency offices. A standard set of questions was used to guide each interview (Attachment 3). Each person interviewed was asked to provide additional names of people to contact.

Interviews continued until research themes became repetitive in each location, at which time interviewing additional people would not have contributed to the study goals. All interviews were tape recorded (where the respondent gave permission) and analyzed.

One final method employed in the final stages of this research was a newspaper advertisement placed in the newspaper of record in each case county. This advertisement explained the work of the social and community impacts team, and invited citizens to call, write, or send email to the researchers if they chose to have input into the research. Three telephone calls were received, which resulted in two additional interviews.

Analysis of Media Accounts

Minnesota has more local newspapers than any other state in the nation. These locally published periodicals are an information source for residents and a forum for public dialogue on community issues through editorials and letters to the editor. This body of media accounts also provides social scientists with a secondary data source from which to capture local issues and public dialogue.

In this research we examined nine local newspapers in the six case study counties. The Rock County Star-Herald; Red Wing Republican-Eagle; Cannon Falls Beacon; St. Cloud

Times; Cold Spring Record; Morrison County Record; Gonvick Leader-Record; Bagley Farmers Independent; and Thief River Falls Times. Items in the nine local newspapers were reviewed for the years 1990 and 2000. Of the nine local newspapers, seven were published weekly. Our review included all editions of these newspapers published in 1990 and 2000. Two of the newspapers were published daily. A sample of the two daily papers was selected for review that included one edition from each week in 1990 and 2000. This provided us with a total sample of 468 editions for 1990 and 468 editions for 2000.

Three specific indicators of community impact of animal agriculture were used in the review.

- Number of newspaper items with animal agriculture content as an indicator of visibility.
- Themes within newspaper items with animal agriculture content as an indicator of focus.
- Number of editorials and letters to the editor with animal agriculture content as an indicator of public dialogue.

Within the sample of newspaper editions the items reviewed included all articles written by local newspaper staff or based on local press releases; press releases initiated outside the county that included reference to local individuals; all editorials, columns, and letters to the editor generated from within the county; and paid advertisements with non-commercial intent. This protocol excluded the following items from consideration: letters to the editor generated from outside the county; wire stories; news releases from national and state entities that are not specifically related to the local context; commercial and classified advertising; and election coverage and advertising.

All items within these criteria were examined for content referring to animal agriculture. Those items that met the criteria were copied for further examination and analyzed within the three indicators.

Secondary Data: Supplemental Statistics

Data from secondary sources were gathered from the U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Agriculture Census of Agriculture and Livestock Inventory, Minnesota State Demographer's Office, Minnesota Department of Trade & Economic Development, historical documents, previous research, and media accounts such as newsprint and trade periodicals. The Population Census and State Demographer's estimates were valuable sources of data to paint a portrait of demographic change across Minnesota. Documents from the USDA underpin this study by illuminating issues such as number of production units, scale of production, and reliance on off-farm income. Census data allowed longitudinal examinations that supported evidence acquired from other sources. Other records were also reviewed, including civil court transcripts, state, county and township documents and current and proposed regulatory statutes.

Research Findings

Interviews and Personal Contacts

This section summarizes the interviews with producers, community leaders, local elected officials, government agency personnel and other local citizens in a manner that conceptually highlights themes in respondents' comments pertaining to impacts of animal agriculture on social and community well being. Issues that were identified covered a broad spectrum, ranging from the rewards of a farming lifestyle on one end to the deterioration of community cohesiveness at the other. Included in this discussion are findings related to community cohesion and sociability perceived to be concomitant with changes taking place in animal agriculture.

The conclusions discussed here were reached after carefully re-reading respondents' interview comments and transcripts from roundtable discussions, and identifying themes across individual responses. Comments were then classified into one or more of these thematic areas. Five recurring themes were identified and this discussion is organized within these areas. This research team has made considerable effort to provide an overview of the general nature of comments emerging within each thematic area, as well as assure that the diversity or range of views expressed is accounted for. The five identified thematic areas are:

- ♣ Changes in Animal Agriculture
- ♣ Quality of Life Impacts
- ♣ Community Interaction
- ♣ Future of Animal Agriculture
- ♣ Changes in Population Dynamics

It is important to note that while each of these themes appeared in interviews in all counties, some themes were more dominant in particular contexts. For example, issues surrounding changes in population dynamics were most prevalent in Goodhue and Stearns Counties while changes in animal agriculture were most prevalent in Morrison and Rock Counties. Within the following discussion these differences are noted when applicable.

Over the past several months we have been privileged to hear these personal stories from more than 120 individuals. While the themes discussed in this section reflect these personal contacts, included in the appendix of this technical work paper is a section of personal narratives (Attachment 4) and transcripts from the four roundtable discussions (Attachment 5). These additional items explain by example the themes presented here.

Theme 1: Changes in the Structure of Agriculture

The most dominant theme in the personal contacts was change in the structure of agriculture, and animal production specifically. This came through in all of the case counties and roundtable discussions, but was most pronounced in Rock and Morrison Counties.

"Get Big or Get Out"
This refrain was heard time and time again to describe how current and former Minnesota farmers we spoke with view their options in terms of animal agriculture. It is almost a now classic epitaph passed on from generation to generation by farm families. For most of the twentieth century farmers have faced constraint on the choices they can make regarding their farming production system in both crop and animal production. Confinement systems continue pressures to expand either by becoming more capital intensive or buying more land and more animals. The continued use of this metaphor strongly suggests that the dualism to which they refer when pondering whether to "get big or get out" is not a by-product of current trends, but more likely endemic in the structure of American agriculture.

Swine and poultry producers were the ones to most often express this sentiment. It was less prevalent (but not absent) in the dairy and beef cattle sectors. One hog producer indicated that expansion is "all about dollars . . . If you don't have enough dollars to live, then you go find another income producing unit. Well, that's another hog. That means you have more hogs."

Producers overwhelmingly felt existing markets, government subsidies, and even government regulations are designed to benefit and encourage large-scale animal production over small-scale production. In explaining how environmental regulations force small hog farmers to expand, one individual stated

> " . . .it's the only way for some of the small producers to be able to abide by some of the new regulations that were brought about and to be able to stay there . . . if you put enough animal units behind it, suddenly everything becomes feasible. But at 50 or 100 hogs, you can't afford some of the things you've asked them to do."

Both producers and others drew a connection between loss of small animal farms, growth in large animal production facilities, and the community impacts of this change.

> "We've lost so many (farmers) over time and they are not coming back. The big feedlots are fine and dandy, but they don't put people into your communities. So, for the town of Goodrich that is running out of children, big feedlots aren't going to do any good. For the VFW that hasn't got enough members left, feedlots are not going to make any difference . . .We can talk about rules and regulations and that is not what is going to break these guys. It's economics that is breaking them, but it will speed the process. I have talked to so many cow/calf guys who have said, "Well, these rules that come along…I don't think that I'm a feedlot. I don't think that I am doing any harm but if I get checked and they say that I have to

> do all this stuff, I will just call the truck and then I'm done." That's a quick answer and that's their choice, but what does it do for the region? You look at the implement dealers and they sell a lot of used equipment and a lot of smaller equipment to the livestock folks. The economic development that occurs because of those smaller livestock operations is pretty significant. It is a true niche within the community that they fill and it's going to hurt us if we lose them."

Vertical Integration and Corporate Farming

Vertical integration was often pointed to in personal contacts, as many respondents agreed "what happened in poultry will happen in pork", referring to the vertical integration of these sectors of animal agriculture. As one beef producer put it, "many farmers were very upset in that what they were seeing was the beginning of corporation farming and they see that as a threat to their own security." The notion of farmers becoming the employees or even referred to as "slaves" of corporate-owned agriculture was a recurrent theme in our interviews with both small and large producers. The ownership arrangements of contract production (specifically in poultry and swine) were viewed by some as a precursor to increasing control and even ownership of farm-site production by national and international corporations.

In both the interviews and roundtable discussions the term "corporate farm" was used to refer to both vertically integrated and to large, multi-owner farming operations (not necessarily vertically integrated operations). While these animal agriculture facilities are within the scope of Minnesota's anti-corporate farming laws, it is interesting to note the differentiation by other community members - including other farmers - that these are not family farms, but corporate farms.

Decreased Visibility of Animal Farming

From producers to consumers, nearly everyone we spoke with agreed that animal agriculture was visually disappearing from much of the rural Minnesota landscape. Fewer livestock operations are dotted throughout the countryside and those remaining are more concentrated and capital intensive or industrialized. Rural dwellers that were interviewed would often point to nearby farm sites to explain the animal production that took place in those locations as recently as ten years ago. While many of the farm sites they pointed to were still standing, the families who occupy them are strictly in crop production (frequently along with in-town jobs) or the farm sites have been sold to a non-farming households. These people also identified new confined animal production facilities that had been erected in their neighborhoods for swine, poultry, and dairy production. Most respondents interpreted this restructuring process as a loss, viewing the reduction in animal operations and the intensification of animal production by a few producers as having a negative impact on the economic vitality and social fabric of their neighborhood and local community.

Neighborhood Impacts of Large Production Facilities

When a producer responds by expanding his operation or constructing a confined production facility, there are impacts on both his farming and non-farming neighbors.

Non-farmers interviewed tended to focus their concerns on fear of potential hazards to the environment and a reduced quality of life caused by the growth in confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs) for poultry, swine, and dairy production.

Rural residents not engaged in farming indicated concern regarding destruction done to township and county roads by heavy equipment and trucks that regularly travel to and from large animal facilities, specifically CAFO-type facilities. Complaints that these vehicles destroy the roads, track roads with animal manure, and drive at speeds beyond safe limits were not uncommon. Fear of reduced property values was also common among those who owned real estate in the vicinity of a CAFO. Of the neighbors interviewed with this concern, only two had actually sold their homes and only one perceived the reduction from their home's appraisal price (25%) as a result of being located next to a large scale confined dairy.

Changes in Shared Production Practices

Both small and large producers suggested that changes in agriculture have changed the shared production practices of farmers. They indicated large operations are very independent and don't need to rely on shared equipment or labor exchanges with other producers. One person explained that farmers are more "self-contained": they don't interact with a lot of people, nor have a need for broader support. Another spoke of a transition from camaraderie to individualism. Not only does this represent a perceived change in production practices, but also a decrease in opportunities for interaction between farm operators. While this appears to reflect a general trend in agriculture rather than one specific to animal production, it was a point made in many personal contacts. For example, in the past many dairy and beef producers have shared baling equipment, and have baled together. One large beef producer explained how it is just easier for him and his brother (who he farms with) to do it on their own rather than with their neighbor. They can do it within their own timeline and don't need to coordinate use of the baler with their neighbor's schedule.

Networks of swine producers presented a new form of shared production practices. Several of these local networks were identified in the case counties, established primarily as an alternative to contracting with a large corporation. These farmer-to-farmer contracts establish networks of producers from farrow to finish in confinement settings located on their individual farm sites. The producers involved share equipment, trucks, and labor. Those involved perceived this as a desirable situation, and felt supported by the cooperative nature of their group of producers.

Impact on Youth Organizations

Historically important youth organizations have also been impacted by changes in animal agriculture. Membership in both 4-H and FFA has declined and/or changed in most areas. 4-H members are less frequently enrolled in animal projects, and the number of animals exhibited at many county fairs has declined. The focus of both of these organizations has shifted away from animal production to other project areas, including a new emphasis on community leadership. In a growing number of 4-H Clubs and FFA Chapters the children of farmers are now a minority of the membership.

The declining number of farm families has also affected agriculture programs in rural school systems. In some cases these programs are no longer offered in the school curriculum due to lack of interest or lack of support for funding agriculture programs. Where these programs are still available the interest in production agriculture has declined. Students are more interested in forestry, food processing and agricultural marketing. Like their parents, farm youth perceive a change in the future of animal agriculture toward food processing, agricultural marketing and agro-forestry.

Theme 2: Quality of Life

Changes in animal agriculture have clearly impacted the quality of life of both producers and non-producers over and above the general decline in agriculture and in small rural communities.

Producer Experiences
Animal producers who had moved into CAFO-based production reported the most increase in their quality of life. Most producers we spoke with felt their quality of life had either not changed or had improved in relation to changes in animal agriculture. Some farmers told us that by expanding their animal operations it helped create the financial means to bring their children into the farm operation. Many felt that without expanding or adding livestock they would not have made it in farming. Some reported that by adding numbers to their herd/flock size, or putting up one or more CAFOs, they were able to spend more time with their family and less time away from home employed off the farm. CAFOs have allowed under-employed farm operators to become more fully employed in their own operations.

Other producers were not as positive when recounting their experiences with expansion of their operation. For example, farmers involved in animal agriculture production regardless of production system, face complicated challenges. They often find they have to expand their operations to justify the investments they are required to make to be in compliance with Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) regulations. This can foster a treadmill effect.

A number of large-scale confinement producers also talked about conflicts with neighbors and life-long friends as a difficult challenge. It is possible that going into more intensive animal production may solve short-term internal farm household problems, but creates external problems with community members**.** Others found taking an off-farm job allowed them to hang on to the farm, but in turn drained time away from their family. Several farmers expressed their concern with the debt taken on by young farm families in order to expand their operations. These were primarily older farmers who had operated diversified operations over the years using traditional livestock production practices. Some had children or other relatives who had built CAFOs, but they had not done so themselves. The young farmers interviewed who had built confinement operations did not express similar concerns about their debt load.

The Experiences of Neighbors

For the farming and non-farming neighbors of dairy, swine, and poultry confinement facilities, quality of life was most often impacted based on the proximity to the large-scale animal agriculture facility. Those with the greatest quality of life concerns were neighbors of poultry and swine CAFOs. Neighbors located less than one mile from the facility reported at least some interference with their daily activities. Odors from the facility had a large impact on the perceptions of nearby residents. The season, temperature and direction of the wind frequently impacted lifestyle patterns. Some neighbors reported the presence of a confinement operation reduced the use value of their property at times as they were not able to enjoy a walk in their neighborhood for exercise, do gardening in their yard, enjoy a barbecue on their deck, or have company in their homes for fear of embarrassment from the odor.

Some neighbors also reported physical discomfort. Cases of individuals suffering from headaches, nausea, nasal irritation, and respiratory problems were not uncommon when the effluent was unusually overwhelming. This typically occurs when there are management problems with the operation or in the spring and fall when animal waste pits are drained and the manure spread on neighboring fields. One elderly man told us "I woke up in the middle of the night and said we've got to get out of here…we were getting a headache and sicker and it was just overwhelming at that particular time…we could not even think of eating a meal in our own home." In three cases, respondents retold accounts of nausea and vomiting while being in their yard due to the overwhelming stench emanating from a neighboring confined animal facility. The only farming neighbors who reported they had this extreme of an experience were those operating grazing systems rather than confinement systems.

Dust and fumes from large-scale confinement systems have promoted health concerns and problems for some neighbors. One woman who lived near a dairy confinement set-up reported breaking out in hives when manure was being spread on neighboring fields one-quarter of a mile from her home. After being diagnosed by a physician, she was urged to evacuate her own home for two weeks when the lagoon was being drained in the spring and fall. This required time off from work, visits to her physician, and modifications to her home to make it as airtight as possible to shield her from the odors. Her husband noted, "We couldn't risk having a south wind getting into the house and effecting her that way, so we put in central air at about a couple of thousand of dollars." Even taken-for-granted daily chores were impacted for this neighbor during the first year the confined animal facility was open. For example,

> "in the winter you have to drive your car out to let it warm up, many times I would be gagging and throwing up and have to change clothes ...go in the house, change them, try it again. It limited my time being outside and enjoying my yard and my flowers."

Later, she and her husband felt they had no choice but to sell their home of 30 years and relocate.

Time and time again neighbors reiterated that problems with odors were not static. The season, temperature, and the direction of the wind all played key factors in their ability to enjoy clean air. Also from time to time management practices produced problems, as some new techniques in manure management or containment had better outcomes than others did. In spite of variability in the air conditions, one mid-sized farmer who lived near a large confined dairy operation told us,

> "If I were looking for a place to live, I wouldn't live where I presently do, but having lived here (his family) for over a hundred years we weren't going to just pick up and move either but it was bad enough I wouldn't want to live here if I had a choice."

Theme 3: Community Interaction

Institutional Interactions in Terms of Hostility, Neglect or Inattention
Institutions are seen to be responsible for much of the blame in perpetuating a hostile and inequitable community climate. This theme was prevalent in all six case counties. For example, many respondents were highly critical of local and state agencies such as the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), and sometimes local planning and zoning as well as county feedlot officers and extension educators. They find these officers complicit in developing dysfunctional and arbitrary land use policies that more frequently exacerbate problems than solve them. Many of the complaints registered concerned access, particularly in the case of MPCA. Phone calls were not returned, letters were not answered, and they felt a general lack of attention and responsiveness. The comments of one roundtable participant suggest his frustration with both local and state institutions.

> "I have tried to get information from agencies. It is difficult to do. You ask for information but you don't necessarily get it all. So, getting the information you are talking about is pretty hard to do. When you do go to a public hearing, the applicant is often given an unlimited amount of time to present their information, but people who want to speak in opposition are limited to how long they can speak…sometimes to 1 minute, sometimes 2 minutes, sometimes 3 minutes. If you feel this an issue that is going to affect you for the rest of your life, as a feedlot does, to be limited to 2 minutes is extremely frustrating."

Farm operators, likewise, felt their needs were unattended by MPCA. They also suggested a general unresponsiveness by the agency as indicated by unreturned phone calls, unanswered letters, and reviews not completed in a timely manner. The lack of responsiveness and responsibility of the key agency with authority to mediate potential conflicts delegitimized the state as an effective authority, and encouraged citizens to attempt to solve their problems through a variety of extra-legal means, such as seeking to get opponents fired and harassing opponents in public.

Most producers we spoke with recognized the need for zoning ordinances around animal facilities, but find their opportunities to continue in farming are obstructed by

burdensome regulations that come from environmental planning. In many cases they brought up the idea that a few "bad actors" have resulted in a burden for all producers. For example, small to mid-sized producers realize that new fences needed to corral beef cattle away from the many waterways in counties such as Clearwater means the viability of cow/calf farming in that region may become too capital intensive for the typical producer (who probably already has a part-time job off the farm to make ends meet). This points to a need for financial assistance to help small and mid-sized animal producers practice ecological responsibility. For many farmers, environmental regulations translate into another costly investment to add to their already burdensome litany of capital intensive costs. Farmers expressed a good faith desire to practice responsible stewardship but indicated the financial expectations emanating from public policy were not rooted in the day-to-day financial and practical realities of their operations. As one elected official put it, "probably the number one issue that I hear is, “I would be more than happy to fix this problem but how am I going to do that? I just don’t have the resources.” And another roundtable participant pointed to a need to change focus at the state agency level.

> "I think the focus from our state agencies should be switched from enforcement regulation to, “Let’s get some money so we can fix these things and keep these guys in business.” It doesn’t do any good to regulate them out of business. Let’s help them get in compliance standards."

From the viewpoint of many producers, the cultural climate is seen as increasingly hostile and 'anti-animal agriculture' rather than supporting a culture that is respectful of the business of farming. Many expressed concern that more state regulations were just another example of an increasingly unfriendly agriculture milieu in Minnesota.

Increasing Role of Township Boards

The increasing role of township ordinances was identified both by those who have expanded their operations and those opposed to expansion of animal facilities. While a strong preference for local control was clear in both roundtable discussions and personal interviews, the role of township governments received mixed opinions. Some felt these local officials use their positions to actively support or oppose animal agriculture, and the decisions they make can initiate or exacerbate local-level controversy. Townships are increasingly implementing ordinances that impact expansion of animal agriculture production facilities, often addressing items not included in MPCA regulations such as odor, property values, and local infrastructure. Many townships are using consultants to assist them in developing these ordinances.

Land-Grant Universities Promoting Change

Land-grant university were also pointed to as complicit in changes in animal agriculture production through research and programming priorities that encourage the development of confined animal feeding operations. One farmer in his 60s explained that men of his generation believed sending their sons to college for a four-year agriculture degree was the right thing to do. But he felt many of those children returned home with very different ideas about farming. They pushed for change and expansion of the livestock

operations, including the construction of confined production buildings, and forced their families into considerable debt in the process. He told us he had seen many family conflicts that resulted, including within his own family.

Organizing Efforts to Oppose Expansion

Community responses to the siting or expansion of an animal agriculture facility are quite diverse. In some cases groups are organizing to combat what they perceive to be a threat to their way of life through the possibility of environmental hazards and social maladies. In Morrison and Stearns County an organization called COACT has taken the lead in highlighting problems associated with confined animal agriculture (dairy and swine). This organization has been successful in calling attention to local oversights and state regulation. Particularly within personal contacts made in Morrison County, local level disagreement and even conflict surrounding siting and expansion of animal agriculture was a predominant theme.

Such a response to animal agriculture may not always succeed in achieving the desired future outcomes, but it can have the impact of reinvigorating community capacity to strategically act on their own behalf rather than viewing themselves as helpless victims. Many people, especially women, told us that because of the community conflict over animal agriculture, they took a leadership role in opposing the facility. Other individuals have not developed such potential for action. Some individuals have adopted a fatalist perspective, viewing themselves as condemned to live with what they term the "stench" and the undemocratic control by those with local power.

Risk in Speaking Out

Individuals who speak against the siting or expansion of a large animal agriculture facility take a significant risk, which is shared by the community through increased incivility. One animal producer told us of being harassed in public by the owner of a confined dairy operation because he signed a petition to request an environmental impact study be completed before the construction could proceed.

> "I signed it not because I was opposed to them coming, but because I thought it was good to have the study done so it wasn't put in an environmentally unfriendly place. One of the owners jumped me on it…she very angrily spoke to me about how much money that [the environmental impact study] would cost them. Another time I was …at a place of business and another farmer in the neighborhood started making comments about "here comes that [respondent's name] that anti-agriculture one". I ignored him, and it kept getting louder and saying it so everybody in the building could hear. I just assumed it was because I had signed the petition. It got to where he was hollering it over and over about anti-agriculture [respondent's name]."

Another woman in the same neighborhood signed the petition, and as a result the owner of the dairy went to her workplace and told her employer "…that they shouldn't have somebody employed [there] who was opposed to their enterprise."

Just as members of a community might disagree on the use of land, individual landowners also use land in ways that discourage community cohesiveness. Neighbors, neither of whom was directly involved in a community conflict over animal agriculture but with strong and opposing views on the subject, might also use property rights as a tool to retaliate against one another. For example, one farmer would not allow the other to hunt on his property because of his position on a local animal facility siting issue.

Lack of Interest and Concern

The individual attribute that most closely predicted concern about changes in animal agriculture was the respondent's relationship to an animal agriculture operation. Community members we spoke with who are not involved in animal agriculture or not directly effected because their property is not located in the same vicinity, were often not interested in speaking with us. One person who was contacted explained that since she lives "in town" she really didn't have any opinion or interest in discussing the impact of animal agriculture in her community. Another town resident who was interviewed explained "the non-farming community doesn't care unless it smells." Both proponents and opponents of confinement systems saw these community members as unsympathetic to obstacles faced by farmers to achieve an equitable income from farming, or concerns over lifestyle interference such as odors or water quality. While we were able to include people in the interviews and the roundtable discussions who were not involved in animal agriculture production, their participation was more difficult to solicit. They did not feel their lives were impacted in any way by animal agriculture or changes in animal agriculture. They may hear about it in stores and coffee shops, read about it in the newspaper, or even smell odor from a facility as they drive through the neighborhood. But since it does not have a direct bearing on their lifestyle it does not become something about which they are concerned.

As few of the interviews conducted were with members of the community that fall into this category that might be referred to as 'bystanders', caution must be used in this interpretation of their position. It does alert us, however, to a need for further research in this area. By specifically focusing future studies on those who do not consider themselves to be stakeholders in animal agriculture it is possible that what may emerge is the recognition that strained relationships over livestock production could be a focused concern within only certain parts of specific rural communities.

Change in Personal Interactions between Farmers

Within the farming community there appears to be a widening gap developing between those who have expanded into large-scale facilities and those who are trying to maintain their small and mid-sized operations. The interviews suggest that large producers are not as likely to belong to local commodity associations as small and middle-sized producers are. These are historically important and strong local organizations whose memberships, according to local producers, have decreased in recent years. In one county two-thirds of the current members of the Pork Producers Association are non-producers, while producers comprised two-thirds of the membership just ten years ago. A current member recited names of several large pork producers in the area who are not members. Large producers, particularly those operating confined swine operations, perceived a sense of

animosity on the part of small producers who are struggling to stay in farming. This was sometimes referred to as “jealousy”. The commodity pricing advantages enjoyed by large producers were clearly a sore spot for the small producers who were interviewed. Both large and small producers indicated there is a lot of “talk” among folks about different producers and the choices they make, and much of this conversation is with farmers who have taken similar paths. In other words, the large producers network with other large producers, and the small producers network with their size peers.

Some respondents, particularly older farm couples, had a difficult time articulating the loss they were experiencing with the depopulation of farm neighbors and subsequent reduced opportunities for interaction with neighbors. One beef producer remembered what it been like in years past. “We used to play Whist at each others house and have an active community club and huge softball tournaments.” While brought up often in personal interviews with older farm residents, this change is likely due to concentration of crop farming and specialization and concentration in animal production, and not specifically confinement production practices.

Theme 4: Future of Animal Agriculture

Limited Options for Producers

One of the most troubling findings of this study is the prevalence of an economic determinism or fatalism expressed by respondents. Most producers and agriculture-related professionals we spoke with see few options other than to “get big or get out.” The thoughts of one man exemplify the connections drawn between the inevitable decline in the number of farms, and the impact this has on Minnesota communities.

> "Agriculture took so many people in 1960 and 1970. 1980 took more, 1990 took more, and 2000 took more yet, so if you don’t have something in your community to replace (agriculture), you’re going to lose people. There is no way around it and there isn’t anything anybody can do about that."

Another producer spoke of the corporations currently involved in vertical integration within the hog industry, suggesting it is inevitable they will take over this sector.

> "I mean the big boys are coming in, guys, it's obvious as I'll get out. I'll put it blunt, if ah, [name of a large vertical integrator] wants my farm, they can have it, 'cause I don't have to farm. I'll go to the city, I mean if I have to, I'm not going to cry about it. But I don't like to see what's happening to rural - and unless you have got better ideas, it isn't good."

The perceived lack of clear choices about viable visions of food provision systems negates the opportunity structures of all operators regardless of size. We heard several stories of producers discouraging their children from going into farming, something that was not species specific.

Changes in Rural Culture
Some farmers see the lack of cultural understanding of their occupation to be a further challenge to operating their business in the manner to which they are culturally accustomed. Rising costs of inputs, declining prices for their product, a heightened regulatory climate, coupled with challenges from 'new-to-rural' dwellers who are offended by the impact of confinement practices paint a dim future for livestock production.

The Outlook of Young Farmers
Youth and young adults participating in roundtables and interviews were primarily from medium-sized dairy and beef cattle households. They spoke of their families' constant struggle to get good prices and increase the number of head in their herd. They saw farm families as competing with large corporations, and farm families needing some sort of advantage to be successful. And they extolled the virtues of growing up on a rural Minnesota farm and the value of the lessons they had learned by working hard over the years with their parents and siblings. Yet, of the seven young farmers, only two confirmed they were looking toward a career in animal agriculture. Most were committed to careers within the broader field of agriculture but did not plan to raise animals.

The barrier identified both by these young people and by older producers was economic. This is seen as the primary factor preventing children of farm families from entering animal agriculture. One lender explained,

> "I get younger producers who want to come in to talk to me about operating the farm unit, whether it's livestock or grain, you name it, just call it farm operations. The problem gets to be the margins they are working with. Trying to make a living and sustain life and start a family, it's just not conducive to them doing it. Then we try to look at other avenues of accomplishing this as a part time farmer. The whole point of the matter is that a young guy cannot get started in this day and age with the costs it takes to go into agriculture, so, there again, our youth are leaving and are not taking an active role in agriculture in this area."

Despite this outlook, this research did identify several examples of young farmers who have joined their parents' animal operations. In most cases the parents were looking toward retirement within the next decade, and the family had added to their existing animal production so the son or daughter could join the operation. In this research we found farm families who added hog CAFOs, a small herd of beef cattle, and added to their herd of milk cows. In some cases the son or daughter was still living in the parents' home, but in most cases an additional farm site had been purchased or rented. Often the animal production was then spread out over both farm sites.

Theme 5: Changes in Population Dynamics

In Goodhue and Stearns County the theme of change in population dynamics was predominant. Of the changing population dynamics brought out in personal contacts, only the first two relate directly to animal agriculture. The other observations relate to more general changes in farms and rural community life.

Nuisance Complaints
Local elected officials we spoke with - County Commissioners and Township Board Supervisors and Clerks - noted how changes in population dynamics have resulted in local tension and sometimes conflict. 'New-to-rural' neighbors contact their elected officials with complaints about mud on roads from tractor tires, odors from livestock and poultry operations, noise of farm equipment operating 24-hours in the spring and fall, siting of new livestock and poultry barns, and the need for township roads to be plowed by early morning after a snowfall so they can commute to work. The officials we spoke with indicated these concerns are very different from the ones received when it was primarily farm operators who resided in rural unincorporated areas. These comments came from most of the case counties but were of particular note in Goodhue County, which has become home to many new-to-rural households commuting both to the Twin Cities and Rochester.

Increased Attention to Neighborliness
Producers spoke of the impact the change in local population has had on farming operations. Most noted an increased attentiveness to manure management activities in light of non-farming neighbors. One dairy farmer explained when he's pulling the manure spreader down the road from his barn to the field and notices a non-farming neighbor driving up the road behind him, he pulls over to the side of the road so they can pass without even slowing down. This is one example of how he has changed his behavior to reduce or eliminate things that may bother his neighbors (now primarily non-farming households) like having to follow a slow moving wagon full of cow manure down the road. One young man who is part of a family dairy operation explained how they make an effort to invite nearby non-farming neighbors to watch calves being born or play with newborn kittens. And a young woman in high school explained her family's concerns about new non-farming neighbors whose house is near their manure storage facility. She explained her family's increased level of neighborliness and attentiveness to these neighbors.

Decreased Opportunity for Community Involvement
One of the ways in-migration from urban areas and the decrease in proportion of farmers in the community influences rural institutions is through scheduling of community functions such as church, school, or civic group events. Farm families told us how community program schedules no longer coincide with farm schedules as they did when there were more people involved in animal agriculture. For example when there were more dairy farmers such events started later in the evening – at 7:30 or 8:00 p.m. – to take into account the evening milking schedule. Now that there are more non-animal agriculture residents in the community such meetings and events start earlier, in effect

negating the participation of families with small and mid-sized dairies. For some this has meant decreased involvement in core social institutions such as the church.

Aging Farm Population
Another demographic observation made by a majority of the respondents concerned the aging of their local farm population. Farmer, neighbor, county commissioner, and agency personnel alike all agreed on this point. When asked how the population dynamics of their neighborhoods had changed, time and time again respondents told a familiar story. There are fewer farms, the ones remaining are bigger, and the farmers are older. Fewer and fewer young people are entering farming as a result of high capital outlays and lack of opportunity. This sentiment is confirmed by the USDA Agriculture Census statistics.

Church Membership
As the number of families with local networks decreases, so does membership in rural country churches. This was heard in all of the case counties. One farmer explained how his rural church had closed due to low numbers, and now the rural church they moved to shares their pastor with another church due to the decreased membership and annual budgets in both congregations. He described his once-thriving rural community as "a ghost town."

Labor Needs and New Immigrant Populations
Different forms of animal production use labor in different ways. Some depend on family-based labor, and others hire labor from outside the family. Within the six contexts examined in this research, there were only a few situations identified where outside labor was used on a regular basis. This was primarily farrowing and nursery operations of swine production, and the milking operations of large dairy facilities. Extended family members or neighbors were most often used in sectors with periodic labor needs. Those who used outside labor on a year-around basis were the most likely to hire employees from new immigrant populations - specifically Hispanic workers. It is important to note that this was found in only a handful of animal operations identified in this research.

The research found that some population change occurred in communities with large-scale dairy operations, but was most noted in communities with a meat-processing facility. There is overlap in locations of animal production and processing, as is discussed later in this paper. This can confuse the issues of an increasing immigrant population in a community where there is change in both production and processing. This seems to be an area that requires further and specific examination.

Media Analysis

Local newspapers provide Minnesota residents with both a source of information on community events and a forum for public dialogue on community issues. Minnesota has more local newspapers than any other state in the nation, providing social scientists with a secondary data source from which to capture local issues and public dialogue.

As discussed in the research methods section, nine local newspapers in six Minnesota counties were examined – all located outside the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area. Within the sample of newspaper editions, the items reviewed included only those generated locally. All items within the criteria were examined for content referring to animal agriculture and the following three indicators.

Visibility of Animal Agriculture

Visibility of animal agriculture is a function of the number of newspaper items within the criteria for the given year. Of nine newspapers reviewed, all included locally initiated items related to animal agriculture in both 1990 and 2000. In 1990 there were 308 locally generated media items in the nine newspapers, however the number of items per paper and county varied. The high in terms of visibility for 1990 was 102 items in the Morrison County Record and a low of 12. The lowest visibility of animal agriculture was in the two papers located in the communities with the highest population - Red Wing and St. Cloud.

From 1990 to 2000 the visibility of animal agriculture declined as reflected in local media accounts - from 308 in 1990 to 255 in 2000. The greatest decline was in Pennington County (Thief River Falls Times). The Morrison County Record continued to have the highest visibility in 2000 with 86 items. In both Rock and Clearwater Counties the visibility of animal agriculture increased from 1990 to 2000.

Focus of Media Accounts on Animal Agriculture

Just as the visibility of animal agriculture changed from 1990 to 2000, so did the focus of media accounts. In this research we categorized each item by theme, what we call focus. The areas of focus were events, meetings and awards; profiles and educational items; national and state agriculture issues and regulations; and local agricultural issues and regulations.

In both 1990 and 2000 most items were those providing coverage of local events, meetings, and awards. In 1990, 169 items were within this focus, declining to 115 in 2000. Examples within this theme were articles about top milk producing dairies in the county, upcoming producer meetings, etc.

The second largest group of items in both 1990 and 2000 were profiles and informative/education items. In 1990 there were 72 items with this focus, 23 percent of

all items for the year. This fell to 62 items in 2000, but remained essentially the same percent of all items for the year.

The final two areas of focus relate to agricultural issues and regulation. These address issues such as bovine growth hormone, feedlot ordinances, and conflicts surrounding CAFOs and other production sites. These issue related items increased over the past decade, specifically items of local agricultural issues and regulation. Fourteen percent of all animal agriculture media accounts in 2000 were within this theme.

In summary, while general and informative items related to animal agriculture remain the primary focus, local regulations, projects, and issues are increasingly the focus of local media accounts.

Public Dialogue

The final indicator examined is public dialogue, a function of the number of editorials and letters to the editor with animal agriculture content.

Editorials include columns by the publisher or editor of the newspaper commenting on local or national events. In 1990 our sample included only 5 editorials with animal agriculture content, increasing to 8 in 2000. Letters to the editor included in our sample are those written by county residents for publication in their local paper. In 1990 there were 24 letters printed in the nine newspapers with animal agriculture content, increasing to 33 in 2000. The primary focus of 1990 letters was bovine growth hormone (BGH). The primary focus of 2000 letters was siting and expansion of large-scale production facilities, primarily CAFOs.

A trend emerges here that is particularly relevant to this research. While news items decreased over the past decade, editorials and letters to the editor increased from nine percent of all media accounts in 1990 to 16 percent in 2000. In all counties this indicator increased or remained the same. While there was a decrease in visibility of animal agriculture over the past decade based on our indicator, public dialogue regarding animal agriculture appears to have increased.

A Note on Sampling Bias

The years selected for examination provide a picture of change in media content over the past decade. It is valuable for that purpose. However, it does miss the years of major CAFO expansion in Minnesota, which occurred during the mid-1990s. While there were still local conflicts regarding changes in animal agriculture and specific CAFO sites in the 2000 newspaper items, it is suspected that the number of items and the content of coverage would have been quite different if 1995 or 1996 had been sampled.

Table 4. Summary of Media Accounts by County

		Total		Rock		Goodhue		Stearns		Morrison		Clearwater		Pennington	
	Indicator	**1990**	**2000**	**1990**	**2000**	**1990**	**2000**	**1990**	**2000**	**1990**	**2000**	**1990**	**2000**	**1990**	**2000**
Visibility of Animal Agriculture	Number of newspaper items with animal agriculture content	308	255	14	31	62	50	42	18	102	86	37	54	51	16
	News Items	248	189	13	23	53	42	18	10	81	52	35	49	48	13
	Editorials	5	8	0	4	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	3	2
	Letters to the Editor	24	33	1	1	7	7	5	8	9	14	2	2	0	1
	Columns	31	24	0	2	1	0	18	0	12	20	0	2	0	0
	Advertisements	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Focus of Media Accounts	Events, Meetings & Awards	169	115	2	12	39	29	13	6	54	28	22	29	39	11
	Profiles and Informative/Education Items	72	62	5	14	9	6	23	2	23	29	7	11	5	0
	National and State Agriculture Issues and Regulations	47	43	2	4	7	5	5	4	23	11	3	14	7	5
	Local Agricultural Issues and Regulations	20	35	5	1	7	10	1	6	2	18	5	0	0	0
Public Dialogue	Number of Editorials and Letters to the Editor with Animal Agriculture Content	29	41	1	5	8	8	6	8	9	14	2	3	3	3

Relationship of Production and Processing

A detailed examination of the processing of animal products clearly falls outside the scope of work of the Social and Community Impacts Team. However, it is important to briefly point to the relationship between animal production and processing, as it does impact Minnesota's producers and communities. This discussion was requested by members of the Citizen's Advisory Committee at their May 2001 meeting.

At the national level one facet of change in animal agriculture is the expansion of meat packing industries in rural areas. Meatpacking plants have historically been located in the metropolitan areas of the eastern Midwest (e.g. Chicago, Green Bay). But there has been a recent shift in plant expansions to rural areas of the Corn Belt; a shift that follows the migration of livestock production to less densely populated areas (Raper, Cheney and Punjabi 2000).

Three trends mark changes in meat processing plants (Henry 2000). First, linking livestock production to processing plants in both beef and hogs. Second, a trend toward large plant size and increasing scale in slaughter driven by large-scale integration of hog production and increases in wages at smaller plants. And finally, spatial concentration of meatpacking in rural areas due to both transport cost savings and lower, non-union wages. This research, although of a preliminary nature in respect to meat processing, found all three of these trends in Minnesota.

Milk processing is an area where proximity to production has historically been essential as it is very dependent on transportation. But in recent years there have been dairy plant closings in Minnesota[11]. These closings are due to inadequate milk supplies in the area, or the product being produced is not commanding enough profit. A Minnesota dairy plant that processed 1 million pounds of milk per day was at one time considered a large facility. This is no longer the case, and plants of this size are no longer able to remain in operation. A plant needs to process 2.5 to 3 million pounds of milk a day to be viable.

When a plant closes dairy farmers usually find another market, but they may be impacted by higher transportation costs. Hauling fees have become an issue within the dairy industry. Dairy cooperatives in Minnesota have subsidized this cost for farmers, usually with a maximum charge of $250 per month for hauling milk from the farm to the processing facility. Minnesota and Wisconsin pay more in hauling subsidies than other states, and in some parts of the country the farmer pays the full cost. Over the last 10 years, however, the structure for subsidizing shipping costs in Minnesota has changed. As producers have become larger the subsidies have not been equal. For example, a producer who is milking 1,000 cows may have paid $250 per month for hauling while a producer with only 15 cows was paying $100 per month. And because of environmental issues, larger farms are building further from the processing plants, which requires higher transportation costs both due to the distance and the quantity of milk produced. As a

[11] Information presented in this discussion of the Minnesota dairy industry was obtained through a personal interview with a management-level employee of a large dairy cooperative. A Minnesota Department of Agriculture staff member recommended this individual.

result, large producers may pay $2,000 per month for hauling. This subsidy becomes a significant factor when producers negotiate price with processors, and large producers are known to 'shop around' based on these fees.

While higher hauling costs clearly impact producers, the most significant impact of a dairy facility closing is the loss of jobs in the area and the direct and indirect economic loss that results. Local towns and merchants tend to suffer most due to loss of citizens, as former employees travel to other places for work each day and spend their income there or relocate to another community for employment. As processing facilities become larger and small plants close down, this certainly impacts communities where facilities are located.

While this discussion is clearly preliminary in nature, it does suggest connections between processing and production in the dairy industry in Minnesota as well as potential social and community implications. The connection between processing and production in the swine, poultry, and beef sectors would appear to have specific trends and circumstances that impact communities as well. This points to the need for a more detailed exploration of the important relationship between meat production and processing in the state.

Conclusions

The purpose of this technical work paper is to identify the impacts that changes in animal agriculture have on social and community well being in Minnesota. While there are many impacts identified in the research and throughout this paper that are attendant to general changes in agriculture and rural life, the task of this team is to specifically point to those impacts concomitant with changes in animal agriculture. This is not synonymous with the decline in number of farms or an increasing 'new-to-rural' population. Rather, it refers to altered quality of life and social capital related to changes specific to animal agriculture (vertical coordination, concentration of animal production, confined animal feeding units, etc.). This section draws out these key impacts.

The research points to quality of life impacts for Minnesota residents that seem to cross all contextual factors. For producers, changes in animal agriculture are viewed with mixed emotions. Among those who have expanded their operations, including those that have constructed confinement operations and entered into contract production[12], most consider industrialization of animal agriculture to be a positive influence on their farming operations and their personal and family quality of life. It allows them to continue farming in the face of narrowing profit margins, or allowed another family member to join the operation. Producers in their mid-50s and older who have not made changes in their operations expressed concern with the amount of debt taken on by young farm families to expand and build new confinement buildings for poultry, swine, and dairy. Although these older producers didn't see their own quality of life impacted by changes in animal agriculture, they did express a sense of loss for a way of life they feel cannot be returned to - one based in diversified family farms tied to a local food system. For younger small and mid-sized producers not engaged in contract production, the expansion of other operations has impacted them by tightening their access to markets with equitable prices. This has quality of life impacts as they are often balancing an off-farm job with animal husbandry responsibilities. This decreases the amount of time they spend with their families or in leisure activities, and means a tighter household budget from which to meet their family's day-to-day needs.

Those whose home property neighbors a large scale animal production facility (almost always a confinement operation) have the greatest reduction in quality of life. Odors, noise, increased truck traffic, health problems, and concerns about well-water safety curtail their ability to enjoy their home and conduct day-to-day activities. While the problems may not be constant, there are specific times or days when odors, noise, or other intrusions from the production facility interfere with daily activities, decreasing their quality of life.

Communities members not involved in animal agriculture, or not directly effected because of the location of their property, do not feel animal agriculture or changes in animal agriculture impact their quality of life. They may hear about it in stores and coffee shops, read about it in the newspaper, or even smell odor from a facility as they drive

[12] Contract production refers to the various types of contracts in place, including local farmer-to-farmer agreements.

through the neighborhood. But since it does not have a direct bearing on their lifestyle it does not become something that they're concerned about. The media analysis points to a declining visibility in animal agriculture over the past decade, further dividing these 'bystanders' from those who consider themselves stakeholders in animal agriculture.

In this research we also explore changes in community social capital. Social capital is the trust, mutual reciprocity, and sense of shared future between individuals, and the ability to work constructively for the good of the community. It forms the fabric of family and community life. There are two forms of social capital - bonding and bridging. Indicators of bonding social capital include the quality of relationships between community and family members, and individual and collective responsibility to solving community related problems. Indicators of bridging social capital include community links to outside groups and knowledge.

The most apparent change in social capital is a decreasing level of individual and community trust in core government institutions at the state, and in some contexts the local level. These institutions - the MPCA, local planning & zoning and elected officials - are seen as responsible for perpetuating a hostile and inequitable community climate. Policies developed are viewed by both producers and other stakeholders as exacerbating problems at the local level rather than resolving them. Many of the complaints registered concern access, particularly in the case of MPCA. The lack of responsiveness and responsibility of this key agency with authority to mediate conflicts delegitimizes the state as an effective authority. When processing feedlot permits and reviews is drawn out over months and even years, stakeholders in the community are left with a sense of uncertainty about their future and frustration that can result in attempts to resolve conflict through extra-legal means. The absence of trust in these key institutions raises significant issues for the future role of public agencies in fostering or abating social tensions and community fragmentation in agricultural areas.

Contexts with the greatest perceived disparities between large and small producers, or between producers and other stakeholders (neighbors and others) had the least unity in shared vision for the future. Small and middle-sized producers shared notions of "get big or get out" and a fatalistic or inevitable view of the future, while large producers and those who are vertically integrated, operating under production contracts, or who own one or more confinement buildings share a different vision of the future. They look toward a continued role in further industrialization of animal agriculture as part of a production and profitability paradigm. There is also a potentially larger cleavage in the shared vision of local communities. In some locations there did not appear to be a role for a changing animal agriculture within the broader community vision for the future. This was particularly the case in contexts dominated by urban areas.

Opportunities for community dialogue regarding local issues are another indicator of social capital. Formal opportunities for community dialogue in respect to local issues surrounding change in animal agriculture were not identified in the research. Paradoxically, participants in roundtable discussions indicated the opportunity, convened for the purpose of this research, was the first opportunity for dialogue in their community.

The media analysis suggests local residents are increasingly using letters to the editor as a means of public dialogue, although a review of these items indicates this dialogue has become personalized in some contexts. This is not surprising, as personal contacts suggest opportunities for expressing individual opinions in community meetings are confined to hearings on specific projects where time is limited or the number of comments restricted.

Informal community dialogue has broken down in some communities, and there are differing levels of community conflict in different contexts of this examination. The contexts with the highest level of conflict are those influenced by growing urban areas and the highest non-farming populations. This has impacted the bonding social capital in local communities to varying degrees.

Clearly the most persistent theme in the research is that changes in animal agriculture in Minnesota do have social and community impacts. These impacts are uneven due to both context and an individual's physical and social proximity to animal agriculture, and can be perceived as either positive or negative depending on one's position. Community conflict does exist, and seems more related to context than does individual quality of life.

Proponents of change in animal agriculture see themselves as active, responsible citizens who may provide jobs and revenue to the local economy. They feel their work is honorable and contributes not only to their own quality of life but also to the well being of the community at large. This view is challenged by those who take issue with confinement production practices and vertical integration of animal agriculture who express feeling powerless to make changes that impact their quality of life or the future of animal agriculture. Clearly there must be opportunities created at the community level to involve all parties in attempts to reach a mutually beneficial balance.

Section 4:

Policy Recommendations

The following recommendations for public policy are based on the research findings presented in this technical work paper. This combination of recommendations seeks to balance community and agricultural interests; provide opportunities for ongoing discussion at the local level; and address the need for responsiveness and coordination within and between state and local institutions. As indicated, these recommendations are best implemented through existing institutions that have credibility in rural Minnesota and not by creating an additional set of agencies or organizations.

1. Explore with producers, community leaders and other local stakeholders ways to expand livestock production that (1) demonstrates the connection between livestock and community viability, (2) respects neighbors and their quality of life, and (3) protects and enhances the natural environment.

The importance of animal agriculture to Minnesota cannot be understated. Livestock production is an integral part of rural communities and culture. Ways for producers to expand their livestock production in mutually agreed upon ways can be identified by tapping existing organizations to facilitate and mediate local level discussion with producers, neighbors, community leaders, and other stakeholders. Working together they can resolve or avoid local disputes, and identify a process for expansion that does not diminish the quality of life for neighbors; is supportive of the local community; and protects the natural environment.

Central to this process is a facilitator that is knowledgeable of the issues, neutral, impartial, and trusted by all parties. In Minnesota, state and local officials and the Land Grant University do not have the legitimacy at the community level to fulfill this role. Foundations, regional development entities, faith communities, or other local organizations are all sources of facilitators or mediators for this process.

The community participation process developed by Abdalla et al (2000) for the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture should be looked to as a template for developing this process in Minnesota (Attachment 6). Its purposes are consistent with what we seek here - a process to resolve agricultural conflicts involving intensive livestock operations that reduces future conflict, preserves a sense of community, avoids lawsuits, develops creative solutions, and saves time and money for all parties.

2. Initiate discussion groups, policy seminars, and conferences for producers, community leaders, policy makers, and other state and local stakeholders, where the many issues of livestock expansion can be discussed and mutually acceptable alternatives developed.

Ignoring the issues or discounting or denigrating one point of view over another will only continue to divide rural Minnesota. Supportive environments will allow proponents and opponents of expansion to collectively search for consensus on difficult issues.

Discussion groups, policy seminars, and conferences for producers, community leaders, policy makers, and other state and local stakeholders can be used to facilitate the direction of public policy and livestock expansion in Minnesota. It is essential that this discussion includes balanced representation of existing constituencies, and that resulting regulations or legislation is specific regarding how each group of stakeholders benefits or incurs costs. While the first policy recommendation was targeted to the local level, this recommendation has a broader state wide policy focus.

Again, this will only be effective if groups are convened and facilitated by knowledgeable and neutral organizations and individuals. Particular attention should be given in this process to the forms of 'capital' found within communities. Human, social, natural, and financial capitals come in to play when we discuss the expansion of animal agriculture in Minnesota. It is important to identify these capitals not as ends in themselves, but as leading to a healthy ecosystem, vital economy, and social equity that are all critical to the future of Minnesota.

3. Institute improved responsiveness, local presence, and better coordination among state agencies at the most local level through state initiatives and increased funding for staff activities.

There is a need to clarify the roles of state agency personnel and reduce duplication of services, including better coordination within and between agencies at the state and local levels. Improved coordination will reduce the frustration experienced by proponents and opponents of changes in animal agriculture that exacerbates community conflict. State regulation is focused on controlling environmental impacts, while local government and citizen concerns tend to focus on odor, proximity to residential neighborhoods, traffic and wear on public roads, property values, etc. Responsible state agencies must clarify both their role, and the web of laws, authority, and relationships between federal, state, and local agencies.

In addition, state agencies must be available and responsive to the needs of local agencies, producers and other citizens who depend upon them, and foster a culture of cooperation among those who use their services.

Changes in animal agriculture have impacts on rural community well being that requires resources state agencies do not possess. They must be better supported financially if they are to improve their responsiveness at the most local level. This support should be directed specifically toward activities that improve community relations, responsiveness, and a local presence.

4. Develop more programs to assist small and mid-size producers who are not using confinement animal production systems to fulfill environmental stewardship responsibilities.

More state programs are needed to help small and mid-size producers fulfill environmental stewardship duties when they are not using confinement systems to raise animals. The cost to comply with environmental regulations, particularly in dairy and beef cattle production but also in the swine sector, reduces farmers' options for responsible stewardship. The opposite often occurs as producers are unable to institute the necessary changes and make the decision to leave animal agriculture, or they feel they need to increase their scale of production, change not always welcomed by neighbors.

Many small and mid-size producers find new environmental regulations cost prohibitive. Financial assistance in meeting environmental guidelines will help them meet this challenge without incurring production practices that negatively impact community relations. Factors such as income, farm size, and animal numbers should be used to identify those most in need of assistance. Existing programs are not well understood or perceived to meet the needs of small producers. Central to designing programs that meet the unique needs of these Minnesota farmers is the involvement of producers and their neighbors. The programs themselves must not be cost prohibitive or create an additional burden that could lead to exit from animal agriculture. Such programs should be viewed as an investment in Minnesota's environmental, social, human, and financial capital.

5. Working with producers, establish and promote marketing alternatives for small-sized producers and those not engaged in contract production.

One of the persistent dilemmas faced by small to mid-size producers is the lack of opportunities to participate in any form of livestock production outside of conventional spot markets, which they feel are increasingly more advantageous to the largest producers. New programs are needed to help small-sized producers and those not operating under contracts set up marketing alternatives for their

products. The goal of such initiatives is to expand the choices available to producers and increase farm and community viability. New markets geared toward local consumers may help stem the tide of out-migration from animal agriculture and can also be part of a constructive solution to reduce community division.

One group of Iowa farmers formed a cooperative in late 1998 to sell pork to local and niche markets. Fresh Air Pork Circle was formed by a small group of northeast Iowa farmers as an alternative to building large confinement buildings or integrating through contract production. While the initial success of this group has been limited, these producers have remained in hog production and continue selling their free-range pork through two area health food stores and directly to local consumers through the local farmer's cooperative. Ultimately, most members point to maintaining a sense of community and solidifying relationships between small hog producers and their community as the greatest benefit. Grey (2000) details the history of this group, and the lessons learned in the initial year (Attachment 7). This is just one nearby example of alternative markets.

6. Initiate a comprehensive examination of the meat and poultry processing industries in Minnesota, identifying the connections between production, processing, and social and community impacts.

Examination of the processing sector clearly falls outside the scope of this research. However, it does point to the relationship between animal production and processing, and the impact of processing on Minnesota's producers and communities. The connection between processing and production in the swine, poultry, and beef sectors appears to have specific trends and circumstances that impact communities, and warrants a detailed exploration.

Section 5:

Additional Items upon CAC Review

Several comments and suggestions were made at the May 2001 presentation of the Draft Version of this Technical Work Paper to the Citizens Advisory Committee. These comments are addressed in this Final Version of the TWP as discussed below.

- ♣ It was suggested that at the most local level elected officials are acknowledging problems that have developed. Townships are seeking assistance to establish regulations for feedlot operations that will prevent future local conflict.

  We were provided with the name of an individual who is working with townships to establish ordinances related to feedlots and other developments for the past 7 years. A telephone interview was subsequently conducted. While the thrust of her comments are most appropriate in terms of land use and role of government, we have incorporated this interview into Section 3 of this report.

- ♣ A member of the CAC referred to the important connection between animal production and processing facilities. Although an examination of this connection and of animal processing was not within the scope of work of this research team, it is included in the literature review.

  Upon the recommendation of a CAC member, an interview was conducted with a management-level employee of a large dairy cooperative facility in one of the case counties. Subsequently, a new section was added to this report on the relationship of animal production and processing.

- ♣ There was discussion by the CAC regarding the source of comments made to the researchers. There were questions about the role of individuals interviewed; what percentage were producers and what percentage were activists?

  This version of the TWP includes an extensive set of attachments to illustrate the stories of individuals whose input was solicited in the research. This includes a set of narratives, as well as the transcripts of roundtable discussions that illustrate the range of different perspectives identified.

- ♣ It was requested that this team provide examples of how and where initiatives similar to those suggested within the draft policy recommendations have been successful and elaborate on the recommendations in terms of specifics.

  The policy recommendations have been modified and expanded in this Final Version based upon the input of the CAC and further team discussion, including examples of similar initiatives.

- When Scoping Document Question 3 is addressed in the updated literature review, it was noted there are three areas of the question where no new studies are identified. There was concern expressed that the social and community impacts team had missed new publications in this area.

  The original research was quite extensive in this question area, and the review of new literature did not identify items that presented new perspectives or insight. Based on additional literature review, additional citations from June 1999 to the present have now been added to discussion of Question 3.

- There were typographical, grammatical, and layout concerns noted by CAC members. Every attempt has been made to correct these items in this Final Version of the TWP.

Section 6:

Literature Review Update

This section of the Technical Work Paper is an update of the literature review completed in 1999 on social and community impacts related to different types of animal production, and changes in animal agriculture. This update focuses primarily on literature that has been published since the original literature review was completed. These new articles are reviewed below and related back to the original literature review. As in the original literature review, the four GEIS Scoping Document study questions on social and community impacts are used to organize our review of the academic literature found in the social sciences.

QUESTION 1: WHAT IS THE RELATION BETWEEN DIFFERENT TYPES OF ANIMAL AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION SYSTEMS AND THE FOLLOWING SOCIAL ELEMENTS:

1a. Demographics (racial and ethnic distribution, residential stability, residency)

In the 1999 literature review, it was found that studies looking at animal agriculture within the context of demographic change suggest a link between low income predominantly minority communities, and the proximal location of confined animal feeding operations and meatpacking plants. Since that time, additional studies have been published that support this conclusion.

For example one new study showed that Eastern North Carolina, which is low in both income and political clout but has a high concentration of African-Americans, is now home to 95% of the state's hog population (Ladd and Edwards 2001).

We also know that on the national level, agricultural workers are increasingly composed of immigrants, particularly young Mexican men. The proportion of Mexican-born workers is increasing in areas where African-Americans and whites had previously constituted agricultural occupations. This can be seen in the meatpacking industries of the Midwest, poultry processing in the South, and seafood processing on the East Coast (Majka 2000).

Research conducted in an Oklahoma county that saw rapid expansion of both corporate-owned hog production and meatpacking in the last decade sheds some light on the relationship between production systems and local demographics (North Central Regional Center for Rural Development 2000). NCRCRD found the case county had an historically agricultural base, but as a result of local recruitment efforts corporately owned large-scale swine production sites and a meatpacking plant located in the county beginning in 1994. The growth of these facilities, and subsequent demand for employees, was rapid. The county saw a ten- percent increase in population from 1990 to 1997, with the most dramatic increase among children. County population of children aged 0-14 increased 15 percent over the seven-year period, compared to a 7 percent decline in this

age group in comparison counties. But what is most notable is the change in the diversity of county residents, a result of an increasing Hispanic population. As a result of the 49 percent increase in the Hispanic population, 13 percent of current county residents are Hispanic. During the same period the white, non-Hispanic population increased by only 5 percent.

Expanding meat-packing industries in rural communities are one facet of change in animal agriculture - a change that is linked to animal production sites. While meatpacking plants have historically been located in metropolitan areas of the eastern Midwest (e.g. Chicago, Green Bay) there has been a recent shift in plant expansions to rural areas of the Corn Belt, a shift that follows the migration of livestock production to less densely populated areas (Raper, Cheney and Punjabi 2000). Three trends mark changes in meat processing plants (Henry 2000). First, linking livestock production to processing plants in both beef and hogs. Second, a trend toward large plant size and increasing scale in slaughter driven by large-scale integration of hog production and increases in wages at smaller plants. And finally, spatial concentration of meatpacking in rural areas due to both transport cost savings and lower, non-union wages.

In general terms what this indicates for rural areas of the Midwest, including Minnesota, is that change in animal production and processing is accompanied by increasingly larger demographic impacts in rural areas.

1b. Community and Institutional Factors (size and structure of local government, linkages between levels of government, voluntary and other associations, employment and income characteristics, and opportunities for new wealth).

As in the 1999 literature review, we discovered no new studies relating size and structure of local government to the structure of animal agriculture, although some new research again suggests an increased demand for services provided by local government (NCRCRD 2000). Likewise, there were no new systematic studies of linkages between levels of government that resulted from different types of animal systems.

In terms of voluntary associations, there are several new studies to add to the case examples discussed in the 1999 literature review of local groups forming primarily in opposition to animal agriculture production systems. In Eastern North Carolina, Ladd and Edwards (2001) found local associations that sprang up in opposition to the restructuring of animal production. Nickles (1998) describes how farmers and town residents in northern Iowa came together to form an organization to address problems related to the rapid influx of large-scale hog production facilities. And in East Texas Constance (2000) describes the development of a local group formed to oppose large-scale chicken production sites.

As far as employment and income characteristics, the 1999 literature review found in general that large-scale livestock production does not necessarily generate economically healthy communities. Studies published since that time further support this conclusion.

In Illinois Gomez and Zhang (2000) looked at rural growth and the impact of large swine farms. Using econometric analysis, their research indicates that, in several measures, economic growth in rural communities is hindered by large hog farms.

In Wisconsin, Foltz, Jackson-Smith and Chen (2000) consider economic impacts of changes in the dairy industry on rural communities. They look specifically at feed purchases by Wisconsin dairy farmers. While they found the percent of feed purchased locally has a negative relationship with herd size (consistent with popular presumption) there was a more significant indicator of local purchasing. The researchers noted physical and "psychic" distance from the community were greater indicators of local purchasing patterns than herd size. Farmers who lived physically closer to town and those who felt a greater attachment to the community were more likely to purchase their feed locally. And they point to social factors as having the greatest influence on purchasing decisions.

Chism and Levins (1994) took on a comparable examination in Minnesota (while not a new study, it was not included in the 1999 literature review). They found that local spending was not related to gross sales volume on crop farms, however local farm-related expenditures fell sharply when the scale of livestock operations increased. It appeared that a certain base amount of spending was done locally, no matter what the size. But as operations got larger the additional spending is done outside of the area. Building on this it could be suggested that changes in animal agriculture in Minnesota will have a greater impact on local purchasing patterns than agricultural changes in crop farming. It is questioned if local communities can capture the spending of large-scale agriculture.

In general, what we find is that changes in animal production are less likely to require additional labor, and result in subsequent increases in local employment. However, there are impacts, as discussed here, in terms of the local economy.

1c. Political and Social Resources (distribution of power and authority, leadership, channels of complaint response and redress, changes in the way stakeholder groups are identified, and ownership patterns)

Distribution of Power and Authority, Leadership

As in the 1999 literature review, no new research was identified that specifically focused on distribution of power and authority and leadership to recent changes in the animal/livestock systems. However, there are some recent studies to add to those in the 1999 literature review that further indicate that where animal production and processing is larger and more industrialized, there is increased social and institutional segregation and citizens and workers are left with less power.

One forthcoming study in Eastern North Carolina, where tremendous growth in the hog industry has occurred (including both contract and corporate production facilities and meatpacking plants), found that citizens there perceive this has left them with an altered power structure, where the interests of large pork producers dominate those of

constituents at all levels of government (McMillan and Schulman 2001). Neighbors of chicken-production facilities in Texas express a similar sentiment. While more than 90 percent felt the level of poultry industry regulation is not adequate, only 53 percent thought the government would increase regulations in the coming years (Constance 2000).

In Minnesota, Olson et al. (1996) found both farmers and non-farming citizens were dissatisfied with state agencies and local planning and land use regulations. Both groups suggested that state agencies need to work 'with' people, and local elected and appointed officials need to base their land use decisions on 'facts and findings.' While there were otherwise clear differences in the perspectives of these two groups in regard to animal agriculture, there was clear consensus in their criticism of state and local government entities. This is an area for further exploration in the state.

The relation between different types of animal agriculture production to leadership and the distribution of power and authority in local communities are important areas for further research. Such analysis would illuminate important social implications for Minnesota locales.

Channels of Complaint Response and Redress

Several case studies discussed in the 1999 literature review identified qualitative effects of conflict and controversy on communities. For those on all sides of complaint and controversy regarding changes in animal agriculture, there appears to be a common "frame" – that of rights and entitlements. In their forthcoming research on the hog industry in North Carolina, McMillan and Schulman (2001) found that all parties involved use this master frame in understanding their position. Middle-class white activists have a civic rights frame - they believe the government should protect their rights. For African-American anti-hog activists this is an environmental justice and civil rights frame - they want the same rights as whites. Producers frame their position in terms of property rights and a right to earn a living from their land. Citizens who are neither producers nor activists frame their position in terms of the right to enjoy their own property. And community leaders are concerned with the right to make a living in terms of both agriculture and industry, as long as this doesn't violate someone else's right to make a living. These different frames, or collective identities, are drawn upon to define one's position relative to the controversy.

Changes in the Way Stakeholder Groups are Identified

The 1999 literature review found that there is important literature on stakeholder analysis in the context of resource management, but research framed directly in relation to animal agriculture systems is not as prevalent.

There is a forthcoming examination of changes in the way stakeholder groups are identified in the swine controversy in North Carolina. Ladd and Edwards (2001) point to a convergence over time of local citizen groups with state and national sustainable

agriculture and environmental justice movements in their opposition to confinement hog production facilities. Parallels have been identified between social and environmental justice concerns, the situation of small farmers, food security, sustainable agriculture, and rural community empowerment. They suggest the controversy has the ability to integrate these diverse stakeholders into a single movement. North Carolina environmental justice organizations have already utilized local and state conflicts regarding hog production facilities to mobilize minority, poor, and marginalized rural communities. At the same time, they point to development of new constituencies on both sides of the swine controversy in North Carolina, as well as an expanding division between these two sets of stakeholders.

As local responses to the changing structure of animal agriculture develop, we suspect there will be additional insight in this area available.

Ownership Patterns

Minnesota is one of several major agricultural states with 'anti-corporate farming' laws on the books. While this prohibits large, publicly traded and transnational corporations from engaging in agricultural production, as contract production becomes a feature of the agricultural landscape it is the ownership and control of animals that is in the hands of an off-site entity. These firms essentially engage farm level workers, including family-farmers to grow “products.” The implications of this pattern of animal ownership for local communities are only beginning to be examined.

1d. Individual and Family Changes

Perceptions of Personal Risk to Health and Safety

As discussed above, there are numerous examples of how perceived threats to human health have motivated the formation and activism of local groups in opposition to large-scale animal operations and CAFOs.

Trust in Institutions, Friendships and Family Relations, Attitudes about Social Well-being, Job Satisfaction, Neighborhood Identity and Neighborliness, Attitudes towards Cultural Diversity

There are two new studies to add to the limited information that was available in the 1999 literature review. In his examination of the impact of chicken-production facilities, Constance (2000) found that although almost all neighbors of the chicken barns had a sense of belonging to the community and did not wish to move, they felt neighborliness and trust had decreased and their community had become less desirable. They pointed to the advent of the poultry industry as the reason for these changes.

Neighbor relations were also considered by Palmer and Bewley (1999) in their examination of Wisconsin dairy operator expansions. They were interested in the

changes made as they related to various aspects of producer satisfaction. They found that between 1994 and 1998 the average herd size of those who expanded their operations had doubled. And while most (72%) expanded by adding on to existing facilities, those who were most satisfied with their expansion built all new facilities. However, producers who did not change their type of dairy facility had significantly better relations with neighbors than those with all new facilities. In other words, while building all new facilities provided the greatest producer perceived benefit, adding on to existing facilities resulted in greater neighbor benefits. In addition, producers with larger herd sizes were more satisfied with all aspects of their operations - personal satisfaction, personal health, household income, family relationships, time away from the farm, and overall quality of life - with one exception. Those with smaller herds were more satisfied with their neighborhood relationships.

Enjoyment of Property

Odor emissions are most often cited as a factor prohibiting enjoyment of property. The 1999 literature review examined two articles in which the negative physical and psychological effects of odor emissions were explored. Related to this issue, the University of Minnesota has developed a system called OFFSET (Odor from Feedlots Setback Estimation Tool) that holds promise in terms of enjoyment of property issues. OFFSET estimates the frequency of annoying odors at different distances from a particular animal production site, and hence can be used to recommend setback distances that will prevent odor annoyance to neighboring properties (University of Minnesota 2001).

1e. Community Resources

The effects of animal production and meatpacking on housing, retail, police, and schools were examined in several studies in the 1999 literature review. New studies further build on their findings.

NCRCRD research in Oklahoma (2000) found that housing rental rates increased nearly 85 percent over seven years in the county where production and meatpacking expansion occurred, compared to a 61 percent increase in comparison counties. At the same time, the influx of new workers resulted in a 47 percent decrease in housing availability. The combined result is overcrowding and shared housing situations, or a commute to neighboring counties with available and more affordable housing. These commuting costs add to the household costs of employees.

The same research notes important implications for community educational institutions. While total school enrollment increased 12 percent resulting in construction of a new elementary school, there was a 125 percent increase in the number of bilingual or limited English speaking students. Despite an 81 percent increase in the county school budget between 1990 and 1997, both dropout rates and student/teacher ratios increased. Community costs due to increased demand on services, such as court costs from

increased criminal and civil cases; law enforcement costs; and applications for public assistance and food stamps were also noted.

Other research points to additional costs of large-scale animal production to community resources. These include decreased sales values of homes and real estate near large hog operations (Palmquist, Roka and Vulkina 1998); impacts on tourism and recreation due to livestock odors (McMillan and Schulman 2001); deterioration of bridges and hard surface roads (Constance 2000); and significant changes in rural landscapes and the number and condition of farm sites (Bowen 2000).

What we see in this discussion is a pattern of impacts on community resources - on local human, economic/built, and environmental capital. In the next section we consider changes in animal agriculture as they relate to the final form of community capital - social capital.

1f. Social Capital

The 1999 literature review showed that social capital has emerged as an internal resource in different instances of controversies and conflicts related to changes in animal agriculture, such as health, odor, housing and residential issues. There are also two recent examinations that specifically address social capital as it relates to changes in animal agriculture - one in Missouri, the other in Oklahoma.

The first looks specifically at the effects of proximity of large-scale swine operations on elements of social capital. Kleiner, Rikoon and Seipel (2000) examined four northern Missouri counties. They found county-level conditions rather than physical proximity to production facilities more closely related to elements of social capital. In the two counties where large-scale corporately owned swine operations have become a dominant economic activity, citizens expressed more negative attitudes regarding elements of trust, neighborliness, community division, networks of acquaintanceship, democratic values, and community involvement. The county dominated by independently owned swine operations had the most positive attitudes regarding the elements of trust, neighborliness, community division and networks of acquaintanceship.

A second recent examination is the one previously discussed that was completed by the NCRCRD (2000) in Oklahoma. It looks at hog production and meatpacking operations, and specifically examines one rural county that is the site of recent and dramatic increase in corporately controlled and owned hog production and meatpacking. Social capital in this county was looked at using indicators of mutual trust, reciprocity, and shared norms and identity. Specifically, the study explored individual security in terms of crime, and community conflict in terms of civil court cases.

In this Oklahoma county the overall crime rate increased dramatically between 1990 and 1997, the most significant being violent crimes that increased 378 percent. Comparison farming-dependent counties that did not experience dramatic changes in animal agriculture saw an average 29 percent decrease in violent crimes over the same period. Theft related crimes also increased in the case county by 64 percent, compared to a

decrease of 11 percent in comparison counties. In terms of community conflict, civil court cases increased in the case county by 7 percent, while they decreased 11 percent in comparison counties. And division between town residents and country residents increased between 1990 and 1998. In this Oklahoma case there was an increasing lack of trust and communication, and a collapse of traditional processes of social control.

These indicators suggest there are costs to social capital in counties that experience rapid and dramatic change in the size and structure of animal agriculture.

1g. Quality of Life

In his examination of large-scale chicken production in East Texas, Constance (2000) took into account quality of life indicators. Among those living near locations of chicken barns, 90% indicated the operations had a negative impact on their overall quality of life. In terms of having day-to-day alternatives, more than three-quarters had to restrict their outdoor activities and keep windows closed due to the chicken barns. About one-third had attempted to move from their homes due to livestock odors. In terms of being respected by family and community, more than half noted a decrease in visits to their homes from family and friends and 80% experienced increased neighborhood tension. More than one-third had lost friends as a result of local controversy over the chicken barns.

QUESTION 2: WHAT IS THE RELATION BETWEEN CHANGES IN THE OWNERSHIP, CONTROL AND LEGAL STRUCTURE IN THE ANIMAL AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY AND HOW THESE CHANGES AFFECT THE WAY STAKEHOLDERS ARE IDENTIFIED, THE WAY THE AFFECTED PUBLIC IS RESPONDED TO, OR THE BENEFITS THAT ACCRUE TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Production Contracts

Production contracts embody changes in ownership, control, and legal structure in animal agriculture. It is suggested that when agribusiness firms contract with producers, or contract with intermediary firms who subsequently contract with producers, they are essentially controlling the production level (Welsh 1997). One aspect of contract production is the movement of decision-making from the farm level to higher levels in the vertical system. We know that almost all poultry growers do not own the birds they raise, and the pork industry is moving in that direction. At this point the beef cattle industry remains the most highly controlled at the farm-level.

The 1999 literature review found no significant literature that directly addresses the social impacts of production contracts. However, a number of new articles demonstrate the diversity of present arrangements and subsequent impacts on stakeholders and local communities.

Hayenga et al. (2000) look at the impact of production and market contracts specifically in Minnesota. They found the largest farms (those with annual gross sales of $500,000 or

more) comprise over half of the production under contracts, while they account for only one percent of all farms with contract arrangements. While contracting can shift the risk from farmers to contractors, there is a loss of independence and possible reward for the grower. For specialized growers with a large investment in equipment and buildings there may be a sense of 'no other options' at the time of contract renewal, and the processors have the advantage in bargaining. Producers who have not entered into contract arrangements are faced with increasingly limited access to markets, again, limiting their options.

Despite the attention it is given, not all contracting within animal agriculture is originated by firm-based integrators. Farmer to farmer contracting has played a major role in the Midwest throughout the past decade. Rich (2000) looked specifically at farm-based hog contractors in Illinois. He found that these are primarily relationships based in social or family networks that are more personal in nature. Much of the relationship is based on personal integrity, honesty, and trust - the three attributes farmers look for when establishing a contract arrangement with another farmer. Yet, in some ways this type of contracting confuses the roles of stakeholders. While contractees are not employees in a legal sense, they certainly receive a fee that is comparable to wages. At the same time, 60% of contractors considered their contractees 'partners'. Contractors understand the awkward relationship they have with contractees, and point to tensions that arise due to the role confusion.

Nettle and Petheram (2000) examined the transition of Australian dairy farmers from 'production management' to 'people management'. Australian dairy farms are undergoing changes similar to those experienced in the U.S. Farm size is increasing as is the use of non-farm labor. At the same time, pressure on human resources in rural areas result in a small labor pool, and what are considered by farmers to be poor quality labor and labor relationships. What the researchers point to are critical transition points for farmers – specifically, negotiating the social and cultural aspects of non-farm labor, understanding the implications of having contracts and employees, re-defining the skills necessary to operate a larger operation, and self-evaluation throughout these transition points.

In Kentucky the fulcrum of debate for four years has been a proposed joint liability provision within state regulations. This provision would make corporations who retain ownership of animals (integrators), but contract with farmers to raise them (contractees), jointly liable for resultant environmental damages or production facility closings. Burmeister (2000) suggests this joint liability provision is the ultimate public policy impact in terms of regulation. It reflects a societal attempt to control the social risk of changes in animal agriculture. Large-scale confinement production illustrates how new technology can pose greater social hazards than traditional production methods. But it is also an example of how old risks of 'capital flight' are socially controlled.

While there has also been no systematic research on animal producers who lose production contracts, we may be able to infer some of the family impact of contract loss from the experiences of families who were displaced by the farm crisis of the 1980's. Despite journalistic images of decimated lives, recent research indicates these families demonstrated resiliency over time. They recovered financially, slowly increasing their

per capita income, and recovered emotionally, identifying lower levels of stress over time (Lorenz et al. 2000).

Environmental Regulations

Concurrent with change in the structure and ownership of animal agriculture has been increasing environmental regulation for farmers at the state and federal level. Srivastava and Batie (2001) examined the concerns of Michigan dairy producers in regard to implementation of total maximum daily loads designed to limit farm runoff into waterways. They identified two themes among producers - fairness and uncertainty. First, farmers felt regulations and monitoring should not be arbitrary, that other polluters should bear the burden with agriculture, and the dairy industry has a few bad actors (some larger dairies) whose problems impact all producers. In terms of uncertainty, dairy farmers were concerned about how compliance would impact their own operations, and farmers felt a level of uncertainty regarding possible lawsuits and fines.

Broader Questions Raised by Structural Changes

It is suggested that change and growth in animal agriculture production and increased use of confinement processes are a metaphor for the broader structural changes in the geography of U.S. agriculture (Troughton and Leckie 2000). Changes specific to ownership and structure of animal agriculture bring to the fore questions of how we define agriculture. What has been a conceptual difficulty in adequately defining 'rural' has expanded to include our definition of 'agriculture'. Burmeister (2000) points to two different visions of rural reality. From one perspective there are citizens who view rurality, and the future of what they define as rural areas as one of multiple-uses, based in historical concepts of 'traditional' agricultural production. In contrast is the position that agricultural development with a high-tech approach is the foundation of present and future successful rural development. While differences in perceived rural realities may manifest in local struggles over regulation of animal agriculture, this may reflect a broader political struggle over the future of rural areas.

Friedland (2000) suggests intensive animal production, more closely related to an industrial approach, is better defined as *agribusiness*. He distinguishes this from *agriculture*, which we historically associate with small-scale, family-based processes. This raises the issue of definition. What is a 'family farm'? The dominant social perception of agriculture is one of family versus corporate farming (Rathge and Wachenheim 2000).

In response to the broader political struggle, several major agricultural states (including Minnesota) have enacted 'anti-corporate farming' laws. While the specifics differ from state to state, the general theme of these laws is to prohibit large, publicly traded and transnational corporations from engaging in agricultural production. Family-owned and operated farms are permitted to form partnerships and corporations for legal and financial

reasons. But some question the effectiveness of these laws in preventing corporations from controlling agricultural production (Welsh 1998).

QUESTION 3: WHAT IS THE RELATION BETWEEN ANIMAL AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION SYSTEMS AND CONSUMER AND CITIZEN ATTITUDES WITH RESPECT TO

3a. Quality of Animal Products and Food Safety

Juska et al (2000) address the issue of food contamination of meat, suggesting we have shifted from avoiding contamination in our meat supply to using technology to decontaminate the supply. This is part of the increasing role of technology and the industrialization of meat processing, which has increased the risk to our food supply. Standards of protection are established as a result of negotiations between scientific, political, and economic actors, with power rather than food safety playing the largest role.

The Combined Animal Feedlots poll (Clean Water Network 1999) surveyed 1,000 registered voters to gauge their attitudes toward feedlots in several areas. One of the findings was voter support for regulation of drugs and chemicals in food such as the antibiotics given to animal raised in confined production.

3b. Treatment of Animals and Ethics

The 1999 literature review found very little literature within the social sciences focused on the well being of farm animals, and the literature that does exist tends to focus on public policy. There are two recent actions taken that fall within the public policy realm.

At the time of printing a bill has just been introduced in the U.S. Senate that would push for enforcement of the Human Methods of Slaughter Act of 1958. The bill results from a *Washington Post* (2001) investigation that identified repeated violations of the Human Slaughter Act with little intervention on the part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The article pointed to a Texas beef company that had repeated violations - 22 violations in 1998 including chopping hooves off of live cattle. The article also pointed out that the USDA discontinued tracking violations of the Humane Slaughter Act in 1998, and the Director of Slaughter Operations did not know if violations were increasing or decreasing. And In January 2001 the New Jersey legislature directed their state Department of Agriculture to develop guidelines for humane treatment of farm animals. It addresses all phases of animal production and processing, and would specifically target confinement practices in poultry, veal, and swine. (Farm Sanctuary 2000)

In a new article, Troughton and Leckie (2000) suggest the least discussed aspects of changes in animal production in the United States are the conditions where livestock are confined. While the public expresses great concern for the well being of domesticated animals, there is very little concern for the welfare of farm animals in this country. A 1999 nationwide poll conducted on behalf of the Humane Society of the United States (Lake Snell Perry & Associates, 1999) indicates public concern about the treatment of

animals on "factory farms." Seventy-seven percent of those surveyed have strong concerns about abuse and inhumane treatment of poultry and livestock in confined production settings. Additional concerns were the use of unhealthy chemicals and drugs in the animals, pollution from animal waste, and the impact of industrialized production on small family farms.

Kalof et al. (1999) examined the beliefs held by vegetarians regarding the benefits of their food choice. They found that the only significant predictor of vegetarianism is a belief that a vegetarian diet is not as harmful to the environment as one that includes meat. Further, beliefs about the benefits of vegetarianism were influenced only by traditional values and altruism, and respondents with a rural childhood were less likely to believe animal cruelty is prevented by vegetarianism.

3c. Consumer Need to Know about their Food Supply

Ruel et al. (1999) examine the differences between urban and rural food security. They find that urban undernutrition is increasing at a much faster rate than rural undernutrition. They base this on the increasing disconnect between urban people and their food supply. Historically, rural people have been much more involved in their own food production than urban residents, a division that appears to be increasing.

3d. Consumer Demand and Willingness to Pay for Food as well as Externalities that May Result from Production of Animal Products

Two recent items were identified that discuss the willingness of consumers to pay more for animal products produced in an environment considered more humane. In a review of consumer viewpoints on animal welfare, Swanson and Mench (2000) indicate that people express a disparate range of viewpoints regarding poultry production. While consumers generally express confidence in the decision making of producers, they also increasingly consider humane treatment of animal to be important. They point to research that indicates at least some consumers will pay more for animal products produced in a humane manner. This has implications for the poultry industry as they make decisions regarding production practices that improve the welfare of animals in intensive production facilities.

In a nationwide survey of consumers, Zogby American (2000) found that most respondents would pay more for eggs produced in a setting where the hens were treated humanely. They suggest that the economic inputs from retailers and consumers must be considered as a way to offset the costs of changing industrialized animal production practices They also found that most respondents felt housing hens in small wire cages that prevent them for comfortably moving about was unacceptable, as was reducing their food to induce molting.

QUESTION 4: WHAT MECHANISMS ARE AVAILABLE FOR PRODUCERS AND THEIR NEIGHBORS TO RESOLVE PERCEIVED PROBLEMS RELATED TO ANIMAL AGRICULTURE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES AND HOW EFFECTIVE ARE THESE MECHANISMS?

The 1999 literature review found few systematic studies of strategies for conflict resolution in communities impacted by animal agricultural restructuring processes. Studies have focused more on documenting conflicts and less on ameliorative strategies and conflict resolution alternatives.

There are a few new studies that further document conflicts over animal agriculture and their causes. Although in the early stages, research in Nebraska (Blankenau and Snowden 2000) is examining how community activism develops against industrialized agriculture in rural areas. They examine a case where local farmers successfully blocked a corporate owned large-scale livestock facility. They were interested in knowing if these local activists made the connections between what was perceived as the immediate threat, and the larger social, political, and economic forces behind changes taking place at the local level. What they found was an understanding of these processes in terms of local impacts, but little recognition of how they operate at the national and international level. Additionally, the ideologies of groups from outside the local area who also opposed the development did not resonate with rural residents, with one exception. Both the positions of oppositional groups and historically held rural values are in conflict with the value of 'bigger is better'. This is an area the researchers continue to examine.

In terms of developing better strategies for conflict resolution, one step in this direction is a report prepared for the State of Pennsylvania by Abdalla et al. (2000). It examines alternative resolution strategies for community conflict over intensive livestock operations. They note successful resolution from the stakeholder perspective is based on "(1) the perception that any outcomes that are reached will be final and will be implemented by those involved, and (2) the perception that all stakeholders' interests will be reflected in these outcomes. (p. 33)." Additionally, procedural issues of civility and respect between stakeholders and increased dialogue influence stakeholders' perceptions of successful resolution. This suggests that successful resolution from the perspective of community stakeholders is based in both outcome and process.

The report further suggests five processes for communities to resolve disputes over intensive livestock operations - public information meetings, formal review and comment processes, public hearings, consensus seeking processes, and mediation involving a neutral third party. Ultimately this process must increase trust among stakeholders, decrease the sense of risk and uncertainty, increase government fairness (both perceived and in reality), and utilize public participation.

Although not focused specifically on animal agriculture, the state of Washington developed Dispute Resolution Centers in 1984. These centers have a settlement rate of 87-92 percent, depending on the problem mediated. Their mediation process is based on social cohesion, shared values, fairness, honoring individuality, and mutual agreement.

Since the social science literature suggests the conflicts that accompany the move to large, integrated animal confined feeding facilities will continue, understanding how to resolve conflict at the most local level possible seems critical.

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ATTACHMENT 1:

Semi-Structured Format of Key Informant Interviews

1. What is the structure of agriculture in the county, and how has it changed?
2. What is your involvement in animal agriculture in this county?
3. What marketing system options are available for county producers?
4. What types of financial assistance are available to contract growers?
5. What jobs have been created by these operations?
6. Where are workers drawn from?
7. Is there a transient work force?
8. Are there local shelters, food pantries, etc., and have they been impacted by workers at these operations?
9. Have there been other financial investments as a result of these operations?
10. Have there been community conflicts over issues related to animal agriculture?
11. How has the community problem-solved these issues?
12. What is the current source of public debate regarding the beef industry, and who is involved in this debate?
13. Is there an inspection process currently in place?
14. What opportunities/resources are available for feedlot operators?
15. Have operators in the county failed to comply with state or local guidelines?
16. Have there been lawsuits/major concerns?
17. What are the potential constraints to success for feedlot owners?
18. Who are the major stakeholders in feedlot operations in the county?

ATTACHMENT 2:

Framework of Roundtable Discussions

Questions from Land Use Conflicts and Regulation Team

1. Objective Level Question/ Fact-based
   - ♣ Question to ask each person to answer going around the table -
     Were you directly involved in a conflict over a feedlot? And if yes, briefly, in 5-7 words, say what event caused you to get involved.
     Ex. - Yes, My neighbor asked me to get involved
     Yes, I was the operator people were complaining about
     Yes, I smelled nasty smells

2. Interpretive Level Questions/ Values, Meaning, Purpose
   - ♣ What specific actions, if any, did you take to resolve the conflict?
   - ♣ Did these actions give you feelings of satisfaction, accomplishment, frustration, etc.?

3. Decisional Level Questions/ What can work
- ♣ Did the conflict over the feedlot(s) get resolved?
- ♣ What was the key event/person/technique to getting resolution?
- ♣ Did land use controls (zoning, comp plan, P&Z staff) play a key role? How?
- ♣ What one thing or action that was missing do you think would have made a difference in getting the conflict resolved?

4. Supplemental Questions if we have extra time:
- ♣ Was the conflict addressed or discussed privately, publically, or both?
- ♣ How did the private and public discussion influence each other?
- ♣ Can you describe a conflict in your community that did not involve feedlots and how it was resolved?

Questions from Role of Government Team

1. Have you participated in any government decisions related to siting or permitting feedlots and what was your experience?

2. How would you have liked to have participated in these decisions?

3. We have listed a number of roles that state or local governments play in the authorization of feedlots on the paper passed out to each of you. What concerns do you have about how state or local governments' handle these various responsibilities concerning feedlots?

4. What government activities related to feedlots do you think local or state government is doing particularly well?

5. What does government need to do better, if anything, with regards to feedlots in the future?

Questions from the Social and Community Impacts Team

General Themes: Do cultural and social interactional characteristics within a community play a role in decision-making and conflict over feedlot issues? What are the qualities of local leadership, local institutions, and local community culture (culture of inclusion, dense community social networks, active public citizenry, distribution of information, norms of collective action, levels of trust)? What has been the level of participation in meetings related to feedlots? Have there been efforts to include others? Have there been town hearings, newspaper reports?

1. How have changes in animal agriculture in your county impacted your community?
- ♣ Have changes in animal agriculture in your county led to changes in your population make-up?
- ♣ Do you have any new population groups settling in your county who work in feedlots?
- ♣ Have changes in animal agriculture in your county led to changes in school composition?
- ♣ Are the new populations bringing families?
- ♣ If so, what are their needs (examples: ESL, housing, social services, etc)?
- ♣ How are these needs being met?

2. What has been the impact of conflict over feedlot issues in your communities?
- ♣ Have changes in animal agriculture in your county led to strained social relations in your churches?
- ♣ What role has the media played in reporting issues related to feedlots?
- ♣ Have conflicts been reported in newspaper?
- ♣ Do you sense that there has been any change in the level of community neighborliness as a result of conflict over animal agriculture in your county?

ATTACHMENT 3:

Social and Community Impacts Team
Semi-Structured Personal Interview

1. What is your relationship to animal agriculture in your community? (e.g., producer, community activist, feedlot regulator, county commissioner, etc.)

2. If a producer, are you a producer of any of the following?

Beef	_____ head
Swine	_____ head
Dairy	_____ head
Chickens	_____ head
Turkeys	_____ head

3. What changes in animal agriculture have you witnessed in your community over the past 10 years?

4. Have changes in animal agriculture led to a difference in the population make-up of your community? (E.G., do you have any new population groups settling in your county who work in animal agriculture?) If yes, explain.

5. Have changes in animal agriculture in your county led to changes in school composition? (Are the new populations bringing families?)
    a. If so, what are their needs? (e.g. ESL, etc)
    b. How is the school system adapting to these new needs?

6. How have other organizations been impacted by the presence of new populations (e.g., social services, churches, community centers, 4-H, etc.)

7. In what other ways have changes in animal agriculture in your county impacted your community?

8. Have you noticed any changes in the way farmers interact with other community members that are related to changes in animal agriculture?

9. Have you noticed changes in social relationships at your local church as a result of changes in animal agriculture?

10. Do you sense any change in community neighborliness as a result of changes in animal agriculture?

11. Would you say there has been controversy or conflict over changes in animal agriculture in your county?

12. Have you ever been directly involved in a conflict over a feedlot?
    a. If yes, how were you involved (or what event caused you to get involved)?
    b. How was the conflict resolved?
    a. Was this resolution satisfactory to you?

14. What role has the media played in reporting issues related to animal agriculture?
    a. Have disagreements been reported in newspaper?
    b. Do you feel that the media has reported the issues in an unbiased manner? Explain.

15. Do you think people in your community are willing to entertain a diversity of viewpoints regarding animal agriculture?
    a. What venues are there for people to express their opinions about animal agriculture? (e.g., town meetings, hearings, letters to the editor, etc).
    b. When in a public setting, does everyone get equal time to speak?

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16. How have changes in animal agriculture impacted your quality of life?
    a. How have they impacted your family's quality of life?

17. Disregarding our example of animal agriculture for a moment, but thinking in general terms about your community, how willing would you say are people in your community is accept controversy (e.g., is controversy brought out in the open and discussed or ignored and hidden?)

18. Give me an example where you believe your community has demonstrated a low level of trust in the decision making process on a particular issue.

19. Can you think of one thing or action that would resolve community controversy or conflict regarding animal agriculture? (probe: Is there one key to success that should be incorporated in policy making?)

20. How would you define (geographically) your community? (e.g., who is in your community, or do you define it by county borders, township, etc.)

ATTACHMENT 4:

In Their Own Words: Narratives Express Everyday Experience

Over the past several months we have been privileged to hear the stories of more than 120 Minnesota agricultural producers, neighbors, community leaders, activists, and business people. In nearly every case changes in animal agriculture have had a significant impact on their lives. Some of the impact reflects success, growth or increased quality of life, other accounts reveal pain, loss, and suffering. While it is clearly our goal to protect the identities of people who informed this qualitative research, we also feel their narratives enhance this report and we present a selection of these stories below to enhance the vibrancy of the everyday experience of rural Minnesota residents.

The following stories reflect the general themes we have heard. We have made every effort here to conceal the identities of the people whose stories are recited including changing their names and minor details that might link them to their local community. Each of the families have read and approved the inclusion of their narrative in this report.

Farming as a Family Tradition

One of the themes we heard many times was the expansion of existing animal production allowed another family member to enter the farm operation. In most cases this was a son who joined his father or parents. One interesting example of this was the case of the Johnson's, who had two sons who wanted to join their father in his swine and cattle operation. When the boys made it known their goal was to join their father in his livestock operation after attending college, it was apparent to all of them that the existing operation could not financially support what would eventually be three households. Mr. Johnson began expanding his operation to accommodate more families. At the same time, the population density of the Johnson's county is increasing, primarily a result of non-farming households building new homes. Mr. Johnson expressed that by the time his sons came home he was exhausted. But now that his sons are partners in the operation he is able to spend less time on farm responsibilities, and more time with his wife. While the process of expanding the operation reduced Mr. Johnson's quality of life, he feels he has now seen an increase in his quality of life. As was the case with other large livestock operations we became familiar with, the Johnson's livestock facilities are now spread over two different farm sites and employ non-family labor.

But we also heard stories of division between generations in farming families. One producer we spoke with expressed deep concern in regard to the decisions made by his son. Mr. Holm had been raised in a farming family, and had continued that tradition with his own crop and swine operation. He finishes less than 500 head each year, which he sells through a nearby stockyard. Mr. and Mrs. Holm don't feel their own quality of life has been impacted by the large facilities that have located in their neighborhood, but feel their son and his children will be impacted. Their son returned to the community after

college, but there wasn't enough income off the farm for him to join his father. He took a job in town, and eventually joined other young men in a locally controlled contract arrangement to finish hogs in confined animal feeding operations. He has taken on significant debt in the process of building new structures to raise hogs, and he continues to work in town, as does his wife. While Mr. Holm feels these men are "hung for life", the young men in this group feel they have created an alternative to contracts with large corporations. Yet Mr. Holm feels their decision to take on debt to build new buildings will eventually put many of them out of business. He is also concerned that his grandchildren will never understand traditional farming practices or a rural way of life he feels we are now unable to return to.

And then we spoke with Mr. and Mrs. Thompson who told us how they had discouraged their son from joining them in their swine operation. While still in high school he began talking about joining his parent's operation. As Mrs. Thompson put it, "we talked him out of that real quick!" Their son has now pursued a different course in life, and the Thompsons are talking about getting out of their swine operation in the next five years, and out of farming altogether in 10 years. This mid-sized swine operation is one that has been promoted by the hog industry as very successful, yet Mr. and Mrs. Thompson did not want their son to go into farming. They expressed concern about the size of livestock operations and the debts that one takes on to expand. They didn't want their son in this position.

Alternative Livestock Production

While we didn't hear of it often, we did find examples of alternative livestock production. In most cases this livestock is shipped out of the state for processing. In one community we found an interesting dichotomy. Bill and Mary Davis raise organic beef cattle that they primarily sell to an out of state buyer. They made a choice several years ago to pursue the certified organic status as an alternative to expanding their operation. At the time Bill returned to the community after college he began expanding his father's operation. His father understood that this was the direction they would go, and supported Bill. But after a few years Bill began to question the increasing application of chemicals, and sought out an alternative. His father was as equally supportive of this direction. What Bill and Mary have ended up with is a very small farm (less than 200 acres) where they raise both organic grains and beef cattle. They are very proud that the prices they receive for their organic products are much higher than others can get. Bill's father is now retired from the operation, but Bill still needs a part-time job in town for the family to make ends meet. Bill and Mary hope that some day this won't be necessary. They look forward to the seminars and conferences they attend with other organic farmers, and feel the atmosphere within this sector of agricultural production is very positive. They realize that many of their neighbors and other community members may not fully understand their operation or why they are raising beef organically. But they don't shy away from explaining this to people who ask.

In the same area as Bill and Mary is a large cattle feedlot. Most in the area recognize this as a facility operated by what is considered to be an aggressive producer. Yet most are not aware that this producer is also involved in alternative been production. He is raising chemical free beef cattle that he sells to an out of state outlet. He was quite clear that although his relatives know about this alternative production, he doesn't necessarily want his neighbors to know about it.

Loss and Alienation for Retired Farmers

The following letter was written by a Minnesota woman to her state legislators to explain in her own words her experience with animal agriculture. Minor details that might reveal her identity or community have been modified.

My husband and I have lived on our 120 acre farm for over 30 years. We are now in our 70's and had hoped to live out our remaining active years here, enjoying activities with our wonderful family, friends and our beautiful horses. When the time came one of my children could take over and enjoy their home place as we have all these years. Now this will not happen!

Three years ago, without ANY WARNING OR NOTIFICATION, we had our life as we knew it, taken away from us. A neighbor put up two barns housing approximately 200,000 laying hens on a small plot of land. (Land that the owner does not live on and yet he calls himself a family farm). The barn's are less than 1,000 feet from my kitchen window to the North and less then 300 feet from our property line to the East.

My husband and I have expressed our serious concerns many times before the County Adjustment board about the contaminated particulate that is entering our property and our home. We know this dry manure system is spewing out dust from its huge fans and reaching us, we find chicken feathers in our hay bales and in our yard. We have not been given any evidence that this dust is not harmful. There has not been any air quality test over the fence line, for that matter, I don't believe there has been any at the site, only modeling. The use of pesticides, insecticides, antibiotics, hormones, Egone used for odor etc. in these dry manure operations is spewed out of huge fans, sending these pollution's in the air and causing my husband and I to experience upper respiratory problems we never had prior to the barns. Especially in the summer with the predominately southern winds, we are directly north of these barns. We both get a dry cough, our nose and eyes burn and water. I have come across proven cases of serious health problems derived from chicken dust. One of which is Histoplasmois. It is a fungal infection that infects the lungs and can invade other parts of the body including the eyes. Chickens have a big role in spreading the disease says the New York City Department of Health.

Prior to the barns, we had trail rides and sleigh rides, with family, friends and the saddle club, in which we have been members for over 20 years. These fun times have had to be curtailed because they were held primarily on the acreage 300 feet from the barns. This has been a loss of many happy times.

Since the barns, we have many family and friend's who hesitate to visit us because of the dust and foul odors. Several of them are highly sensitive to these pollutants. I am even being deprived of having my five year old granddaughter come to stay with me for any length of time as she has many allergies and I do not wish her to be subjected to these probable harmful emissions. This has left a real void in our lives.

Since the barns we haven't been able to cut the hay on the field next to them as we believe it is too toxic to feed to our horses or do we want to sell it to any one else. This is a financial loss to us.

Now, thanks to new laws, variances and lower set backs, made again to accommodate the Big, (750 feet from a residence, insane!). This farm owner will be building another barn that will be an inhumane home for another 99,500 poor laying hens. This will bring the total number of inhumanely caged chickens to about 298,500, still on only 10 acres!

The set back laws should be 2,000 in any direction, from a residence. (On many days we have to go that far to enjoy riding our horses before the odor is bearable.) The laws are made to protect our land and people. Why are they being compromised? Why do neighbors of these feed lots have to put up with the stench, the harmful chemical emissions and the lost of value of their land while the feedlots prosper? This kind of injustice is being inflicted all over this county and country because of feedlot permits and variances being granted at the expense of neighbors. Why are only the big and powerful complaints being addressed and ours ignored? Will it always be useless for the small and old to fight the big and new? The horrendous impact of these feedlots on lives is irreparable.

Thank you so much for this chance for me to vent. Hope you can help!

Note: The author mailed this letter to numerous county commissioners and state policy makers. She was eventually told by her state legislator to give up the fight for community justice; there was no way she could prevail against the power of agri-business.

ATTACHMENT 5:

Transcripts of Roundtable Discussions

Pennington & Clearwater Counties Roundtable Discussion

Wynne Wright*: I'd like to start by going around the room quickly and have you say your name, a little bit about your agency, and whether you have had any direct relationship with animal agriculture or feedlot issues in your county. Tell us in one quick sentence what that would be. We don't want to spend a lot of time on this. I'm the only one with her nametag not outward, but if you could introduce yourself quickly.*

Participant*: I'm the _____ County Commissioner. About the only feedlot issue that we have had would be a hog feedlot a few years ago. We are having some problems as far as the new feedlot rules and we see some changes that need to be made in those.*

Participant*: _____ County Commissioner. I have worked on our feedlot ordinance and I have also worked on the Norman County feedlot ordinance. I am also on our County Feedlot Committee.*

Participant*: I'm _____ County Commissioner and our water resources advisory committee has been working on this feedlot problem for a couple of years. We have done the Phase II inventory. Since that time, we have opted to not take responsibility for the feedlot situation in our county.*

Participant*: I am an extension educator in _____ County. I have worked with the Water Planning Committee and their feedlot issues and on the 6-county Feedlot Committee. I was a town board member when [name of dairy] came into _____ County. This was a 1,000 cow dairy operation so I got to see that first hand. I am currently working with two townships in [name of county] developing stricter feedlot regulations on their zoning.*

Participant*: I'm [name of position] for [name of local agency]. Both Clearwater and Pennington are in our service area and I am just here to participate in any way that I can. I work mostly with low- to moderate-income housing programs but our agency serves low- to moderate-income clients throughout the entire 4-county area.*

Participant*: I work with the Minnesota Pollution and Control Agency out of the _____ office. I work exclusively with feedlots – compliance, permitting, general education, public meetings and things like that.*

Barbara Freeze*: I am an environmental consultant in St. Paul and, as mentioned, I am working on the portion of the GEIS that relates to the role of government, both*

state and local and to the extent that is relevant to the federal level. So, I would be interested in hearing your view on that and later on I will have some specific questions for you.

Participant*: _____ County Commissioner. I have cattle but no feedlots.*

Participant*: Good answer.*

Participant*: In some ways, good coaching.*

Participant*: _____ County Assessor. I don't have a lot of knowledge about cattle but I was the county administrator of our land use planning project so I think that I have a little bit of an idea about how our people feel about regulations in general.*

Participant*: I raise beef cattle but my cows give no one any problems.*

Participant*: _____ County extension education. I work with feedlot rule development, especially as it pertains to pastures, and also county producers who are developing feedlots or have concerns.*

Participant*: State Representative from District ____, which includes _____ County. As a member of the Ag and Environment Committee, I heard a lot of testimony and I was active in the feedlot rules legislation that was passed. I served on the Conference Committee that dealt with this. I don't know if I'm an official member of this committee or not, but I certainly have a lot of interest in what the outcome is. One of the concerns that continued to arise before the legislature was the economic effect that regulation was going to have on our livestock producers, and also if the state of Minnesota was going to have good climate or environment for animal agriculture as a whole. Hopefully this group will help answer some of those questions.*

Participant*: I'm a livestock producer in _____ County. I'm on the Feedlot Committee of _____ County.*

Participant*: I work with Farm Credit Services out of _____ and I work with the ag producers in both Clearwater and Pennington Counties.*

Participant*: I'm County Commission from _____ County. I'm in the bison business, so I guess I'm kind of an alternative to the beef industry.*

Participant*: I'm a beef producer from _____ County.*

Wynne Wright*: OKAY. We're just bursting at the seams here, I'm afraid, but that is just great. I appreciate your coming and attendance. I want to start by asking you a couple of questions about some changes that may or may not have taken place in your*

counties so we can get a feel for what is going on in this issue. We want to think generally about animal agriculture, but also think a little more specifically about the beef industry. We are trying to get our heads around both issues at the same time. What sort of changes have there been in your population dynamics, let's say over the last five and ten years, in the course of the 1990s? Have you had any new populations move into your counties?

Participant*: More moving out.*

Wynne Wright*: Moving out – out-migration. Okay. Can you elaborate on that?*

Participant*: [Directed toward another participant] how many dairy herds did we have 10 years ago compared to now?*

Participant*: In 1985 we had 120 dairy herds. Today we have 22 left, I think.*

Participant*: And beef cattle would be a little better than that?*

Participant*: Yes, we have about 20% less beef cattle herds. They have held on the best.*

Participant*: Producers anyway.*

Participant*: Yes, producers. Hogs – we're down to one part-time guy.*

Wynne Wright*: You are talking about just Pennington County, [participant]. Right?*

Participant*: Right but that will hold true for most of northwest Minnesota. I have exact numbers on Pennington but the trends in northwest Minnesota are very similar.*

Participant*: I agree with that because in 1984 Clearwater County had 210 dairy herds but now we are in roughly the 30 range, give or take a couple more. I don't have the exact numbers here. Our beef herd number actually did increase considerably in part due to the exit from dairy into the (beef).*

Wynne Wright*: When these farm families/operations leave your county, are they moving and relocating their operations to another place? Or are they just going out of business?*

Participant*: No. Many are retiring*

Wynne Wright*: What about other new populations, not necessarily specific to animal agriculture or agriculture but in general. Do you have any new workers?*

Participant*: You mean like people? People populations?*

Wynne Wright*: Right.*

Participant*: Most of our counties, if you take northwest – [another participant], you have to help me when I get a little further down here… If you take the 7 counties in northwest Minnesota – Roseau, Kittson, Marshall, Pennington, Red Lake, Cook, and Norman – all have lost population except for Pennington and Roseau. Pennington has maintained about an even population while Roseau has grown about 1200 people in the last 10 years. The rest have declined. The only growing population that we see is the Hispanic population. I can't speak for the other counties, but basically you're looking at the turkey processing plant that has brought in the Hispanic population for its labor force. They stay and go to work at Arctic Cat and so they go find some more and bring them up from Texas. So, we have doubled our Hispanic population in the last 10 years. It's still very small – less than 2%.*

Wynne Wright*: But, nonetheless, you have doubled it, which is significant. And how are they integrated into the community, or are they?*

Participant*: Right now they are a small enough part of the population that I don't think that most people have really noticed it.*

Wynne Wright*: Do these workers bring their families with them?*

Participant*: More than that.*

Wynne Wright*: Extended families? I'm assuming then that they are entering their children in schools? Attending churches? Are there special church services? Special school programs that cater to this population? How many of this new population is employed in animal agriculture? You said the turkey processors but how about on-farm with an operator?*

Participant*: Close to zero.*

Wynne Wright*: Really?*

Participant*: Yes. The very large dairies employ some but other than that (no).*

Wynne Wright*: So, am I right in understanding that most of the cow/calf and beef operations are family labor?*

Participant*: Yes. Absolutely.*

Wynne Wright*: So not very much hired labor at all?*

Participant*: Some part-time.*

Participant*: The populations in the country, when you get away from Deep River and some of the big cities, it has changed and become much more retired people or close to retirement. There aren't as many children. There are still some people living there, but because they are retired or close to retirement, their children are grown and gone. They still are farming but got a CRP.*

Participant*: I would like to respond to [another participant]'s comment that Pennington County is basically the same or has gained only a little in population. It is kind of the same with Clearwater County only we have had a lot of agriculture industry move into Pennington County over the past several years. Also, we are getting to be kind of a bedroom community of Bemidji. Land values are cheaper so people will go and drive to Bemidji for employment.*

Participant*: If you look at Kittson and Red Lake Counties as two examples, the last census reported that they no longer have the biological ability to even feed themselves. You have a much older population, a rapidly aging population.*

Participant*: Any school districts that don't have a town in them have lost probably one-half of their population in the last ten years and are projected to lose another half of their school enrollment it in the next ten years. There are some townships in Kittson County that don't have people in them anymore. They are not even incorporated anymore.*

Participant*: Right.*

Participant*: There is absolutely nobody in some of them. That may be true.*

Wynne Wright*: Has there been any conflict over any attempts by producers to expand or start up new operations?*

Participant*: Yes.*

Wynne Wright*: Can you tell me a little bit about how that was manifest?*

Participant*: [Another participant] had about the biggest incident and then our county probably had about the 2nd biggest incident. Do you want to go first, [directed to other participant]?*

Participant*: Sure. This was when [name of large producer] came in. Marshall County is not zoned. _____ Township is not zoned and there were no changes to the rules at that time. [Producer] went to PCA and got the permit as they were supposed to and basically started construction. They were within six miles of Deep River Falls. If you drew an 8-10 mile radius around Deep River Falls, that is the bulk of your rural non-farm folks. Of course, [producer] were interested in being on a 10-ton road or a*

road that could handle heavy trucks and closer to Deep River to reduce transportation. This alienated a lot of folks who were very nervous about a number of things, primarily the odor.

Wynne Wright*: Were they permanent residents?*

Participant*: Yes. And there is still a little bit of… What I found there was that once you sour people on something, boy, it sticks with them for a long time. You have to get along up front, otherwise people watch all the time. You make people mad once and you tell them "Just stick it," they will stick you as often as they can for a very long time.*

Participant*: And that's not even in Pennington County. That is in Marshall County.*

Wynne Wright*: The _____ Township is in Marshall County?*

Participant*: Yes. It's on the boarder.*

Wynne Wright*: You don't have to elaborate any of the specifics but tell me a little bit, if you will, about the nature of this conflict. How did it present itself? Were there town meetings where people could express their grievance or were they writing letters to the editor?*

Participant*: There were letters to the editor and there was a town meeting. Once [producer] realized what was happening, they held a township meeting for all the residents in the township but the cat was already basically out of the bag then. They spent thousands of dollars prepping the site and doing what they had to meet compliance issues for PCA. They were committed and stuff was on the way. There was no way to change at that point and they were trying to explain (the operation) to people. They offered to take a bus down to [another facility] to show them because that was what they were modeling after down in _____. But people were so revved up and frustrated at that point. Because the township and the county wasn't zoned at that time, they had already pretty much gotten through the permitting process, so there wasn't anything people could do anyway. So, it kind of got them all revved up and concerned that this was happening and they had no control over the matter. If I learned anything out of that, I guess… Part of this is going to be cured now because under the new rules, before you can do anything like this, over a 500-animal unit, you have to have a public meeting where everyone within a mile (of a proposed operation) must be notified. So, a lot of this has already been corrected. I mean it will help. It isn't going to relieve all of the stress, but…*

Wynne Wright*: You think that a big part of the frustration was that the people weren't involved in the decision-making process from the beginning then?*

Participant*: That and [the producer] had no clue that they would get this kind of response. I don't think that they expected [this]. Pennington and Marshall Counties are very rural. They just figured that rural folks living out in the country should expect agriculture to be there. There was such a non-farm element involved in there that I don't think they anticipated that.*

Wynne Wright*: But a permanent rural non-farm, not a transient population like weekenders or something?*

Participant*: Right.*

Participant*: [I'd like to comment on] some of the corrections that you were talking about. We had a dairy come in and they were a 1,400-cow dairy. They did notify the people within a mile and they had the town meetings and people accepted that a lot more, I think. I don't think that we had the problems (that you had). It was only a mile from the town of Lancaster. There were some complaints about odor at different times, especially when the (??)[13] would blow up from the lagoon, but nothing really big. I think the people kind of accepted that. We do have an ordinance and we have County Zoning, so they jumped all the hurdles with MPCA and they seemed to accept it. The farmers there were having trouble with their wheat – the wheat scab – and they wanted to start raising corn and alfalfa and everything to feed the dairy. So the ones who were owners of the dairy also have an outlet for their feed. It goes to the dairy, so they are making money from their products, as well as the dairy. They also brought in Hispanics who didn't speak English. I guess they were having a hard time hiring people because they didn't pay very much and people wanted more high-tech type jobs and that wasn't a high-paying job.*

Wynne Wright*: [Participant], did you want to say something?*

Participant*: No, I was just waving at …*

Wynne Wright*: Okay. [Participant], did you have something to add? You said that you had a different case.*

Participant*: We had a hog operation that was built in our county and northern Minnesota, as a rule, isn't known greatly for its hog production. This was a 6,000 animal unit machine operation or would kick out about 6,000 animals a year. As we know, hog manure nationally has kind of a bad reputation and people picked up on that. There was also some concern would the operator… They had never been involved in a large-scale hog operation before and wondered how it would turn out and how it would be managed? There was quite a bit of scuttlebutt about the situation. One of the townships that that operation is located in decided to go ahead and do its own ordinances. They had trouble meeting but nothing has developed as of this time.*

[13] At times during the transcripts of the Roundtable Discussions there are portions of the taped conversation that are not clear. These sections are noted by (??).

I don't know if anything will. It's kind of low (priority). In perspective, it wasn't a large hog operation as you think of down in the southern part, even if it was to the local people. We have a lot of beef cattle operations that have far more animal units than that hog operation has. People just accept them because they are used to beef and they know how much they smell or don't smell and how they operate. But (the hog operation) did cause quite a bit of concern for 6-8 months.

Wynne Wright*: Is this fairly recent?*

Participant*: It's been in the last couple of years.*

Wynne Wright*: Can you talk a little bit about how these strained relationships and conflicts manifest themselves in other areas of your community life -- for example, at church or at the grocery store or in your relationships with your neighbors? Do you have experience with the continuation of that conflict over the expansion or new facility spreading into other areas of your life?*

Participant*: Well, it caused some immediate polarization. You had the rural non-farm folks who didn't want the odor and who were concerned about how the operation was going to run versus the farmers who were selling forage. This was a super marketing opportunity and this was wonderful for them. So you polarized those camps immediately. There was basically crop production before and, like Terry said, we have always had crops out there and we are used to it. I get a complaint once in awhile when we get armyworms and the airplane pilots have to come in. The neighbors have their windows open and they can smell it. Then they get a little nervous. Other than that, you don't hear much. Compared to a 1,000-cow dairy, they would (complain) right away. You start to adjust. We are used to smaller livestock operations. This dairy was new to us and our area, just like [another participant]'s hog operation that was new to his area. We have two townships that border Deep River Falls that are mostly, or more like 50-50, rural non-farm to farm family. They are putting in stricter rules now. They never thought of it before because they just figured, "Well, it isn't going to happen up here." Now that they see it is happening, they are adjusting.*

Participant*: I think a lot of people have a fear of the unknown, of what pollution could possibly come out of this. You know that type of thing. Another fear is that once you have one dairy operation or one hog operation like this, a lot of people think that they are going to be built on top of each other right down the highway like they are in southern Minnesota because the rumor gets back that we have a lot better land, we have a lot better conditions, we are not zoned, and you don't have to fight all of that. This may be a legitimate concern, but I think things are highly exaggerated in some people's minds.*

Wynne Wright*: What about from some of your producers in the room? [Another participant], you are a producer. Has there been any conflict with your operation or any of your neighbors or anyone you know?*

Participant*: No.*

Participant*: I'm _____*

Wynne Wright*: I didn't catch your name, _____. Thank you for coming. If you think generally about other issues, not necessarily agriculture in this case, are people in Clearwater and Pennington Counties fairly willing to accept controversy?*

Participant*: No, they are not.*

Wynne Wright*: Can you give me an example than for what makes you kind of "leap" to that conclusion? Is it hidden or covered up?*

Participant*: Do you want to deal with government relations? If you want to talk about wetlands, there is controversy. If you want to talk about septic, that's gone. If you go to Roseau or Marshall, you have the (??) plants and you have Fish and Wildlife that has prairies up in Kittson County. I think it is a general trend all over the country. I don't know that northwest Minnesota is any different than anywhere else, but I think you have kind of a movement where people are concerned about our community vitality and about our prosperity. People are worried that rules and regulations that are needed elsewhere, for whatever reason – and we don't want to take those away from other areas – but they dramatically impact us for no appreciable return.*

Wynne Wright*: Can you tell me a little bit how you would go about defining community prosperity?*

Participant*: Good crops and good prices and we haven't had that for 10 years.*

Participant*: I look at community prosperity based on the population influx. A gentleman down there described a county that he is a resident of. I don't know what term was used down at that end of the table but was it "non-self-sustaining"? Is that correct? You can look at community prosperity on whether you are keeping your youth in the communities. That is not necessarily taking place any longer. The youth that are staying are doing so because Mom and Dad need them on the farm until that senior year, they then move to a place where they can find better jobs.*

Participant*: Per capita income there runs about <u>half</u> of that of the state.*

Participant*: One more example, I look at modern agriculture and that it costs a lot for agricultural producers. I look around this table and the guys that are farming that I do know – I'm not asking them their age – but they are older than average. I get younger producers who want to come in to talk to me about operating the farm unit, whether it's livestock or grain, you name it, just call it farm operations. The problem gets to be the margins they are working with. Trying to make a living and sustain life and start a*

family, it's just not conducive to them doing it. Then we try to look at other avenues of accomplishing this as a part time farmer. The whole point of the matter is that a young guy cannot get started in this day and age with the costs it takes to go into agriculture, so, there again, our youth are leaving and are not taking an active role in agriculture in this area.

Participant*: Just to expand on that, my son graduated from high school in '96. He just got married last summer and he wanted to invite his classmates (to the wedding). He graduated from a class of about 80 and there were 17 left in the community. So, that is what happened in a very few years.*

Wynne Wright*: How important would the health of your institutions – schools, churches, and civic organizations – be to this definition of a prosperous community? How important is it to have an American Legion in your town? Or to have a number of churches that have good attendance?*

Participant*: I think that we need to look beyond just the churches and stuff and look at emergency medical services and look at all those type of things that our communities are getting to the point where they cannot support. With the median age of people getting older and our young people not staying in the communities, the burden gets left for those who remain. Along with that are the rules and regulations that take place that force added expenses for our farm producers that make it almost impossible for those who are currently farming, to say nothing of the new ones coming.*

Participant*: If I can elaborate on that, as we go into a global economy and even more of a national economy… It used to be that if you were short of a product, the price went up because of a shortage. Now it isn't like that. So basically, when these rules and regulations are in affect, causing an increase in production cost of 5-10%, the competitor doesn't have that. That automatically puts us at a disadvantage.*

Wynne Wright*: What role would you say your social relations in your community play toward a recipe for community prosperity? Neighborliness? Community congeniality? Trust – trusting your neighbors or other people in your community? Is that an important ingredient?*

Participant*: Yes, I think it is. But when I think of farmers who are having a hard time in our area, animal agriculture is the big thing. If you get a little away from the West River, all of our area is cattle grazing and that type of thing. With all of the expenses escalating, I think they need to share equipment and do things like this. I think that they are doing that and that we are trying to find more ways to try to get added income. Some of them are going to horses and different things that are making money. You can't always do the things you have always done where everybody gets…especially equipment that you just use now and then. Everybody can't afford to have their own, so they have to share and they are starting to do that as a way to try to maintain. For*

our area, animal agriculture is one of the biggest parts of the economy. When that comes down, we have a real problem.

Wynne Wright*: Do you think the conflict over animal agriculture in your counties has had an impact on your community neighborliness or trust of each other?*

Participant*: No, we really haven't had any conflict since the…*

(TAPE STOPPED - TAPE TURNED OVER)

Participant*: We're dealing with something very different from what we are use to – large cow dairies and large hog operations – we don't know what this is like. We're not used to and we haven't seen this before. Then we worry that we are going to get a whole lot of this. There are also issues from the standpoint that our churches and the American Legion and all of these are running out people. I could bring you some pastors who are doing 3-4 churches because they don't have enough parishioners to hold it together. They are talking about having to close some of the country churches because there just aren't enough people left. My own church was that way. We got down to a couple of old folks that had some money and they pumped money into it until we had only 5 people at a service. Finally, they died, the money dried up and we had to close it and that was it. Goodridge is a good example. Their school system has 19 seniors and 5 kids in first grade. The writing is on the wall. Something is going to have to happen.*

Wynne Wright*: How many kids?*

Participant*: 19 seniors and 5 first graders.*

Participant*: Agriculture took so many people in 1960 and 1970. 1980 took more, 1990 took more, and 2000 took more yet, so if you don't have something in your community to replace (agriculture), you're going to lose people. There is no way around it and there isn't anything anybody can do about that.*

Participant*: It's not just in our counties. It's a national kind of trend.*

Participant*: What's happening to your farmsteads? Are they still occupied?*

Participant*: Some of them.*

Participant*: We don't seem to have the magnitude of change in that we are getting an influx of people who like our cheap land and they come in with money, so they can outbid the people who can't afford to pay that much to operate it.*

Participant*: They are turning their farmland into hunting land in some areas.*

Participant*: Yes, they have enough money that it doesn't matter. They can just leave it vacant and use it for deer hunting.*

Wynne Wright*: To come out on the weekends, maybe? Is that what [is happening]?*

Participant*: Yes, two or three weekends a year is all.*

Participant*: They are paying three times or more than what it is appraised for agricultural use.*

Participant*: We come in and we will appraise the property based on the versatility of the property. If you go into Clearwater County, the versatility is not there. I mean, its primary purpose is for cow/calf operations. Therefore, the value that it can return to that land based on income generated out there is limited. If you go to the Valley, for example, land can sell for $1,000-$1,500 an acre due to beets or whatever you can put on there, where over in Clearwater County which is only cow/calf dairy ground, $300 an acre is probably on the high side. Truthfully, based on what you can make on a cow/calf operation, you could probably spend $150/acre and barely be able to make a payment. They are coming in there and spending $5,000 an acre on this land for the deer hunting purposes. If you divide that up between 5-10 people and it's not a big issue to them.*

Participant*: And that causes other problems on our tax base because that drives our farm values up so our agricultural producers end up paying a higher price for their tax then it should be.*

Participant*: You mentioned special populations moving in. Clearwater and Pennington haven't seen this yet but in this area there is a ethnic group of Russian immigrants who have come from Oregon that have settled in the east Polk area predominantly. I think that they there are close to 75-100 families that have settled in this area now within the last 2 years. They are coming here because their property values in Oregon where they came from have been driven up so dramatically and the congestion is so bad out there, they come here for the cheap land, clean air, and uncongested living space.*

Wynne Wright*: Are they farming?*

Participant*: No, they aren't farming yet. Most of them are trade people.*

Wynne Wright*: That is interesting. I hadn't heard this.*

Participant*: Clearwater County is now getting some in but we have only one purchaser so far. We are getting Mennonites and I think we have one Amish farming unit and more on the way. We have a Mennonite family and they are looking to expand. There your school systems start to suffer.*

Participant*: Do they home school?*

Participant*: Yes.*

Participant*: I think I was reading – and you probably know more than I do – that we have 150-180 in Clearwater County preschoolers altogether that are home schooled.*

Wynne Wright*: That's quite a few for one county. This is Jean Coleman our missing link. We were starting to get ready to send out a search party.*

Jean Coleman*: I want to know if there is a [name of participant] here because I got to spend about an hour in Mahnoman with his niece.*

Wynne Wright*: Did you have car trouble?*

Jean Coleman*: I locked my keys in my car – again. Luckily there is a locksmith there. I apologize for interrupting.*

Wynne Wright*: Well, we're just glad that you are here Jean. I'm going to ask one more question and then we'll turn it over to you, okay? We kind of reversed the order today. I'd like to know a little bit about the role that the media has played in discussions over changes in animal agriculture and your communities. Have you seen examples of editorials? Somebody mentioned that earlier. What kind of job do you think the newspaper has done about reporting these issues? Do you think that you are getting unbiased objective information?*

Participant*: I think that Clearwater County has been fairly unbiased. They have tried to give the opportunity to both people. I don't think that they have been out trying to create problems.*

Participant*: I think that generally the papers try to support all kinds of agriculture on their own. They have to print Letters to the Editor and that type of thing and other peoples' views.*

Participant*: I think the local papers have done a far more objective job of reporting, both positive and negative. When the press gets a little further away, it seems to become more of the looking for the big splash and hot story. The local folks seem to be more objective in that regard in trying to cover both sides.*

Wynne Wright*: Would you be talking about regional newspapers or state newspapers?*

Participant*:* **The Star Tribune***, to mention one.*

Wynne Wright*: Have there been cases where your county has been referred to in* **The Star Tribune** *that you didn't think was accurate?*

Participant*: Yes.*

Wynne Wright*: That's about all I have. I'll turn the next section over to Jean now.*

Jean Coleman*: Good. Let me catch my breath. My name is Jean Coleman and I am leading the land use, focusing on conflict, technical paper for the GEIS. I'm really glad to see faces that I know around the table. It will get me a little more comfortable up here. Our charge on the land use team is to try and come up with land use techniques or techniques that are based in land use planning or ordinances that can potentially reduce conflict over feedlots. One of the reasons we are up here is because this area is doing some very creative things in regards to using land use tools. So, I'm going to focus the few questions on conflict and land use. Because I didn't get to hear the introductions I'm going to have you go around the table again and everybody gets to answer the first question. It may not be so pertinent since you've gone over things already, but were involved with a conflict over feedlot directly? If you have been involved in a conflict, what event got you involved? For example, was it someone locating or expanding next to you? Was it your job? I imagine there are some people who get the phone calls like [a participant] and have to go out? Was it a neighbor saying, "Help me. I need some support here"?*

Participant*: I haven't really had a conflict with feedlots, but I think that on our land use planning we've always talked about how we can enhance areas to accommodate feedlots and to get them to locate in the right areas, etc. I think that is the key. If you do have a big feedlot in the right area and it doesn't cost you much for infrastructure and it doesn't cost you any heartaches and pains like odors for neighbors, etc. I think that they can be good for a community. People can sell them corn silage or hay or whatever. It could become a market for people close next door.*

Participant*: As the [county official], I was involved in our hog operation. Because I am part of government, people said to me, "Why do you let them do this?" I answered, "Well, it's not me…". Secondly, they said, "Are you going to lower my value?" and I had to say, "Well, I'll see what the market shows. If the market says that I should, I will." That hasn't seemed to play out that there is a real adverse… The person who said that to me wanted to refinance the next year and wanted the highest value possible. So, that didn't play out. Thirdly, on our land use planning and this was immediately after this hog operator moved in, we did our long-range land use plan. The people there were mostly non-agricultural people but the predominant theme was, "We like the way it is and we don't want it to change, but we don't want it to be over-regulated either." So, I don't know how you accomplish both of those, but that was the message they sent: "Leave it like it is without any regulations" and I don't know if that is possible.*

Participant*: I guess that I haven't had any involvement directly with… For myself, I'd like to know if I have a feedlot on my farm or if I don't. I don't think that I do but I'd like someone to tell me.*

Jean Coleman*: And you are a farmer?*

Participant*: Yes.*

Participant*: I'm a County Extension Educator in _____ County and I get to get involved in conflict because of our existence. I will let it go at that.*

Participant*: I was a County Commissioner when the feedlot was being built and it was being built in [another participant]'s Commissioner District but I'm right next door to it. I'd like to talk just a little bit about what was going on in Clearwater County. From my point of view, I think that there were a couple of things that raised this to a higher visibility than it would have normally been. First of all, we only have 5 communities in the county and it was located almost 1 ½ - 2 ½ miles between two of them. That meant that two of the communities where there were non-farm people had the fear of odor. That raised the visibility a little bit. Also, it was next door to some active residents. There were lawsuits. This wasn't just a case where we held some town meetings and got it resolved sort of thing. This went to court and they challenged the permit. If it wouldn't have been in the location that it was, operated by the individual proposing it who didn't have the best track record as far as how his operations function, it wouldn't have become that. It is unfortunate to my way of looking at it that that had to be the first one because now that it is up and running–and I don't know what is going to happen next summer. I don't think that there have been very many issues in the last couple of years. Manure has been injected in the soil and I don't think that people have even known that that has gone on. Having said that, I don't think that the hard feelings have gone away. I think that they have just been repressed. It like you said, they are just waiting for an opportunity and they will figure out a way to poke back. I think that is really unfortunate and I think it affects your communities a lot more than you think it does. I don't know how you get over it.*

Jean Coleman*: You said that they were next door to "active" residents. Were these neighbors active before the feedlot expansion?*

Participant*: I think that there were neighbors who wouldn't have carried it that far. They were fairly well-off and made it a bigger deal than it would have been. I don't know. I wasn't involved in the decision making and I'm just looking as an outsider at who the people were and trying to assess what happened. Really, it was just a location issue more than anything. I find it hard to imagine that northern Clearwater County can't be rural enough to find a place to have animal agriculture without conflict but maybe that's not going to happen. I don't know.*

Participant*: I have to add a little . . .*

Jean Coleman*: This is your story, yes.*

Participant*: I think the saddest part of the whole thing is… I don't like to say that people don't like the party but there had been so many problems with this particular person in advance to this. If it had been anyone else in that area, I don't think we would have had a problem.*

Participant*: I agree with that.*

Participant*: In some respects, I agree that it could cause problems and flare up in the future, but in some ways I disagree because some of people that I had direct conflict with during all of this – they hollered at me and we went back and forth a few times – I feel like I get along fine with them now and that it's all in the past. But if anything came up with this particular party again in this, it would be an uproar again.*

Participant*: That's probably the worst thing when everybody knows everybody and everybody else's business.*

Participant*: It carried over. You have two communities that are trying to build a new school. Each have an older facility in their community, so they were going to locate the new building. Well, it got to be a big deal because they couldn't locate it between the two towns because of the _____ facility.*

Participant*: The whole thing mushroomed.*

Participant*: It got blown way out of what it should have been.*

Participant*: To tell you the truth, in the last year and a half, I've only heard of two different people who said that there was a smell coming at them. And it's been hot and wet at times this summer and that hasn't… In fact, I don't think I heard even one complaint this summer.*

Participant*: It hasn't been an issue in the last couple of years.*

Jean Coleman*: So this was hogs? When you refer to this feedlot, what is it? Is there a name for the feedlot, just for our purposes?*

Participant*: _____ is the legal name. [Questioning another participant], can you tell us if you've been in a conflict as you can define it?*

Participant*: No. We're all pretty much rural livestock producers in an animal agricultural area, so there hasn't been conflict in the area that I know of.*

Participant*: Could I add one more?*

Jean Coleman*: Sure.*

Participant*: I was active as a representative last year. The conflict that is occurring right now is this [participant]'s discussion of the new rules and how we are going to define our calf/cow operators. It is a huge conflict in our community and it going to have a big affect on our community. Registration is hated by a lot of the people. They are going to refuse to do it. It's going to be a huge negative if they push this through without figuring out some way to work it out on how they want to do it.*

Jean Coleman*: So, this is a conflict that is between the community and the state, the outside, not within the community? And the two elements are registering and defining feedlots at a smaller size?*

Participant*: There is more to it than just that. I see it that there is more to it than just defining if [participant] is a feedlot owner or not. We all know people who are out there who are in the same situation. If he is cast as a feedlot operator, the economics that he is going to face from the standpoint of how much it is going to cost for him to be in compliance with whatever those rules are stating that he has to do. Nobody has a clear understanding. Until I sat down today, I didn't know that those feedlot rules were passed. I thought that they were still pending, waiting for…*

Jean Coleman*: Surprise.*

Participant*: Absolutely. I try to stay as well read as possible, but obviously I haven't done a very good job of that. When I look at a cow/calf operator in particular, the costs that he is going to face if he has to come into compliance with whatever those rules are going to read. When you look at agriculture in this particular area, for example, and you have a manure pile, it is one of the best things. Cows love to stay up on a manure pile. It's warm and it is conducive to heat in the winter months. From what I've seen, this is illegal in the practices of manure handling.*

Participant*: Sometimes it's the only dry place they have.*

Participant*: It's the only dry place they have. It's warm. It dries off. They can get up easy. They are comfortable. It's just a natural place for them to be. Yet, if it's getting rained on and the run-off is coming off that pile, are we spoiling the water? I don't know. So, I'm still confused what those rules will be that are coming to pass and what they are going to do economically to an industry that has already suffered financially. The truth of the matter is that there are very few people in the cow/calf business who are actually making money in this area. I know quite a few of them. I do business with some. Some of them I don't. Some of them I'd like to, but I don't see them making any money. They are just sustaining life and that is about all that they are doing. If they have another burden placed on their shoulders such as another tax bill, they cannot afford them.*

Jean Coleman*: Did you want to comment?*

Participant*: I've not been involved in conflict, but I think this issue, like so many issues, are a good idea but not near (??). And it is the same in any issue that we face in a community, as well. What I constantly hear and constantly feel and constantly get really tired of is being called outstate. I'm every bit a part of Minnesota. Yet, all of the laws and regulations that are put on St. Paul or Minneapolis, where the infrastructure is different from what we have up here, those same regulations are supposed to apply here and it costs infinitely more for us to do the same types of things that they do down there. Quite literally.*

Participant*: Can I make a comment to that? This is the second time I've heard this reference to the feedlot rules and the metro area. The feedlot rules are not being driven by the metro area. They are being driven by Renville County, Grant County, these high-concentration of hog counties. They are rural counties. They are being driven by the neighbors of those producers and as they go to the legislature then, the more metro suburban legislature would feel more sympathy for the neighbor than for the farmer, perhaps. But the feedlot rules came from rural counties and they are being pushed by rural counties.*

Participant*: Mostly from hawks.*

Participant*: Yes, mostly from hawks.*

Jean Coleman*: [Participant], have you been involved in any conflict?*

Participant*: I can't say that I have. The neighbors get along. I was born and raised in the county. We have always had agriculture that I know of. I mean, all the neighbors used to be farmers and they have chickens and pigs and we all got along and we are good friends. I don't know where this is leading to or what you are trying to get at. If it's that conflict has been around in rural communities for many years, that is not the case. As far as conflict, I think that we are here today because of government agencies proposing rules that would put my neighbors or myself out of business or financially cripple us to the point where we'd have to do something else. That would be more of a burden on our communities. That is going to create more conflict than our communities have seen a long time unless we get some resolution to it.*

Jean Coleman*: Good. That's a new twist on…*

Participant*: In response to [another participant], one thing I've heard throughout the state as I work with the feedlot resolutions is that it's a needed thing in some counties but MPCA introduced these rules and it should be up to a county by county situation if they want to vote them in or not. In other words, if Clearwater or Pennington Counties say, "Yes, I think is the greatest thing. We need it. We are high in animals. We are*

going to vote it in," or they should be able to say, "No, we don't think we need these. We can handle this ourselves." The county should have some control if they need to be adapted or not or needed in their area.

Participant*: My question is what are you voting or voting in? Then would you need a recount?*

Participant*: I don't have an experience with conflict.*

Jean Coleman*: [Participant], did you want to say anything else?*

Participant*: I could add a thing or two, probably many. I am going to turn toward the feedlot rules that have gone into place now and our counties having to make the choice of becoming a delegated or non-delegated county and what happens to counties when we have to face these unfunded mandates for this. When we have to fund the regulatory end of state rules that don't pertain to us, that becomes to me a conflict for our county boards and a conflict for the people we represent. So there is one form of conflict that we need to be thinking about. The other thing I'm thinking about regarding the feedlot rules is that we know that PCA has a definition for what a feedlot is. We do not feel that the pasture thing meets these. There is a complete difference, like night and day, between our feedlots and southern Minnesota feedlots. Even when we have a hog feedlot in our county and you're talking… I think that they can put close to 3,000 animals at one time of varying sizes from 12 pounds to 250. There is a big difference when you talk feedlots, coming out of these counties in southern Minnesota where they have 50,000 –100,000 and their beef feedlots (I have an article out of a beef magazine)... The largest feedlots in our country are hundreds of thousands of animals and there is not one of them listed in the state of Minnesota. They are in Texas, Nebraska, California and in the Southwest. Now, how can we meet the definition of a feedlot when you have maybe 20 cows, 100 cows, or maybe 1,000 cows and about the only time they are in a closed area is possibly for calving. The fairness and stuff is not there. The state is painting the whole state with one brush, but we are different. [Another participant] alluded to this when he said that counties should be able to have a choice in regard to what affects their county.*

Participant*: Do you think the counties should have a final say as to how they are going to meet development or if they want more and whether to even bring in real feedlots, the cow/calf operations? They are there and they don't consider themselves feedlots and I think that there is going to be a real conflict there. They are just not going to register. We are a designated county right now but when it comes to registration, I'm sure that we're not going to do it.*

Jean Coleman*: How about Pennington?*

Participant*: Talking about conflict, this happened before I was County Commissioner. I had a hog farm with a feeder operation, feeder-to-finish, if you want to call it that,*

about ¾ a mile east of where I live. In my township we had no zoning ordinance or anything like that and the county does not have one. This feeder operation was put into operation about 15 years ago. Is that correct, [directed toward another participant]? There was very poor planning by the original investors who built this operation because they had no way of disposing of their manure. So, they were going to depend on the neighbors in the area to dispose of it for them, on the neighbors' land. That went for about two years like that and then the neighbors got tired of it. I mean, your tractor smelled so bad after that that it took about 2 years to clean it up. As I said, this was a feeder/finishing operation where the hogs would be trucked out of Canada because it was owned by a Canadian outfit towards the end but not originally. They would truck the hogs out of Canada and finish them locally, trucking all the feed out of Canada also. They were trying to gain from the difference between the Canadian and American dollar as far as marketing them in this country. The manure disposal operation there was basically a nylon bag and the manure was pumped into that bag. There was no provision for circulating the manure in the bag to agitate the material, so when it was pumped and they tried to dispose of it, none of the solids came along with it at all. Eventually the bags filled up with the solid material. They cut the top of the bag off then so they had access to it. Of course, then everything went into the atmosphere and into the neighboring surrounding area. The nearest farmer lived 1½ miles away at that time and he could hardly breath because the odor was so strong when the wind was right. When heavy periods of precipitation took place, it would run across the yard. Of course, the bag was filled up then and it was running everywhere, into the local ditch and went right past this farmer's place, etc.

(TAPE STOPPED - TURNED TAPE OVER.)

It has not been in operation since then because nothing complies with any of the rules or standards that must be complied with.

Jean Coleman*: MPCA came in because?*

Participant*: Pennington County called them and said, "We need some help."*

Jean Coleman*: Who called the county?*

Participant*: We called the county. In fact, my neighbors were calling me and I was calling them. That was before _____. So, that has been a very contentious issue in our particular township because of the way this thing was started. There was no ordinance and no way of stopping it. There is no check and balances anywhere. Looking at some of the new feedlot rules that are coming down to us, if we are going to be in charge of them without having any reimbursement from the state, there is no way we could afford (time-wise) to do that. We would have to hire another person to do it, probably part-time unless it became a bigger item than that then we'd need a full-time person. That would have to come out of the county budget the way it is set up right now. So, we are not looking at that too favorably. They also will put a lot*

of additional costs on the producers in order to bring their feedlots up to code, etc. with the new rules and regulations like they are. We really can't see where the producer is going to be able to make that up. He has such a thin margin right now, that it is going to put him at a real disadvantage to have to update his facilities.

Jean Coleman*: [Participant], you probably don't have anything to say…*

Participant*: I was involved in this one.*

Jean Coleman*: Is there a name attached to this one?*

Participant*: Nope. As a matter of fact, I had to keep one neighbor out of jail because he didn't think anything about trespassing. If I needed to know if there were hogs out there or not, he would just drive out there, go take a look, walk into the barn and do whatever he wanted to do. The guy from Canada finally got mad and pressed charges on him for trespassing. But there was a case that really needed some help because the manure handling system was under-designed and it had twice as many hogs as it was designed for. We had problems closing it down because the manure didn't go right into the county ditch. It ran into the woods first and half of the wood was dead. The oak trees had died from too strong a nutrient content. Because it went through the wood first, the law was cloudy as to how to deal with that. If it had gone right into the ditch, it would have been easier to handle it. So you do have to have rules and they have to be handled properly. I know what you are saying, [another participant], about the southern counties. They have some problems down there. If you drive down I-94, you can smell a lot of odor. What I don't understand is that there are zoning rules that townships can do and counties can do and if counties or townships want to be stricter, they have that option. I'm working with two townships right now, _____ and _____, that are going to have pretty restrictive feedlot regulations that are going to make it almost impossible to do over 300-animal units. That's fine with me and if they choose to do that and the township wants to do that, that is their right and they should be able to do that. So, I'm going to help them write the stricter ordinance. Also, if we can find some locations where a bigger feedlot would be welcome, we need to do that so we can get that going. I'm concerned about the little guy and the cost that it takes if you have a lot more regulations. We've lost so many (farmers) over time and they are not coming back. The big feedlots are fine and dandy, but they don't put people into your communities. So, for the town of Goodrich that is running out of children, big feedlots aren't going to do any good. For the BFW that hasn't got enough members left, feedlots are not going to make any difference. How do you build your community when… We can talk about rules and regulations and that is not what is going to break these guys. It's economics that is breaking them, but it will speed the process. I have talked to so many cow/calf guys who have said, "Well, these rules that come along…I don't think that I'm a feedlot. I don't think that I am doing any harm but if I get checked and they say that I have to do all this stuff, I will just call the truck and then I'm done." That's a quick answer and that's their choice, but what does it do for the region? You look at the implement dealers and they sell a lot of used equipment*

and a lot of smaller equipment to the livestock folks. The economic development that occurs because of those smaller livestock operations is pretty significant. It is a true niche within the community that they fill and it's going to hurt us if we lose them. The last time I looked at the Minnesota ag statistics, 25% of our gross agricultural product has been coming from livestock. That's a big chunk.

Participant: ***Ours is about 85%***

Participant*: Clearwater County has a lot more livestock than Pennington. Regardless, it's a big chunk and if we do anything that is going to quickly impact that, there is another negative and another economic crisis that we have to deal with…economic deterioration for an area where we are already struggling to keep up.*

Jean Coleman*: Thanks for making those connections.*

Participant*: Could I add one thing to what he just said? This is something that hasn't come up that needs to be considered when you are talking about the economy of the area and the smaller farm. Almost every small farm now has off-farm income. That is the labor supply that is providing work in the school, the nursing home, the Gourmet House, or whatever for a lot of our small industries. If you take the small farmer out of that area, then you are going to lose that workforce also. This is critical.*

Participant*: Just to add on to what [participant who made the previous comment] was saying, I work a lot with financial development and that type of thing with our farmers. If you look at these beef operations and I'm talking about the smaller ones that have about 20-50 cows, what did they get? We talk about the economics. We give that extra $5,000 to $10,000 a year income into that family that lets them sustain themselves and helps increase the quality of life – to send their kids to college or just to exist here. Sure, people all say, "There's just not a lot of beef farmers that are making a 100% where both the husband and wife are both working on the farm." That's true but you look at than infusion of money into their family that wouldn't be there, it's going to be the straw that will break the camels back as far as being able to stay up in northern Minnesota.*

Participant*: One other comment on that. I went to a session down in Mankato about a year and a half ago. I know that cattle prices were a little lower at that time than they are today, but they said that it took 850 cow/calf pairs to make a median family income in the state of Minnesota. That is an interesting tidbit. Most of our farmers aren't living or existing off their livestock. They are making it on a combination of everything. So, the rules really hurt them because they are going to end up pulling income from not only their farm operation, but also their non-farm work in order to update their farms to meet some of these new regulations.*

Participant*: Since I've lived in Minnesota, I have worked mostly in the area of housing and in community development but in a former life I lived in _____. I*

worked for the County Health Department in _____ in environmental health. I had the responsibility for doing some livestock supervision and for operations. Looking at it from a regulatory side, I saw a lot of situations where we had some pretty tough situations. [Religious community] was a real violator [in that location]. The _____ had a large dairy operation and they had a chicken operation out there that had excess of 10,000-20,000 laying hens. Their favorite project was to have free-range geese that roamed up and down the _____ River by the thousands. Every spring all of this effluent just flowed right down the _____ River into the _____ River and into Canada. We also had producers who fed lot of potato waste and sugar beet waste right along the _____ and some of the other tributaries to the _____ River. So, we had a lot of problems with livestock operations there. I think that I am hearing that there needs to be a balance between the economics of it and yet still have some environmental controls to prevent some of the those problems that were very flagrant. So, there has to be a balance somewhere.

Participant*: To add to that, I don't think anybody that I talk to talks about the fact that the gross violator needs to be dealt with. It's the micro-management of these things that get to be an issue.*

Participant*: I haven't had any direct, individual conflicts but I know of quite a few men statewide and nationally who have been involved and who are involved. I know that there are many feedlot operators in southern Minnesota who would just love to expand a little bit, but just can't economically justify the expense of the permitting issues there. If they are going to expand they want to go over to South Dakota. It seems to me that the conflict is really between one group of people who think that animal agriculture is desirable, namely farmers, local units of government, school boards, planning commissioners, and then another group who thinks we probably shouldn't have animal agriculture, non-farm rural people and environmental groups. There is where the conflict is, I think. Looking at finishing feedlots, we only feed about 150,000 head in Minnesota. _____ of _____ Feedlots in Oklahoma feeds 450,000 acres. That's just one man who feeds 450,000 head by himself, so we are pretty small. Anybody who's been on the farm knows that when you grow corn and then you feed the corn to an animal, the best thing to do is to put that manure back on that field where the corn was grown. So, we used to feed about 75% of the corn that was grown in Minnesota and exported about 25% of it. Now it's just the opposite – we feed 25% and export 75%. The animals are going to get fed someplace. It doesn't make any sense to me that we are going to grow all of these crops in Minnesota and then ship them off to Oklahoma and create this huge nutrient pile-up down there. Then we have a deficient here, so we put fertilizer and anhydrous on it in order to make up for that. It seems that the closer you can raise those animals to where the crops are growing, then that would be the best thing environmentally to do. We hear from our local county commissioners that we would like to encourage animal agriculture. That has been focus in any group that I've been in. I think the focus from our state agencies should be switched from enforcement regulation to, "Let's get some money so we can fix these things and keep these guys in business." It doesn't do***

any good to regulate them out of business. Let's help them get in compliance standards.

Participant*: I worked for 10 years with MPCA feedlots and there has never been any kind of controversy [tongue in cheek]. I think that I have been involved in every one that has been brought up so far today. I could sit here for hours and hours and tell you about the controversies, but I think the one thing that makes it really tough on the agency and agency employees is when the counties don't have county zoning and the neighbors come to us and they want us to do zoning. It's not in our rules. It's never been in our rules and I hope it never ever gets in our rules. But then we get beaten up because we can't stop the open hog farms.*

Participant*: What is the open hog farm?*

Participant*: I have an article on the open hog farm, which was built as the state-of-the art and the savior to hog agriculture in Pennington County. I still have that article in a file. That was how it was originally built. That is the one controversy that is probably the hardest to deal with. It can't be resolved because we don't do zoning. The producer gets mad at us because we have to listen to these people, even if we can't do anything. Their permit gets tied up. They end up suing us and it's a no-win situation. What it all gets down to is the fact that the county doesn't have decent zoning. [Another participant] is working with some townships where it sounds like they are being more restrictive than we would have proposed at the state level. If we had proposed that, we would have all been led out of Dodge on a rail. Unless you want some individual examples, I guess that is what I want to share.*

Jean Coleman*: I have actually run out of my time but I will be following up, particularly with the county people, about what's going on locally. I know that you have working closely with being restrictive and with opening it up, [directed toward a participant].*

Participant*: I would like to add one thing. I stopped in Gulley the day before yesterday and I was talking to a guy at the local restaurant there. He was talking about his feedlot and the rules, etc. and it sounded like he had 400-animal units. He said, "This deal with the $3,000 that I would have to spend, it's no big deal." I asked him, "Well, what do you think is going to happen in 5, 10, or 20 years from now? For you with the 400-animal units, it's probably not a big deal, but what about the guy with 20 cows or 40 cows or whatever?" Is it fair to ask the small guys to pay the same $3,000? Are we going to run the small guys out? If you have 40-animal units, are you going to run out 10 families to equal the one with 400, so some of the stuff doesn't make sense. I think we have to get this into perspective to a certain degree. I don't know how to do it, but I think it will be talked about. People are more concerned about rules and regulations that are to come, not so much about the ones that are here today. But what is going to happen in the next 5, 10, 15, 20 years.*

Participant*: The zero discharge at the farm gate. That means that everybody has gone up, even the small producers because you can't…*

Participant*: I have a good example of that. [An individual] in the office just sent out an e-mail that was just sent out about Michigan where right now, any operation over a 1,000-animal units has to get a federal permit to operate. This is the same permit that ADC would have around here to operate a lagoon or that any business with a lagoon would have to have. They are expensive as far as permits go. EPA is in Michigan right now and they are pushing for lowering that from 1,000 to 300 and it's the Sierra Club that is pushing it.*

Jean Coleman*: I think that touching on the federal rule is a good time to switch over to Barb who is going to talk about the role of government; so, thank you.*

Barb Freeze*: I have heard a lot of interesting information and I would like to ask some follow-up questions about some of it as we go along. First, I'd like to first go around the table again and have you address, if you have thoughts on it, what you think the government is doing wrong with respect to regulation and feedlots. Also, what do you think it is doing right? What ideas do you have that government should do, in respect to some of the specific things you've already brought up and also generally. Keep in mind that we are not talking just about feedlot rules and the implementation of laws, which is one of government's roles, but also about the issue of permits, the enforcement of those permits, education, analysis of the resources to determine if there are environmental problems, and providing technical and financial assistance. All of these are various roles that the government plays with respect to the industry.*

Participant*: Let's start with Jean. I want to hear her answer first.*

Jean Coleman*: I'm listening today.*

Participant*: I think that there is good and bad about regulations no matter what… I think that before the regulations get handed out to the local units of government or whoever it is, there should have been some input from the local units of government as to how these regulations should have been proposed in the first place.*

Barb Freeze*: Were you around during any of the hearings?*

Participant*: Yes, I was there.*

Barb Freeze*: I wasn't. So, you were able to attend but you didn't feel that that input was accepted?*

Participant*: Well, you go in front of an administrative judge and he usually already has the report written before he hears the testimony, so he makes you feel like you really didn't do any good.*

Barb Freeze*: Okay. Was that the sense that you had.*

Participant*: Yes, I think that was the feel of 80-90% of the people that were there. To make a rule statewide, we have such a geographical difference in the state that it just doesn't make any sense to make any statewide rules on any part. Nationally, federal rules would be dumber yet.*

Barb Freeze*: So, you would envision county by county rules?*

Participant*: Yes, or at least regional with geographical areas that are kind of the same. That would make the most sense to me.*

Barb Freeze*: What about the harder question? What do you think government is doing right?*

Participant*: There's the tough one.*

Barb Freeze*: Perhaps I should start with local government.*

Participant*: Government is at least giving out some money once in awhile so we can keep some people in the rural area. As far as the regulations?*

Barb Freeze*: In regard to any of the roles they play. Giving out money is one of those roles.*

Participant*: If it wasn't for the money, there wouldn't be anybody here.*

Barb Freeze*: Are you talking about the federal farm programs?*

Participant*: Yes.*

Bar Freeze*: How about the grant programs that relate to environmental issues and cost share programs and that sort of thing?*

Participant*: Some are good and some are bad. Some are a carrot to hang in front of you saying, "Well, if you do it this away for awhile, then we will drop the money but you still have to do it afterwards." It will cost you more than it was probably worth. That is my feeling.*

Participant*: I'm tempted to plead the 5th here because I might get into trouble.*

Barb Freeze*: I don't think you are going to find yourself in trouble. I'm sure that [another participant] has heard all of this before.*

Participant*: I think that there is a reluctance on government's part to do anything and we all have to admit that there are problems, even in our own backyards but by trying to address them, you step on the next guys toes. I have a cousin who lives out by San Francisco and she can't have a car parked outside of her house that isn't currently licensed. This is probably because she had somebody down the block used to have junk cars, I think. So, there is that overreaction that people are afraid of. So, if we prevent the guy from having 40 cows within the city limits of Bagley on the west side, how do we then not also prevent the guy 2 miles outside of town on the east side. How can you prevent the bad thing without micromanaging so much? It's almost impossible to have rules that work unless you just have a local board or a local arbitration system. You can't write that permanently. So, I guess we need to be more flexible and have the state come up with some broad guidelines and let us take care of it more at a local level. That would be my suggestion.*

Barb Freeze*: And in terms of what the government is doing right or ideas about what would you like to see the government do? I guess your answer in terms of providing more local control is a response to that.*

Participant*: There is not an easy answer. I think that to propose a solution, "one fits all", "take it or leave it", is discouraging counties from even taking minor steps to correct the worst situations. They say, "We won't take this whole package, so we're not going to anything except fight you." I think this discussion group is a good step. Maybe it's a little late, but asking local people is a good idea.*

Participant*: I can agree with what these guys have said. In regard to the hearings on the feedlot rules in front of the administrative judges, you hardly said anything that wasn't based on common sense. "We have a different situation in this part of the country than they do in southern Minnesota. Treat us different." But you ended up feeling like no one heard you, that they had made up their mind ahead of time, and that it was a waste of your time to even discuss it. Responding to what government is doing right or wrong, to me the farm programs are not working. They are not keeping the family-sized operations on the land. If it's a priority, something has to change. For myself, I have 2 boys who are interested in agriculture, but I'm torn whether to encourage them to even think about it because I have a feeling that in 10 years they (government) are going to try to keep all animal agriculture in South America and import all the meat from there, because they don't have to play by the same rules. I know this must seem like an overreaction, but I kind of think that that is where it is going.*

Barb Freeze*: I'd like you to elaborate a little bit on the comment you made about not feeling like the judges heard your comments. Can you think of some specific behavior or comment that was made that gave you that impression?*

Participant*: Almost all the comments were that a beef/cow operation is entirely different from a confined feedlot operation. You might have 500-animal units but they*

are spread out over miles and miles of ground most of the year, whereas a feedlot is confined to a certain square footage. Are we going to be playing by the same rules as far as disposing of manure? It's impossible with the cow that walks on grass in the open to treat her the same as an animal that is probably under a rope or confined. You just can't control where that manure goes to the degree that you… You can fence off the river or fence off the lakes or something like that, but you can't control it the way…

Participant*: Weren't there comments made at those meeting about sampling, water testing and soil sampling to test to see if contamination was taking place? Why don't you scientifically prove that problems are occurring in this geographical area?*

Participant*: Yes. I thought that we had run enough testing in Clearwater County to prove that we don't have problems with manure contamination or feedlots.*

Participant*: That's correct. We have lots and lots of data.*

Participant*: But that didn't matter. You know we still have to have rules. I don't think we have a problem with that concept, but we have to play by the same rules as the counties that have a problem.*

Participant*: Thinking about northern Minnesota, I can't help but agree with [another participant] in that we do have some problems in different places, but I think that we are going after a mosquito with a canon with these regulations. The economics are a very, very serious problem. On a positive note, I do dabble a little bit in the farm bill in an advisory role and one thing they are strongly looking at doing – those of you who get the magazine, this was kind of let out of the bag, even though it was exaggerated and misrepresented – is very high subsidies for small farms. Last year, they spent about $22 billion to $25 billion in agriculture subsidies and most people felt like this was like spitting into the ocean. It didn't really do a lot of good to raise the level. Now they are looking at some subsidies where, for example, if you have a dairy herd of 50 cows or less, milk would be subsidies at $20 a 100. The proposal on the table would give $31.85. If you have 51 cows, you have no subsidies. I don't want to give any specifics because nothing has been decided and I don't know if it will go this way. But government is starting to react to our problem. The big problem with government is that the cat has to be dead before they call a veterinarian and that is kind of where we are at. Now that Minnesota is dead, we may be getting a little bit of reaction and hopefully it will bring something back. I definitely believe in local control. Maybe if each county would have a board and if a feedlot problem was brought to their attention, it would be up them to decide if MPCA should be brought in. Some type of a screening situation might help because two operations can be so completely different. It gets really frustrating to have to deal with a situation when the problem really isn't there except in very small instances, but you have to deal with it. It's kind of like the wetlands bill. Look at what good that did. With the wetland regulations that we are under, every time I go to Minneapolis or Bemidji, I see wetlands being filled in by acres and acres and acres. It really didn't solve the problem it was intended to solve.***

Barb Freeze*: I'd like to hear both your general thoughts and then some more about Emerald Farms. Is that what it was called?*

(TAPE ENDED - NEW TAPE INSERTED.)

Participant: *With the new requirements of asking the counties to do the work without adequately compensating them for doing it. As local units fulfilling statewide standards, the state has to pay for it. On a local perspective, I think [another participant] talked about how at their zoning meetings they wanted to keep things the way they are but limit the regulation. The only way that I can see things evolving to the satisfaction of the majority of the constituents is for the local county to take over this role. It is the only way that will offer the protection of the animal agriculture environment while maintaining the quality of the environment. It is not going to occur at the state level. It can't. There's too much diversity across the state.*

Barb Freeze*: When you say "this role" you mean the setting of the standards, not just the implementation of the program?*

Participant*: I think that they are going to have to set their local conditions as they need to be set. I understand that the role of the state is to set some higher bar or something that everyone strives for. But, just as a practical matter the only place that this can happen is at the local level. It's the only place that hopefully can recognize that differences occur in their region and can accommodate them. Now, the state has to allow the flexibility for that to occur but I think that it was in this room that extension was doing the informational meetings on the feedlot. I didn't realize that Polk County has a zoning ordinance and the zoning ordinance is actually doing more to protect the farmer in the way they are managing it than anything that the state could possibly do. This is because they have interpreted this 5,000 feet notification to mean that if the farm was there first, that the houses that encroach upon that 5,000 feet lose their complaint rights. Think about what that would do for all of your existing farms with this encroachment of non-rural residents. I've set on boards and I know how hard this is to do, if we can get ourselves turned around, the local control is really going to do more to maintain what we have than anything. We've had our ins and outs on this. I've served with [two other participants] and I've known [another participant] for a long time and I've known [another participant] for a long time and I understand that we are going to disagree on some of this, but from my perspective, this is the only way this can happen. I just can't see it…*

Participant*: How about township? That is what we encourage if they have a problem.*

Participant*: Township would be…*

Barb Freeze*: Could I ask you one question before we continue? We were at a roundtable in Stearns County recently and one of the county officials said that he*

thought that most of the conflicts were owner related and came from two sources: 1) expanding feedlots and 2) encroachment of non-farm land. That seems quite logical to me but I'm wondering if you would agree with that? Which direction do you think it leans if it's not evenly balanced between those two causes?

Participant*: I don't have any personal knowledge about an odor complaint, really, in my entire legislative district. I can't think of one other than there might have been a couple of comments about [a specific farm] and there might have been something over in Clauston. Other than that, people are for the most part accepting of animals being there. [Another participant] was talking about this being something they have and they are comfortable with it. I think that if we have regulations – zoning – I hate to use those words but that is what they are, that accommodate and allows those things to occur as they historically have, we are not going to have a problem. How to do that to satisfy the state's need to know that there isn't an environmental disaster waiting to occur like this gentleman talked about. I don't know. We have some history of success with local water plants. There was a funding mechanism set up by the state to put money into the counties and to the local water plant. Maybe we can use some kind of mechanism like that. It just appears to me that if we can do it locally, it will be way better. To sit at the ag or the environmental committees in St. Paul and to have these neighbors bringing in their pails of hog manure…and then the county board coming in…it just isn't the place to solve this issue.*

Barb Freeze*: Could I ask you about the [specific operation] case? It was a hog feedlot and it was in Clearwater County?*

Participant*: Yep.*

Barb Freeze*: And when was this, [directed at a specific participant]?*

Participant*: 2 years ago, I think. 2½.. It was right in the middle of my first campaign.*

Barb Freeze*: But nobody ran against you and I still can't believe it.*

Participant*: It was like the summer of '98.*

Barb Freeze*: And there were lawsuits?*

Participant*: Yes, there were lawsuits.*

Barb Freeze*: What size facility are we talking about here?*

Participant*: It's under1,000-animal units.*

Barb Freeze*: And part of that includes cattle?*

Participant*: Yes, but it's a fairly small part of it.*

Barb Freeze*: So, it didn't need an EAW then? And no it was not a (??). What kind of a process took place? Were there hearings or any kind of notice?*

Participant*: Well, I don't know what the exact process was. My understanding of what the problem was is that the project was mostly already going by the time the local residents felt they had any input into it. I think that we could have alleviated a lot of issues by giving prior notice.*

Participant*: Could I make a comment? Would you like to go ahead?*

Participant*: There were a couple of different lawsuits but one of the main ones was regarding notification to the neighbors. Apparently there was some selective memory on the neighbors part.*

Barb Freeze*: They were claiming that they had not been notified when there was some reason to believe that they had been?*

Participant*: Yes. I believe it started out as a big dairy and then switched to hogs and that really affected the memory of some of the folks.*

Participant*: Part of the problem was that these people were always looking at doing some grandiose thing. They were going to have a dairy/feeding operation and they had a meeting on that. Then they were going to go into a 100-count operation and they had another meeting about that. Then they came up with a couple of other grandiose things, so people said, "Yeah, yeah, yeah. Now they are going to start a hog operation. Yeah, yeah, yeah." Then all of a sudden some dirt started moving and they said, "Oh my god, maybe they are going to do this."*

Barb Freeze*: Ultimately it was built. Were those lawsuits dismissed or were they settled?"*

Participant*: They didn't prevail.*

Barb Freeze*: They actually lost? Did they go to trial?*

Participant*: Yes, I believe that is the case.*

Participant*: The administrative judge in my town was in favor of the defendants - MPCA.*

Barb Freeze*: MPCA was a defendant in this case? And the facility has been built and is operating?*

Participant*: Yes.*

Barb Freeze*: You were saying before [another participant] that you think that the hostilities have calmed down and that it's not an ongoing source of conflict.*

Participant*: I haven't heard any comments at all on this.*

Participant*: Just wait until something goes wrong, then you'll hear about it.*

Participant*: Yes. When the bulk tank springs a leak as it goes down the road or something, it going to be… There was such a conflict between some of the people involved that one of the guys had another guy stranded up in a loader bucket one day and one took a pot shot at another one. There was so much conflict before with different parties pulling others into it. I think it was more than a personal thing than it had to do with the feedlot.*

Barb Freeze*: It sounds like there was no settlement reached here basically and that they went to the end of the line and lost. So, did they build it as planned with no particular modifications?*

Participant*: As far as I know that is what they did but let me tell you that I have paid a special amount of attention to this. They go by my place at least 10 times a week because it's right where I live. It really doesn't have an odor problem except occasionally on the hottest, most humid days when the curtains are up, you might get a little whiff. But it really hasn't been a problem in the city of Gonvick. I don't think that anybody in Clearbrook has complained.*

Participant*: They have a lagoon?*

Participant*: An under-floor under the concrete. I think that it is a pretty good design, although I don't know that much about it.*

Barb Freeze*: We're running out of time so we better keep going. [Directed to a specific participant], do you have some thoughts on what the government can be doing better or what they are doing well?*

Participant*: I agree with a lot of these guys regarding getting local control. I was involved in dairy, which I quit, and a lot of my decision-making was done based on the new laws of this control. The dairy issue is already done and gone. They set that up with state inspectors and they already have all of the control of it. I don't have the figures, but I know that in our country… I don't know how many have quit this year and how many plan to quit in the next coming year, but there isn't going to be hardly anybody left.*

Participant*: I have a question for the county commissioners here and maybe I ought to turn to… If money was not an issue where the state said, "You self-regulate it in your county and send us the bill, whatever the cost is for the feedlot officer, etc." What difference would that make?*

Participant*: Money isn't the big issue with us.*

Participant*: I think that the control issue is the big thing. Most of the people that I talk to are sick and tired of control. The comments I get are, "This is getting like Russia. We have to register our cattle now. We have to do this…we have to do that. They all know what we have."*

Participant*: And what's to come?*

Participant*: Yes, what's to come? You have that On-Star thing now and you are driving down the road, push that button, and a voice comes on and tells you where you are, etc. How much do we have left for ourselves as far as our individualism? To me, it is the state taking control, or government control of what's happening out in the rural area.*

Barb Freeze*: Did you have anything more to share, [specific participant]?*

Participant*: No but this expands into the manure handling areas…for small guys…You are talking about somebody who is going to haul a few loads a year and they have to start hassling with that.*

Participant*: The applicators licensing is something that they don't like.*

Participant*: Could I add one more quick thing about the dairy. Part of the problem with dairy that I see is not regulations within the state of Minnesota, but it is that across the United States, the EPA has different thresholds for their regional EPA offices it appears to me. If you go to Idaho, it's obvious that those dairy farmers have different thresholds of manure handling than we have and that is an unfair situation for our farmers.*

Barb Freeze*: By "different thresholds of manure handling" do you mean that they are…*

Participant*: Free for all.*

Participant*: They have feedlot officers and all of those things but their overhead is irrigating and brown water and the odor is not quite the issue. It is over fractured rock…*

Barb Freeze*: So, you are saying that the actual compliance or the use of technical standards varies from region…*

Participant*: How about Canada? We have to compete with those guys too.*

Participant*: Regulatory efforts and compliance issues between Chicago and Denver (the two EPA offices) have been discussed for a long time, regarding sanitary landfills. The second one east of the Red River is far, far more difficult than it is west.*

Participant*: Better dig a new Red River.*

Barb Freeze*: [Directed toward specific participant], do you have any thoughts on this issue?*

Participant*: In common, I agree that I think that we need more local control and I think that we need to do more educating of our people. We may be getting a higher population that is not agriculturally based. I was born and raised in [an urban area], so I don't have any agricultural background as far as understanding all of these things. From what I've listened to, not only in township meeting but also in the extension meetings that we have had over the years, I've learned what it is from other people. I think that we have a large part of people in the state like myself who have moved into the area who have no agricultural background. Somebody can get these people all fired up with totally misinformation and they go on with that. I know that in our school system they keep taking our children into these large dairy operations to educate them, so in some respects children carry this information home but I think that we need to do a better job of communicating to our public via our local newspapers. Obviously, the* **Star Tribune** *is going to do that elsewhere. If we want more local control then maybe we need to take the initiative to actively seek it through our local media.*

Participant*: I don't have a lot to add than to say that I concur with that also. You asked someone earlier if they were aware of any government programs that are out there that would be eligible to people from the standpoint of improving their waste handling systems. There are a few out there, but the difficulty in accessing them is a problem that I would like to address and just bring out that there is money available out there. It is called Ag BMP, Best Management Practices, and it's for improving their facilities for handling their ag waste. It is a very decent program. It does involve borrowing money, obviously, from the state of Minnesota and it's a great program, except for one little stickler. That is the fact that people have to declare themselves a polluter prior to getting the funds. I look at it a little bit differently. I see it as somebody who is taking an aggressive approach to modifying the way they do their business to improve it, not that a declaration of, "I am a polluter," and therefore I should be stigmatized wherever. That is going to fall in some kind of archives that this gentleman or this lady has admitted in the past to get this money that they are polluters.*

Barb Freeze*: Are you saying that there is a formal document where the actual term "polluter" is used?*

Participant*: Maybe that is a little harsh word but basically what it refers to is that, in fact, in order to…The program I am describing is the Ag BMP… It's a great program and the state of Minnesota allocated money to the different townships, counties rather, to get low interest money to improve their farms. But you have to go through a process with somebody from the MPCA to determine what would be beneficial plan to improve their farm and in that process it appears that you are saying that you are creating problems that you are trying to correct.*

Barb Freeze*: And you are afraid that this is creating a stigma that will come back to haunt you?*

Participant*: Right.*

Barb Freeze*: What about the state and federal cost share programs? Do you think that there is a similar concern with those?*

Participant*: Yes, a little bit.*

Participant*: That's what it has always been. You could only qualify for cost share if you are identified as a problem/polluter. They didn't hand out money for (??) systems. It had to be to correct problems. In the 10 years that I've been doing this, that is the way it has always been.*

Participant*: Therefore, not too many people are going to step up to the plate to declare themselves as a problem or a polluter.*

Participant*: Well, I think that over the years most of the money was spent and used up. There were a lot of ag waste systems built, a lot of total farm plans, a lot of run-off control, clean water diversions. There was generally a lack of money. I think that there were more people who were willing to step up and say, "Yes, I have a problem," or they were identified in some other way, like my showing up in their driveway because I received a complaint from a neighbor or something. That is just the way the cost share has always operated.*

Participant*: I'm not just referring to the cost share. I'm just sharing what I've learned from friends about somebody being declared a "polluter".*

Barb Freeze*: That is an interesting point that I haven't heard before.*

Participant*: [It's the idea of] "Well, I'm a lawbreaker, so therefore give me some sort of money."*

Participant*: Instead of me robbing a bank, why don't you just give me the money that is inside of it.*

Participant*: The worst of that scenario would be that if you had enough money to give out and 12 people applied, but 2 didn't get funded. Then if some of those who were helped become the violators, then Pollution and Control will come in and say, "You fix your problem whether there is money or not."*

Barb Freeze*: Your are afraid that people who step forward to apply would actually be inviting some pollution…*

Participant*: One other comment I will make is that I don't like the government payments. It has created a self-sufficiency on some of those things. I will agree that without those government payments in the last 5-7 years, people that are still farming would not be farming but I don't think that they are beneficial in the long haul in helping people maintain economic viability in this region.*

Barb Freeze*: Are you talking about the overall pricing?*

Participant*: Yes.*

Participant*: Would you read your questions again and then I'll give a crack at them?*

Barb Freeze*: Yes, it's been a while. Generally, I'm interested in your thoughts on what government is doing wrong in this area and what government is doing right. And what you would like to see it do. There has been a strong voice here in favor of local control, so I'd be interested in anyone who raises a different view.*

Participant*: I'll make a comment on local control. I have a lot of skepticism as a county commissioner toward that because (of past experience). We county commissioners were pushed in this direction with our local garbage or landfills. Some of us stepped to the plate as counties and we got involved with incinerators. It cost us a lot of money and it was supposed to be the best way to go and the other people would be out of business in awhile but the other people are still in business. Federal government and state government have changed the rules quite frequently as technology has been put in place and forced the counties to upgrade their systems. That has cost us a lot of money and has been uncompetitive as far as getting the cheaper land fills because we had to commit ourselves for many years when we got involved with that. Why we would not get involved as far as enforcing the rules or helping with pollution control and the rules is because I don't think the county would be given the authority to interpret the rules and be backed up by pollution control. If we could interpret the language, which our representatives and senators passed, which is broad enough and you could interpret it one way or the another. An environmentally-minded person who isn't representing that agency could come out and interpret it a whole lot differently and more strictly than what the county would. That would make the county in*

violation and make it come down on the county then for letting the person get away with something like that. They wouldn't come down on the individual so much because he may not have money to do it. But they would come down on the county, as they have many times even since I've been there, and say, "You will do this because you are an arm of the state or we will cut your funding." We don't like getting into that type of situation, especially dealing with our constituents who may be our neighbors. We may be putting them out of business or forcing them to do something that most of us would agree isn't necessary. As far as a good part that I've seen could happen, when I was on the Water Board they had programs similar to what [another participant] talked about where there was a pool of money available so you could address a problem that is happening or a potential problem and get funding to correct it and keep people in business and on the land. If there was funding to take care of potential problems, you wouldn't have trouble down the road.

Barb Freeze*: Funding for counties or funding for operators?*

Participant*: Funding for specific projects. That could come about by having a review committee. We update our water plans as counties every few years and most of these problems are addressed in the water plan. You could have a board that would come up with applications for funding and have it approved.*

Barb Freeze*: This sounds a lot to me like the state cost share program.*

Participant*: It could be similar to the state share program.*

Barb Freeze*: What would be different? Are you talking about expanding it or about having a different focus?*

Participant*: I would say expand it and fund it in an appropriate manner to adjust the problems, otherwise you have an issue like [another participant] said where only part of them get it and you have already committed yourself. In the rules they are already pushing us to say that we have "feedlots" when most of us don't think that we have feedlots. They do this just to eliminate or find a potential problem down the road. They are trying to push the counties to get involved with this when there is not the money or we don't have the authority to make decisions on the rules.*

Participant*: I'd like to make a comment on that solid waste and cost sharing to build facilities. For dairy, that is what has created half of the problem. In dairy, if you hauled your waste every day, they don't have anything to say to you all. You know you're not to spray in the ditches, etc. If you put it in the waste facility, then you were under inspection instantly. According to the pollution rule guidelines, which no one will decipher what they really are, no system could ever pass. They are engineered facilities but yet no one is going to stand behind the engineering.*

Barb Freeze*: So, you think that the cost share programs promoted the building of these basins and that is now triggering an additional level of regulation and inspection.*

Participant*: Yes.*

Participant*: I wasn't thinking the way [another participant] was. If there is a problem, we would address that there is a problem, but the operator might not have money to fix the problem. Then you need a pool of money to access, not necessarily a grant. It could be low interest money so it gets paid as the problem is resolved.*

Participant*: I also feel that there should be more localized control of rules and regulations.*

Barb Freeze*: Like at county level or township level?*

Participant*: Yes, township would be better.*

Participant*: I don't know if I can find anything good about government. I feel that in a lot of areas, they come with BMPs…*

Barb Freeze*: You mean emotionally developed BMPs?*

Participant*: Right and those things can be used as a guideline to individuals to upgrade facilities or to figure out a low-cost method to make things work.*

Barb Freeze*: You are saying that this is something you would <u>like</u> them to do, not that they are doing this already?*

Participant*: Right. To me it can be done with BMPs and then through local control, rather than a top-down approach.*

Participant*: One of the problems you have with the BMPs is who dreams up the BMPs and how do they get adopted as BMPs?*

Participant*: That's my other thing. I brought my little note card with me. I learned a new word about a year ago and I clipped it out and hung on to it because we are always talking about "voodoo" science and that kind of stuff. The definition for "factoid" is "something fictitious or unsubstantiated that is presented as a fact; devised especially to gain publicity and to be accepted as a cause because of constant repetition." What I see happening so much around us is factoid things becoming the basis for law and the basis for these rules. I really have a problem when we blame things on the agricultural sector that are happening with wildlife, like the swallows building their nests under the bridges and the geese congregating along our rivers, but our farmers are getting blamed for the pollution. I think that common sense needs to come into play. I also have one other comment on the feedlot hearings and on the rules. There were 13*

feedlot hearings across the state of Minnesota but only 2 of those 13 took place in northern Minnesota. Most of the meetings actually took place in the southern Twin Cities. So, I don't think that you are really getting the knowledge of what is happening with rural people from the rural standpoint.

Barb Freeze*: Wynne just reminded me that we are starting to run out of time, so I might not be able to ask you all the questions I would have liked to but I would still like to get your rest of your views on the general questions.*

(TAPE STOPPED - TAPE TURNED OVER.)

Participant*: But I think we have a problem when the regulation start being a hazard to them. (??) I think that a lot of the counties don't have the zoning and I think that maybe they should have zoning or an ordinance or something to go so that they can administer and protect these feedlots and the water, etc. But I do think that it should be at the county level at least. I think people need to be better educated. In our area, I know that we test the water. Like [another participant] said, the worse nitrates were found under the culverts where the barn swallows make their nests. It has nothing to do with our farms. We've tested water in our area and a few of them needed to be looked at but most of them have tested out good, so we feel…*

Barb Freeze*: (??) County?*

Participant*: Yes. We don't feel that we really have a problem but we do have a committee. If there is a problem, there are many times that we have heard the problem and we have taken care of them. We have taken care of them without any conflicts. It seems like this is the place to do it – right at the local level.*

Participant*: First, I'd like to comment on what government doesn't do well. Government, specifically regulatory agencies, have a tendency to over-regulate and to become stricter than what is really needed. This is particularly true in the state of Minnesota. It seems like we have to do things much better, even at the federal level. I don't know why that is. It's been a long-going habit in this state. Also, government does not listen to the local people the way it should. I think the feedlot hearings are one indication of that, where opinions are predetermined by the people in control there as to the outcome of the hearings, regardless of what came out in the hearings. It's not the only time I've been to public meetings when opinions have been heard by the local people and higher ups from these agencies don't listen to that, particularly looking at the rules and regulations that come down afterwards. It doesn't seem like any local opinions were taken into consideration. Those are the bad things. I think that government can help, particularly with the feedlot situation by becoming less strict on some of the rules and maybe by redoing some of the ones that have already been done. Also, if they want the local control and the counties to be the enforcers for this program, they better send some money along with it so that we don't have to add that into our local levy and absorb that cost locally. Also, as far as Pennington County we*

do have a land use plan. We do not have a county-led ordinance yet but we are going to be working on something in the next year or two. I don't know how quickly that is going to go. Our ordinance is going to let the decisions on these matters, particularly concerning feedlots, be decided by the local townships and have them give input at the local level that there is going to be a feedlot there, where that is going to be built, etc.

Barb*: Since we are going to talk tomorrow, maybe we will continue on this when we get back.*

Participant*: I don't have anything new to add.*

Participant*: I think they could make it much, much better if the state would agree to regionalize some of these rules. An example in the small end of animal units is what constitutes what needs to be regulated and what doesn't need to be regulated. In Benton County, for instance, what is reasonable as far as what needs to be regulated is certainly not the same in northwestern Minnesota as it is in suburban. The state seems to resist any effort to change things. The state is very variable in demographics, environments, land, and everything. It's a lot different here than it is in the southeastern part of the state. The environments are different and what makes sense is different. I also think the local levels of government, townships and counties, need to identify areas where animal agriculture would be desirable and acceptable and designate those areas so people who are going to move there or build a house there will know that there may be animal agriculture there sometime…that is an area where we think animal agriculture is going to be. People need to be made aware of that. That would solve a lot of problems ahead of times. I think that we need to distinguish between regulating new or expanded construction versus existing construction that is already there. I think that with new or expanded construction we need to make sure that everything is done in the proper way with permits, etc. at the expense of the people who are going to build it. They should be prepared for that expense ahead of time. But for operations or enterprises that are already there, then I think the focus needs to be on assistance in moving them into compliance. I think the state should have a pot of money to help fund those. When you do that, give the technical people in the field some responsibility and authority to look at cost and say, "[specific individual] has one over here. It's not polluting very much and it would cost a lot of money to get him into compliance, but there is a spot here that it wouldn't cost so much to get into compliance and it has a bigger problem." I think we need to do the work where it will do the most good. Stop trying to manage all of this from St. Paul and give those in the field some leeway.***

Barb Freeze*: [Specific participant], you've addressed this a little bit in your earlier comments. Do you want to say some more?*

Participant*: I'll just make one quick comment regarding what I think government did wrong in the rules regarding the feedlot process. Why is the GEIS still going on when we had legislation passed last year and we have feedlot rules that were signed by*

Governor Jessie Ventura on October 23? Several people here have said that nobody listens to their comments. That comment was made a lot at the state capital and it didn't carry any weight with anybody. Why couldn't they wait and put the rules on hold and put the legislation on hold? It was all a knee-jerking accident and we are doing the information gathering now. It doesn't make a whole lot of sense to me and that is coming from a government employee.

Participant*: That was brought up at Crookston at the hearing. They asked, "Why don't you just wait until you get all the GEIS stuff back before you get excited about any of it. Get don't you get all of the information?"*

Participant*: Other than that, we do everything right.*

Participant*: Can I add one thing. I think that maybe we are on the right track but we don't have the right procedure. I think that pollution control is making the rules and saying that we have to do things like this. Maybe all we need to say is that every county or township can grant the variance to anyone of these things. This would give the power back to the counties and then we have it.*

Participant*: Actually, there is variance language in the rules.*

Participant*: To every one?*

Participant*: There is one little category.*

Participant*: I thought you were going to say that there is one little catch.*

Participant*: You can apply to give the variance.*

Participant*: No, I want the county to have the authority to give the variance, not go back to Pollution Control and have to fight for 2 years and hire lawyers and all that stuff.*

Participant*: I'm not sure where the variance procedure is, if it's at the county level or at the state level. I've asked that question and haven't gotten the answer.*

Wynne Wright*: We're coming to the end and I appreciate the time you have taken. It's been a very informative day but I know that you have other things that you need to get back to doing in your real life. I have one last question that I want to ask before we leave, if you can you help me understand. The major theme that we have talked about today is that you want local control. Yet, Pennington County relinquished local control in the feedlot regulations back to the state. Help me understand that.*

Participant*: Because it is not local control. The state came down with a set of rules and said, "Thou shalt do this, Pennington County. You take and you enforce these*

rules and if you have questions, call us and we'll interpret for you and tell you how to do it. You do it."

Barb Freeze*: You want the interpretive power then or this variance clause?*

Participant*: I think it's like it was said earlier, nobody supports words. If you have a polluter, you have to fix it. That's a fact. The problem with the old rules in the way they were administered was that if there was a complaint, I would hear about it and go check it out to see if it was real or not or if it was just somebody poking a stick at the neighbor. If it was real, I'd call [MPCA staff member] up and say, "_____ hog farm is a real problem and we have to deal with it." [MPCA staff member]'s biggest problem was that the rules were not clear enough to allow him to take immediate action. He had to beat around the bush and eventually get after them because they didn't have a permit to operate, etc. So, he kind of had to go through the back door. There was not question that that had to be dealt with. Now we have everybody being looked at rather than just the ones where there is a problem. I think that if we tightened the laws so the PCA could have taken quicker action on the ones that were problems and concentrated on that rather than trying to look at everybody… Now we've tightened the rules even further and if they are truly to be enforced, PCA doesn't have staff to do that so the counties will have to hire staff to do that. We are spending our time looking at 95%-100% of the feedlots when it's only 5% that are a problem.*

Participant*: Or less. I think that we have even less than in the northern part of Minnesota. Maybe less than 1%.*

Participant*: To answer Wynne's question, are you saying that in Pennington County you didn't like it, so you didn't want to deal with it so you told the state, "You deal with it." Is that summarizing it in a condensed version?*

Participant*: I'll try to help answer that. When we looked at the whole scenario, Pollution Control wanted somebody to be their bad guy out in the field and we were going to get $2,900 a year from the amount of cattle that we had in are zoning to do all of this. Forget it. Let them go do it. They can go out and deal with each and every place if they want the $2,900. I don't care. Our guys don't have to get the black eye then.*

Participant*: The counties weren't given the authority to bring in any local flexibility to the rules. But you know that there is an issue of trust between governmental units here. If you look at township government and they badmouth the county. I mean, they do. Township officers get to the township officers meeting in Clearwater County and they say, "Ah, the county is really screwing us on our road budget." Well, you know, the county boards say the same thing about the state and the state says it about the federal level. Look at all that stuff they just piled on the state to do. So, it's all this interaction of governments and authorities. At the county it is going to be an extremely difficult process to go through but I look at other representatives that I've served with,*

unless they've come through the local system, they don't trust local government. Why do you think that we have levy levels? Because they don't trust them and it's the same thing with the feedlot rules. They don't trust the local board to do what's right unless they themselves have come through that process and know how it works. There is very little faith that it will happen properly.

Participant*: Talking about trust in different programs, the most recent was this wetland issues. We were counties that were concerned about the environment. Clearwater County kept 80% or 100% plus for wetland but the rules they put on us cost us severely, not only in dollars and cents but in load projects in dealing with other entities to get projects…*

(END OF TAPE – END OF ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION)

Stearns & Morrison Counties Roundtable Discussion

Wynne Wright: My name is Wynne Wright. I work for the West Central Research and Outreach Center in Morris, University of Minnesota, and I have some colleagues here with me today who I will introduce: Jean Coleman, Lee Paddick, and Barb Freeze. The four of us have been contracted to work on different themes. We've written these themes up on the board. These are parts of the Generic Environmental Impact Statement for the Environmental Quality Board for the state. Jean is heading the team called Land Use and Conflict. Barb and Lee are working with the Role of Government team and I am involved in the Community and Social Impacts team. Those are the three themes we would like to talk about today.

We have asked you to come here because you are the experts in animal agriculture in Stearns and Morrison Counties. We are particularly interested in learning what you know about the poultry industry and how the poultry industry is being restructured to your… So, most of our questions will be concerned largely around poultry production. I hope that was made clear to you before you came. So, you have all been involved in some way. You have some level of expertise or have been interested in this ongoing discussion. We urge you to feel free to share your points of view. There is no right or wrong answer today. We realize that sometimes this topic can be very controversial. We want to hear from all parties involved throughout the state. That is why we have selected case studies to meet with people and talk to them about their ideas and viewpoints on the subject. We are interested in the positive, as well as the negative.

Each of the team leaders will be engaged in sort of starting or moderating a portion of our discussion today. We probably won't take a break since I don't want to interrupt the flow of conversation. If you need to use the restrooms, they are down the hall and to the right. There are hot cider and coffee and cookies behind me, so please feel free to get up and help yourself when you are ready.

We will be tape-recording our conversation today. We will not be using your names specifically when we are recording or reporting the events of this meeting, but we will be using first names just so we can all be on a first name basis, if that is O.K.

Before we actually begin, I would like to go around the room and have you give us your name and tell us what you do or how you are involved in animal agriculture in this area.

Participant: My name is _____. I am a loan officer for Ag Star Farming Service. We finance and work with contract producers, primarily with Golden Plump, and some contract producers in the turkey industry as well in Stearns/Morrison and this area.

Participant: I'm _____. I am on the Board of the Directors of [local lake association]. I know nothing about chickens. _____. Our President, mentioned this (invitation) at our meeting Saturday and she felt that it was quite an honor to be

invited to this roundtable – to be asked to give our viewpoint on this. She was busy so she asked me to attend.

Participant: My name _____ and I am Stearns County Environmental Services Department. I am [specific name of position].

Participant: My name is _____. I am a feedlot reviewer for the Pollution Control Agency. I am located up at the _____ regional office.

Participant: I am _____. County Commissioner, ___ District. I live in Sauk Centre and have a farm there. I represent over half of the county and probably 60% of the animal agriculture is in my district of all counties, so I am quite involved.

Barb Freeze: As you know, I am Barbara Freeze and I am working on the role of government with (couldn't hear).

Lee Paddick: I'm Lee Paddick and I am working on the same issue. My background is that I worked for about 20 years in the Attorney General's office in the Environmental Division before doing this kind of consulting work. I grew up in northern Michigan in those 160-acre dairy farms back in the 60s, so I am a little familiar with dairy farms from that period.

Participant: I'm _____ and I work for Stearns County in the feedlots on Environmental Services.

Participant: I'm _____ and I'm also one of the people who works with farmers here in the Feedlot Permitting and I'm with the county.

Participant: I'm _____ and I'm a volunteer with the Minnesota COACT (Citizens Organized Acting Together). I grew up on a farm in New York State and I own a farm here in Morrison County. Minnesota COACT has been active on the issue of concentration of animal agriculture, environmental safety and the preservation of the access to a safe food supply by supporting independent family farmers. They have spoken on this issue before the Minnesota legislature, it's county board, and other organizations. I appreciate being here.

Jean Coleman: My name is Jean Coleman and as Wynne said, I am leading the team that is doing research on land use and conflict around animal agriculture. I am an attorney and a planner. I work for a consulting group where we do a lot of planning and zoning work with rural, local government. The reason I was interested in this topic and was interested in working on this project is because practically everywhere I go people have feedlot stories that caused a public meeting of 50-150 people to come out. I am interested in coming up with some possible solutions for people.

Participant: I'm _____ and I work for Stearns County in Environmental Services, feedlot unit.

Participant: I'm _____ and [job title] of the Stearns County Environmental Services Department. We have a responsibility for not only feedlots, but all of the land use issues that are associated with a planning zone.

Participant: I'm _____ from Melrose. I'm here because our Pastor, _____ was invited and he couldn't be here. He asked me to come in his place. I was born and raised on a farm and have been involved in agriculture all my life. I was dairyman first. In the last 3 years, I have been in the turkey business west of Melrose. I do live in Melrose and am retired and all, but my boys are running the business.

Participant: I'm _____ and I'm [previous participant]'s brother. I have a farm in Stearns County. I have a chicken farm, a breeder farm, for Golden Plump.

Participant: I'm _____, President of the Stearns County [fraternal organization] and I am a dairy farmer, so hopefully the "birds" won't be Greek to me.

Wynne Wright: Thank you all for coming. I really appreciate it. We have a very diverse group of people, which is just what we were aiming for. Again, I would like to invite you to get up and get refreshments whenever you would like to. One requirement for facilitating the flow of communication, we request that just one person speak at a time. If you can remember -- I am terrible about this -- to say your name before you speak so the transcriber will hear that when typing up the notes. Please speak up.

I'm going to start by turning our conversation today over to Jean who is interested in rural development.

Jean Coleman: I'm Jean Coleman and I'm leading the research on how local governments have used or can used or should use local land use controls to reduce conflict around feedlots. There are other levels of government that have other tools that Barb and I will talk about later, but I am specifically interested how we can use local controls to reduce conflict at the local government level, county and township. My questions are therefore about conflict and land use. The first thing I would like to do is to ask everyone around the table to answer the question of whether you have been involved in a conflict, as you would define it, around feedlots, particularly around poultry. If you haven't been involved in a conflict around poultry, perhaps you have around another type of animals. Thinking about that conflict that you may have been involved in, briefly tell us what event caused you to get involved. For example, I would expect Wynne to say, "I have been involved in many conflicts and my job got me involved." Somebody else might say it was your neighbor or brother got you involved.

Participant: I've been involved in lots of conflicts on animal agriculture. The number one reason is because the land use rules, and now the Minnesota-state rules, are written to

be based on complaints. When you have a complaint-based land use system, it pits one neighbor against another. I have been involved in quite a few conflicts. [My organization] recently spoke before the Stearns County Board because of the conflict that was occurring around the granting of the conditions permits for the _____ chicken layer barn expansion. We also spoke before the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency about that expansion. The issue is that the ordinance is written to be based on complaints.

Jean Coleman: So, it is a complaint-driven process.

Participant: Absolutely.

Jean Coleman: [Directed at specific partcipant], have you been involved in conflict and what precipitated that?

Participant: I haven't been involved in too much conflict regarding poultry. Personally, my involvement has been more with dairy and hogs, again, based on my job working with feedlot permits and setback issues and those types of things when the public gets involved.

Participant: I just started this position two weeks ago so I haven't had much conflict.

Participant: Oh, the honeymoon period.

Jean Coleman: Did you live in the county before then?

Participant: I actually live in (??) County.

Participant: As County Commissioner I have certainly dealt with several of the issues. I am a member of the Planning Commission, so we have gotten to deal with the _____ conflict and also with some of the turkey barns and some of the Golden Plump barns. That's all I'll say about that for now.

Participant: As part of my job, I have been involved with conflicts, not so much in poultry, but with other types of facilities, such as dairy.

Participant: I have been here for 6 months now and I think a lot of our work over the last 4-6 months has been with dairy and some hogs. The poultry issues have been mainly the _____ feedlot, for example. My participation is work related.

Participant: Nothing with chickens. We were involved with one hog feedlot issue.

Jean Coleman: What got you involved in that?

Participant: People coming to our meeting thinking that we should do something or could something about it when we really couldn't other than offer advice and I think we did that with the County Commissioners at various meetings. We offered our input to that also. Our main concern was not that it was going in. We were concerned about the possibility of pollution and I think this was resolved when he realized that we were going to be monitoring him, or watching him. I think that is the important thing because we both are out for the same thing, really.

Participant: I've not been directly involved in conflict. My involvement is more on the lines of compliance with existing law from the lenders perspective. We require compliance before we pursue any kind of financing on facilities.

Participant: In our particular township, we have had zoning for about 22 years already. A number of years ago with the dairy expansion, we had to grant a variance because we all live on these 160 and 200-acre farms, so, naturally, the setbacks are not there. So, that is a bit of a problem.

Jean Coleman: The setbacks to comply with the county or the township?

Participant: Ours were township. The counties are even more restrictive.

Participant: I retired from the Town Board about a year and a half ago, and I was on the Board for about 10 years.

Jean Coleman: The same township?

Participant: No. [other participant] was lucky. He had zoning but we didn't. We still don't. We are underneath county rules now. It seems to be working. I don't hear a lot of complaints in our area but we do have a unique township in that we aren't as much ag as [other participant]'s township. We are probably more residential. There is a lot more residential and I can see more problems down the road, especially with bigger…not so much with poultry but with the dairies. The farms are not big enough to sustain these large herds. You are too close to the residential areas and you are too close to the neighboring farm or neighboring resident. I can see problems coming down the road.

Participant*: I was only involved in one conflict and that was not serious. That was east of (??), in Washington County. About one-half mile or about one-quarter a mile from our farm, a group wanted to come in and build in a residential home area. We were invited to come to the meeting to tell them how we felt about it and it got voted down because it would be near too many homes. If you know _____, _____ is moving over to the East. I'm not saying that it won't happen someday.*

Participant: We get to see conflict from both sides of this issue. We see the conflict between the existing farmer and the residents who will be out in the area and we also see some conflict in terms of expanding operations…chickens, hogs, dairy.

Participant: It's really not too much of a problem around here. Most of them are broilers, which are all totally confined. They don't create a whole lot of odor. Layers create more odor. We recently had one big expansion that caused controversy.

Jean Coleman: Is that the same one that…

Participant: Yes, that one will probably be referred to a lot, I imagine. Other than that I can think of only one incident where there…(couldn't understand him).

Jean Coleman: We have one poultry example and maybe a couple of other poultry conflicts in the back of people's minds and a few other conflicts around dairy, it sounded like. Now I'd like you to think about your involvement in those conflicts. Could you tell me a little bit about the conflict, your role, and if you took any action to resolve the conflict, what were those actions? As the neighbor, the farmer, the government staff person, what actions did you take to resolve the conflict? Can you also tell me whether those actions were effective? Did they make you feel satisfied that those actions were effective? Did you have feelings of accomplishment or frustration or how did you feel about the actions you took? I would like to open it up to anyone who would like to describe the conflict that they were involved in and the actions they took to resolve it.

Participant: I'd like to use our poultry example. One of the things we did as an organization was to do a background research to find out if there is dust, odor, a smell from layer barns. Is there something distinctive between layer barns and grower barns? We compiled that research. Our initial letter was to the Pollution Patrol Agency. At the variance hearing before Stearns County, we recommended building a berm and the operator had proposed weather hoods. So, we supported weather hoods to help direction of the dust. As an organization, I think it turned out to be a positive, better result than would have occurred otherwise, I think. My personal opinion is that raising animals in that manner is not healthy for consumers, but that is a personal opinion.

Jean Coleman: But your group is doing the research in order to inform the public agencies, the PCA, the county board -- you thought that was particularly effective?

Participant: I think that it is important to do your research. You can't just go in and say, "I don't like this. It is going to smell. I don't want it here." You need to be able to know what the basis is for this. Or if somebody comes to [our organization] and says, " I have a problem." We have to establish that the issue is valid. You do that by researching it.

Jean Coleman: That sounds very positive. Would anyone else like to comment on this?

Participant: My staff and I are essentially liaisons between our Board of Adjustment, which is the board that decides on whether to grant variances, and our Planning Commission, which is the board that decides on whether to grant a permit -- (looking at) the consumer or the general public and the project proposer. So, we have to be kind of

problem solvers and sort these things out. Our role in this conflict… We gathered public input and heard the concerns. I heard the concerns that [another participant] was talking about. We met several times with the project proposer and his attorney and tried to work out some compromise solutions. We eventually brought this matter forward through our Board of Adjustment and Planning Commission.

Jean Coleman: I'd like to hear from a County Board member and the Planning and Zoning Commissioner in response to that. Do you have similar views about the role of the staff and then could you comment on the role of the Board?

Participant: Yes. In regard to this whole issue, I think that [another participant] was instrumental in getting facts to the [Board]. There was an environmental impact study done, right? Out of that study…

Participant: There was a regular… assessment.

Participant: No. EAW…

Participant: (??)

Participant: Anyway. Out of their recommendation came a lot of things that I think [another participant] was instrumental in getting out on the table. That was the hoods on the fans, tree plantings, burms and that kind of thing. That was a big decision-maker for me, since they were going to go through those steps to do those kinds of things. This influenced my decision in favor (of granting a permit). It helped that we were able to work it out. So, the staff worked hard with it and so did everyone else to make sure that things were carried out -- the hoods on the fans, a burm put in, trees planted that would grow, etc.

Jean Coleman: How about the role of the County Board with the Planning Commission? How do you see that in resolving conflict?

Participant: The County Board per se pretty much leaves the conflict up to the Planning Commission. It's kind of a way to delegate the powers out or whatever and take the heat off of the Planning Commission. They can be appointed so they are supposed to be able to take the heat. The Board can come in and sometimes resolve some of this stuff and compromise a little bit more from what the Planning Commission came up with if it has to be.

Jean Coleman: Have you taken that role?

Participant: Not in this particular case. We agreed with the Planning Commission 100%.

Jean Coleman: In any other case, have you had to…?

Participant: Yes, with setback issues but not particularly with animal feedlots. Sometimes we do, but not generally. We try to use the staff recommendations and the Planning Commission.

Jean Coleman: Would anybody else want to talk about their role in conflict? What you might have done to resolve conflict?

Participant: We tried on this hog farm that we were involved with. That was the time you were adopting your feedlot rules and quite honestly, I wouldn't want to have been directly involved in that. I remember one particular case where we tried to mediate this. We invited people from the County to come. [Another participant] wasn't at our meeting but several people from the County and Environmental Services did come. We had people from Browns Lake who were on our chain and our watershed and we had the president of the _____ Lake Association, which is a different deal altogether. Finally, after much haggling, the people from the County said, "O.K. If we do an environmental impact study for you and it goes against you, will you accept that." He said, "Absolutely not. I'm going to continue fighting it." Right and then there I said, "The hell with it. He doesn't want to compromise. It's either all or nothing and that doesn't work." So, I think we kind of walked away from it. In fact, we happened to have a Board meeting on the Saturday that the farmer and son were having their open house on their new hog set-up, so we all went down and ate ham sandwiches with his family and got a tour of the building, which we knew we wouldn't be able to do once he was in operation. No one could get in there then. We are talking to each other. I was really disappointed when the guy said, "No, this is what I want you to do and I'm going to keep fighting if it goes against me." That's not the way to do it. Both sides have to be willing to compromise. I don't think we have any problems with it.

Another kind of odd thing happened. That fall, we sent our newsletter out, talking about the feedlot that had just started. I had two people come to my house and say, "We just read your newsletter. Should we sell our cabin since that feedlot that is going in there?" I said, "Where have you been? All summer there have been articles in all the papers about all the meetings and now, finally, you hear about it." I said, "No, don't sell it. That's the worst thing you could do. That isn't going to bother you." "But that is only a few miles (away)." I said, "So what?" "Yeah, but that's a feedlot." I said, "So what? It isn't going to bother you. Don't sell your cabin."

We go to these meetings and the people out there don't read the papers and they don't know what we are doing. That's the whole thing. I think [another participant] and [another participant] run into the same thing. You can hold meetings and talk and talk and all of a sudden someone comes up and wants to know when you are going to do something about this. Well, we've been holding meetings on it.

Participant: They never heard about the ordinance.

Jean Coleman: Would you do that again? Would you act with [local advocacy group] as a facilitator in a situation like that if it came up again?

Participant: I think we have to. I think we have to.

Jean Coleman: So, there were some good things even though it was frustrating?

Participant: Yes, it was very frustrating but we saw the other side of it too. You know, it is a case where you know you have to compromise but you don't really know what the other side is doing and we did learn that. We learned that they are human beings just like we are. They are trying to make a living. They are not trying to pollute and we have to work together.

Participant: Stearns County implemented a feedlot Task Force and maybe [another participant] can reiterate on that a little bit too. The County Board and the Planning Commission and the Board of Adjustment put a lot of weight on it. I think that has worked out very well since we have a wide variety of people in these groups.

Participant: What [previous participant] is talking about is that for each application that comes in and requires a conditional-use permit, we have a review group.

Jean Coleman: So the Task Force is ongoing.

Participant: Yes. It meets on a monthly basis and they are…

(TAPE ENDED - TAPE TURNED OVER)

Jean Coleman: How often do they do that?

Participant: Not very often but there have been a couple of times where they did actually do that.

Jean Coleman: Interesting.

Participant: I can speak from my side of the issue. I have tried to get information from agencies. It is difficult to do. You ask for information but you don't necessarily get it all. So, getting the information you are talking about is pretty hard to do. When you do go to a public hearing, the applicant is often given an unlimited amount of time to present their information, but people who want to speak in opposition are limited to how long they can speak…sometimes to 1 minute, sometimes 2 minutes, sometimes 3 minutes. If you feel this an issue that is going to affect you for the rest of your life, as a feedlot does, to be limited to 2 minutes is extremely frustrating.

Oftentimes from a land use standpoint, if the existing ordinance is a problem for a particular operator, who happens to be fairly influential, they'll just change the ordinance.

Jean Coleman: That has happened?

Participant: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. In my experience, I don't think that agencies make use of existing information. When we were working on information, particularly on the poultry issue, there is a lot of information by the ASAE (Agricultural Society of Agricultural Engineers). Some of that is international information, work that has been done overseas that has established this information. What we want to do is have more research. Well, let's take the research we already have and look at that, rather than doing more research. When you try to get information from the University of Minnesota, they will be happy to take a grant and do more research but they aren't as willing to say, "Look, in Denmark they have setbacks or bills like this or they do this because this is a particular problem." They don't want to tell us about that. Instead, they will say, "Ah ha, if you have this facility, we will be happy to get a gazillion dollars from the legislature and do the research." So, we think that too often they are reinventing the wheel.

Jean Coleman: I'm going to ask one final question and then turn it over to Wynne to ask more questions about community and social impacts. I've heard suggestions about what actions or things or changes in statutes could really make a difference in getting conflict resolved. Does anyone want to give their opinion about one change you think might make a big difference in reducing conflict?

Participant: You were talking about not being able to get information from the university. Has it gotten better with the County now? When this hog operation started, the County didn't have their rules so they were going with empty? They had certain rules, he didn't follow them, and they didn't enforce it. Now I think that with the County, we can at least get a hold of somebody in the County when we are backed into a corner, and I think we have a chance on some of these things. They seem to be living a little bit closer to the problem. So, I think that that is possibly better. They are familiar with the problem and they have to answer to the people here. Anybody else? Now you are FCA. How do you feel?

Participant: My question right now is, is there really a magic bullet?

Participant: I think leads is the magic bullet. I brought this to the Morrison County Board and I said exactly the same thing. If you have a feedlot that is being built, rather than just sending out a letter or proposal, say, "The conditional hearing is today. Come and speak." What you do is take all those people who would be notified, the feedlot operator, a planning person, and a county board person. You should let them sit in a room and let them say as much as they want to say and you do that before a public hearing. You can resolve 99% of this stuff if you let people get together before the public meeting thing.

Jean Coleman: There are some very positive things to that, I think. I hear you reacting to the constraints of public hearings. Is that right?

Participant: Yes.

Participant: I think we do address that through our Feedlot Review Committee meetings that are held on a monthly basis. Those are open, public meetings. For example, with the _____ situation, we did have [specific producer] come in and give their presentation and there were also public members at that meeting. I thought that was a good opportunity to have both sides of the project, so to speak, as well as county people in there discussing the project, looking at different alternatives and project configurations to be made and so. I do think that we have a process in place but maybe that is something we can work on enhancing in the future.

Participant: In my experience, I think that is just a little bit too formal. One of the issues that came up was that there were some people who never came to public meetings to speak and they probably wouldn't have spoken there. But in a less formal setting, all of the neighbors might have been there. That is what I am saying. You can do a lot of stuff at the very informal setting.

Jean Coleman: I'm going to hand it over to Wynne now.

Wynne Wright: O.K., I would like to continue with that theme because I am jotting a couple of notes down. Just to refresh your memory, my task in this process is to somewhat discern what the impacts on the communities well being and the community health well being, particularly focusing on those places where there might have been conflict. What has that meant as far as your social relationships, community congeniality, trust and relationships with your neighbors and other community members? One of the things I would like to draw on from the previous conversation that we were just having is that I heard some of you saying that maybe there are people who don't feel like they are part of this process. That they don't necessarily feel like there is a forum where they can speak up and to express their praise or dissatisfaction or am I off track there? Do you think that is the case?

Participant: I'm from Morrison County. I haven't been to every Planning Commission meeting that we have had but the ones I have been at, the public has had a lot of opportunity to speak. They will give them and opportunity once. They will go around the room and it is not limited, at least not in this County. It may be in other counties.

Participant: Stearns County -- We do not limit unless things really, really get out of hand but I can't recall in my 7 years of being here that we have ever had to stop public comments.

Participant: At the Planning and Zoning meeting when we were hearing about _____, there was a person who had several pages of information and the chair said, "You certainly aren't going to read all of that, are you?" So it was his…

Participant: Was that hearing continued then?

Participant: No. No.

Wynne Wright: I think that is significant but as a sociologist I'm wondering or concerned about community cohesiveness and trust among neighbors. I'm wondering if it's possible that there are some neighbors who feel like that for the sake of peace in the community or the township, they are a little bit intimidated to speak up or…?

Participant: This is along the educational end of things. As part of our department Internet web site, we have a feedlot portion of the web site that lists a lot of different information about our feedlots in general and the permitting process, and our county processes. There are different links there that will steer you to different research out there. It think that there is a link to some of our conservation district regarding cost share funds so I think that is a real useful tool for getting some of that information out to the general public. I don't know how many times we have people make a head, so to speak, on that web site, but I think we have at least gotten that far in …

Wynne Wright: Yes, I think that I have seen it. How would I get access to that information if I didn't own a computer or didn't know how to use the Internet?

Participant: You would probably have to go to a public library or other public areas that have free computer access. Also, again on the education end of things, we do have a number of meetings in the winter that we will be planning with the soil and water conservation district and the natural resources conservation service. These will be more focused on feedlot producers. We will be talking about some of the new MPC rule changes, county ordinance changes, research, etc. so there should be ample opportunities for feedlot producers and even the general public if they are interested in coming to some of these meetings.

Wynne Wright: Are they offered during the time of the week where the typical person who works from 8-5 can attend?

Participant: From what I understand, most of the meetings are usually during the week at 4:30 or so. I just want to stress that we do have ample opportunities out there.

Participant: I know that in this area (??)High School has a computer coordinator, an expert there, who would like nothing better than to help people (learn the computer). Eden Valley High School has that and I think that there are a lot of them also in St. Cloud besides the library.

We are talking about formal meetings. I can come over here to the County Commissioners meeting and that is formal. You get up there with a microphone in front of all of these people. How many people can do that? How many people can really do

that? But you can sit next to a guy and talk to him. I think that is what we are talking about.

Wynne Wright: So you think that some people might have that fear of being on center-stage or fear of the microphone?

Participant: Right. And most of these are televised.

Wynne Wright: Oh, televised.

Participant: Yeah. Pretty soon your neighbors say, "Oh, I saw you at that meeting. You made an ass of yourself." A lot of this is fear of the unknown. If I have a couple of farmer (friends) down there who talk about someone I don't know and they say, "Well, he's doing this. He's putting this on his farm." My first response is to think that that's terrible until I meet the guy then I find out he's not such a bad guy and can ask, "What are you doing over there?" He may respond with, "This is what I'm doing." "Oh, that's not what I heard."

Wynne Wright: So you think that face-to-face contact is a plus in defusing conflict, like Jean was saying.

Participant: Right. A small group like this.

Participant: The reason people get in touch with [participant's organization] is because there is an issue and they don't know the process. They don't know who to contact. If they do know who to contact, they don't know what to do about it. A lot of those people are just plain scared to death to speak in public. This is something they have never done, and they don't have the foggiest idea how to do it. There are people in this feedlot issue who have been threatened, who really feared for themselves to coming out and speaking. So, it is a lot easier if an organization can speak for them. Then they don't have to put themselves in jeopardy. There were particular hog lot issues where a person was going to come speak at a public meeting and she got a phone call just before the meeting that said, "If you go and speak, we are going to rape your daughter." I can give probably half a dozen instances where that or something similar has happened when we talked about the feedlot issue. So some people are not going to speak.

Wynne Wright: Was that here is in Stearns or Morrison County?

Participant: Stearns, Todd, Morrison

Wynne Wright: That is certainly something to think about but I would like us to think a bit about what the more typical community impacts have been on social relationships. For example, are there new populations in Stearns and Morrison Counties that have changed the dynamics of your community? Maybe created new needs for social services, education…

Participant: Yes. Some of the industries, particularly in the Melrose and Cold Spring areas, have changed some of the dynamics of our population. I think that our local population is not able to keep up with the work demand so we have imported a lot of workers from the outside. The Melrose area has a lot of Hispanics and the Cold Spring area has a lot of Laotians.

Wynne Wright: What sort of needs do they bring that your community has adjusted to or failed to…

Participant: Public health issues. We had an outbreak of tuberculosis, I believe, in Cold Spring about two years ago. That created a whole era of new public health needs.

Wynne Wright: Did you have inoculations?

Participant: I don't know if there were inoculations, but there were certainly a lot of health assessments, mantle tests, and…

Wynne Wright: At the school?

Participant: No, at the work place.

Wynne Wright: Are these new workers working in the poultry related areas or any animal-agriculture-related places?

Participant: They are working at the processing plants.

Wynne Wright: Are they bringing families?

Participant: Yes.

Wynne: To relocate sort of semi-permanently?

Participant: Yes.

Wynne: What are other needs that those families bring to the communities?

Participant: Housing.

Wynne: How has your county met those needs?

Participant: I don't know about the county but I'm bordering the city of Melrose where we have a large Spanish population right now. I'm guessing that there have been a few HUD projects in the last few years. I'm now familiar with the housing projects, but I know that it is a bit of a problem.

Participant: It is. I think that the County Board has had some discussions with that group. There is an affordable-housing Task Force there that is studying the issue of how to provide affordable housing. That is one thing that has spurred that. There may also be some kind of local, individual efforts.

Participant: The thing that I see happening is…Hispanics tend to cluster. It's not the Hispanics fault; it's probably everyone's fault. When they cluster, they tend to get into more trouble. I think that St. Cloud probably has the same problem with the Laotian colonies. We need to get these people to learn our language so they can fit in our communities. We have to help them. We have to do things to do this because the Hispanic population is going to get larger and it is going to get worse. There was a rumor in (??) High School as of today. They were going to celebrate (??) at 11:00 this morning and there was supposedly a threat. The Hispanics don't agree with this (celebration), so they were going to come with their guns and shoot. So a lot of kids stayed home today. That is just one little incident that is already coming into our schools.

We're not used to this in rural America. You have to understand. Minneapolis and St. Paul have had this problem for 30-40 years but we're not used to this. We don't know how to cope with this. We need to figure out new ways and better ways… I think this is here permanently. I think that we are going to be importing a lot more people later before it is all said and done. People are starting to retire and the workforce out there - there just isn't enough to meet the demands of employers. So, it's going to get worse instead of better and we'd better start learning how to deal with it.

Wynne Wright: Let's hear from [another participant].

Participant: I think that is one of things that we have been trying to stress to counties. That you do a long-range, comprehensive plan with maps. How is your community going to grow? You do this with the cities. If you are going to let concentration of livestock come into your community, there are other problems then just building the animal facility. You have to plan for processing, transportation. How are you going to handle, not just the manure, but the production? It will become more apparent in dairy because you are going to be bringing in people to work in dairies. You will be bringing in people to work in the processing plants. You need to have your infrastructure in place if you are going to allow this concentration to occur in your community. I think that too often County Boards don't look beyond the feedlot and they figure, "I'm going to let this feedlot go in because this guy just wants to stay in business…just wants to stay on the family farm…blah, blah." There is so much more beyond that county boards and maybe townships don't look at…and cities are negligent on this issue because they are the ones who usually have the burden of housing to bear. You have to look beyond that. If you have a land use ordinance in Stearns County, does that include a comprehensive plan that allows for everything else that comes with that industry?

Participant: I'm from Melrose and as I said, Father _____ asked me to come here. For months now, he has a mass once a month that is just for a Hispanic mass. He is getting over 100 people (coming) now. In fact, he has one next Sunday at 1:00 in the afternoon. I think that is a start. We need to mix with these people. Our Chamber of Commerce also in the fall had a 4th of July celebration. The Hispanics have a different day. Now they have that day on September 15th(??), I believe. They had a good turnout.

Wynne Wright: What is that called?

Participant: I'm not sure what the Hispanics call their…

Participant: It's their Mexican Independence Day, isn't it?

Participant: Cinco de Mayo

Participant: It's not the 5th of May.

Participant: No, the 15th of September. They had it in the park and had a good turnout. This is a start. You know Melrose has about 300 people working in…

Wynne Wright: This is very interesting what you were talking about. Is it Father _____?

Participant: Father _____

Wynne Wright: Is this a mixed congregation?

Participant: No, it is not.

Wynne Wright: It is a special service within your church, but Hispanics are still not mixed in with the local residents?

Participant: Right. He has a priest come in who does the mass in that language. He can't do it in that.

Participant: Just as my brother just said, the language barrier we have is the biggest problem. We have some of these people working for us at times and I wish that I could understand them. That's a problem.

Wynne Wright: You may not be able to answer this, [participant], but are you familiar with programs that train employers in Spanish? Are there any farmers taking Spanish classes through extension programs?

Participant: I took a Spanish class a couple of years ago at night and we had the lady from the local bakery in our class. She hired a lot of them (Hispanics) and she took this

beginning Spanish class. I know that the grocery store in Cold Spring carries some food items especially for the Hispanics. St. Monica's in Cold Spring also has a Spanish mass, I think, once a month and a priest from St. John's, I think, comes in for that. But you know, we talked about how they kind of group together and if you look, our ancestors did that too. The Germans wouldn't talk to the Irish. You go over to Eden Valley, a town of 700-800 people, you had 2 Catholic churches, an Irish and a German. So, we can't fault these people. You tend to group with those that you can talk to and everything.

Participant: So, you have to make them feel like they fit in because if they feel left out, they are going to cause trouble. That is a natural thing.

Participant: Sure they are. Isn't Spanish, next to English, the largest language in the world now?

Participant: I think English is second to Spanish now.

Participant: Is it now? That's possible.

Participant: Would it possible that the companies who hire them (Hispanics) would (have them) go through a 3-month process of learning English language before they take that job and that they would have to pass a little test before they got the job? This way, they would learn some English so that they can… I will gladly speak to them but if I can't understand them, I'm not going to talk to them.

Participant: I don't think you have that trouble with the young ones. The young ones seem to pick up the language much easier than us much older people.

Participant: I was just thinking that maybe that would be a useful tool that we could (implement).

Participant: In the parochial schools, they are teaching Spanish to our grandchildren. I have an 8-year old grandchild who comes home who can count in Spanish already. I think that is great. At least the next generation will be able to do this.

Participant: I have a granddaughter in Montana like that. She can count in Spanish and I think that she is in preschool.

Wynne Wright: Are the school systems teaching English as a second language? Do you know? To any of the Hispanic or Laotian children?

Participant: I think you are asking the wrong group.

Wynne Wright: There isn't anybody with school-age children or experience here? Let's think a little bit then more specifically about conflict over animal agriculture and more

specifically over turkey/poultry operations. Have these conflicts led to strained social relationships in your communities?

Participant: Not in our community that I know of.

Participant: I think some isolated incidences like the _____ case. I know there are some hard feelings on both sides of that issue. That hasn't been the case in all of our dealings with feedlots. It depends on the location.

Wynne Wright: Maybe you can't speak to this but how does that manifest itself in the community? Does that make for strained social relationships in the church?

Participant: I think we have some anecdotal evidence out of the _____ situation, [directed toward another participant]? There is big impact right in the church. That was a very divisive situation. It was a hog feedlot. It was very divisive in the community. The _____ case didn't have a wide community impact but it certainly did with several individuals who were neighbors.

Wynne Wright: How does that strained relationship manifest itself with the next attempt at some sort of community dialogue concerning feedlots? Is it still present? Does it linger on?

Participant: Oh yes. Once you create a situation where you are pitting neighbor against neighbor, it's really really hard for those people to set aside those problems. I don't' know how much of it you've had in Stearns County but in Morrison County there was a person who spoke up in opposition to a feedlot. So, a farmer drove up in front of their place and turned on the manure spreader and dumped a whole load of manure in their front yard and said, "Don't do it again." So, I think that if you are going to use land use planning, if you are going to use the law, you need to make sure that those laws are written so clearly that you don't require neighbor to speak against neighbor. It's the weaseling that ends up in the lard or... When the first land use ordinance in Stearns County was passed, _____ expansion could not meet the setbacks. He wouldn't have been allowed to build. They changed the rules and that's put him 50 feet off. For 50 feet or 47 feet, my gosh, that's giving a million. It's not good when a county does that because you are going to have people that say, "They are just writing rules for the feedlot people instead of writing rules for the community."

Participant: I was part of the feedlot committee and when we discussed setbacks, we weren't sure what number to pick. I mean, we weren't sure what number to pick but out of 20 some people on the committee, everybody decided on this. After half of a year, we are realizing that because of the proximity of all the farms in our county, especially in our township, that we can not possible meet all those setbacks. I don't think the rules were changed to meet one or two operators. It was a consensus of that committee that this had to be done, so I don't think that Stearns County should be accused of changing their feedlot ordinance for one person.

Participant: Were you given information about odor and particularly (??) from different areas in order to help you find (??) Did you get something, say, from…

(TAPE ENDED - NEW TAPE PUT IN)

Participant: Yes, we learned about some of the new methods of controlling odor.

Participant: I think that handicapped you.

Participant: Well, I'd also say that it educated us about some of the things that are possible with odor problems.

Participant: If you had been given more of the information and research that is already established – maybe even just some of the modeling that has been established – you would have been able to make a more educated decision.

Participant: Let me speak. In my neighborhood, we granted a variance to a dairy farmer, probably three years ago, who wanted to grow. There is a problem with odor when you get larger numbers but also, the dairy industry is disappearing in our neighborhood. Almost none of the farms have dairy animals and this person wanted to grow and he has the land to apply the manure because all the others are quitting. We had no place to sell our feed or rent our land to, so it has also benefited. You have to look at both sides of it. Granted, there are some problems with large numbers of livestock, especially with odor, but somehow we have to deal with those issues.

Participant: About 6-7 years ago when we were trying to zone our township, one of the gentlemen of the township got up and said, "You wont' believe how agriculture is going to change over the next 5 years. We won't know it as the same." This was before all the large dairy operations got started. They have only started in the last 6-7 years. I usually am one to look into the future and not one to look back much, but I wondered if he was going to be right. Looking back, I see that the gentleman was right. We don't know how agriculture is going to change. The young people are not going to stay on the farm. They don't want to farm these 160-acre farms because there is no future for them. We don't know which ones are going to quit or which ones are going to survive, so how can you say, "We're going to stay with these pre?? and we're going to be real strict and not grant any variances." Well, if we don't grant this guy a variance and the other guy quits a year later, now he could have had the variance. Am I right? So, what I'm saying is that we have to allow some growth in our community because the animals are going to be clustered. They're not going to be on these 160-acres farms anymore. They just won't because that's not the way agriculture is going. That's the way I feel.

Participant: I think that part of the expansion in agriculture can be linked to the concentration of the processing facilities. I've been very active in sustainable agriculture so I'm really familiar with what works economically. I can point you to farmers in

Stearns, Morrison, and Todd Counties that do rotational grazing, grass-based dairy who will make twice as much money per cow as the larger animals. And these would be facilities milking 60-100 cows. I have not seen a single county entity come out and really aggressively work in support of those types of management to keep independent agriculture going. The biggest growth in Minnesota in the dairy industry last year was the organic dairy farmers who grew by almost 70%. Where is the state of Minnesota? Where are the counties in encouraging that growth because those farmers can live and work along side residential people without the conflict?

Participant: I'd like to respond to that. That is going to be fine because I think that the organic farmers right now are getting at least $17 a hundred, I believe. Am I right?

Participant: Yes.

Participant*: That is O.K. until there is too much. All of a sudden you have doubled your production of organic milk to a point where the market can't take any more. That price is then going to drop also. Right now it is a new thing. All organic agriculture – there is a place for it – but it can be overdone. When you get too much of anything, and heaven knows I've been a farmer for 53 years, you will have a bad price. We see that in dairy right now. There is too much milk out there. We don't have too much organic milk right now but if this other milk price stays down at $9 for very long, like it is right now, you will have more people go to producing organic milk and that will drive that price down to where they will not make much money.*

Participant: I agree with you. Yes, it would be great if we could just raise our cows again. That would be just super, but I don't think that is going to happen.

Participant: I don't think your point is completely accurate. There is not too much milk, not in the state of Minnesota. Not when Minnesota is importing it from California and other states. There's not too much milk in Minnesota.

Participant: I don't have any figures on that.

Wynne Wright: Let's think a little more closely about conflict and then I probably need to turn this over to Barb and leave. But, I want to ask one or two more questions before I do so. Let's heard from this end of the table. I haven't heard much down here. Have there been issues in the newspaper? Has your media played much of a role in reporting issues about animal agriculture in Stearns and Morrisson Counties? Your local newspapers or radio programs? What sort of role do they play? [Another participant]?

Participant: Well, speaking about the last 6 months. That was right before I came and that is when the ordinance went into affect so I'm positive that there was a lot of media exposure in the past but, I guess, I don't' know. I might have to refer to [another participant] or [another participant] as far as how the media has played in the last few months.

Wynne Wright: I'm most interested in knowing whether they have played an objective role. Do you think there as been a fair-handed presentation of issues?

Participant: Yes, the St. Cloud Times covers most of our Planning Commission meetings. They usually look at both sides of the story and they are shooting pretty straight. They aren't trying to skew their story one way or the other.

Participant: Thinking a little more about this, I can add that one of the local radio stations, KASM, is pretty active in reporting agricultural events, news, you name it. I even had an opportunity to speak on that radio program. So, they are pretty active in promoting events related to agriculture.

Wynne Wright: A lot of you are very active in working on this issue. What do you think that you could do to enhance community trust, community congeniality over this issue? Or is there anything that you feel empowered to do in the course of your work?

Participant: I know that some of the producer groups put on demonstration days. I'm thinking of the Farm City Tour that was put on in June.

Participant: That goes over real well. There are 100's of people that go to those things. They get to talk to the farmers who are hosting a tour of their farms. They have lunch and an open house where they are inviting people from the city to come see what is agriculture is really all about.

Wynne Wright: How long has that been going on?

Participant: 3 years and every year it has grown.

Wynne Wright: Do you know if that emerged in response to community conflict issues?

Participant: Yes, that came right after the _____ hog dispute up there. I think that was when they realized that they had to do something to get the city people to realize what is going in rural America and vice a versa. We need to get along.

Wynne Wright: Are these producers from all sorts of species or types of farming operations, not just hogs?

Participant: No, it's always been dairy.

Participant: I think the Dairy Advisory Committee has been instrumental or have worked hard in getting this Farm/City Tour thing going. I'm a member of that committee, ex officio, of course, but this is strictly to promote dairy in Stearns County. We are having a lot of trouble with ordinances and things like that to… Minnesota has probably got some of the strictest ordinances that keep some of the dairy out. I'm afraid that Stearns County

is going to lose one of our major dairy plants, be it AMPI or Kraft. If they see that Stearns County is not going to – I'm talking dairy now – promote dairy or have some incentives and they come to a point where they have to make an expansion or do some major improving, they are going to say, "Well, it doesn't look good. I don't think we are going to do that." Then they will just leave. The dairy farmers who are left will probably have to haul their milk to Wisconsin or South Dakota or Iowa or whatever. That will take another dollar out of our milk price and that is really going to hurt.

The poultry industry has been quite active, especially the turkey industry – Golden Plump – in making sure they have the plant and then they go out and solicit growers. We don't have that in dairy. If they get a ruminant plant, they go out and solicit another barn somewhere. I think turkey plants do that and so do (??)

You talked about the media and that is something they could get involved in, but I don't think that they want to stick their neck out and start promoting something.

Wynne Wright: The media?

Participant: Yes, the media. Places like Albany would probably, but I can't see the *Times* doing it because it is controversial. When you bring livestock and people together, you have problems but we do have to think about keeping our infrastructure sound. We are losing more dairy cows now than we are gaining. The way it is going to go is they are going to go on larger farms. We know that is going to happen, so we just have to figure out how we can live together and let it happen.

Participant: I have a question for [two other participants]. Does the County take into account or keep any kind of information about the turnover of cows and dairy farms? How long does a cow live on a 1,000-cow dairy farm versus, say on your farm?

Participant: As far as my knowledge, I don't think that we have statistics. I have heard rumors that the 30-cow dairy and pasture is going to last longer than it will on a 1,000-cow dairy operation. And that is one of their big costs because it costs a lot of money to replace this. My knowledge is that the large dairies have been getting their replacements from the "Ma & Pa" operations that are selling out. So, now they have another 30-50 cows that they can bring into their group. But, if they can't reproduce fast enough, it's going to start to hurt.

Participant: I know we heard you talk about poultry. Talking about the future of livestock in Stearns County, if you lose these independent dairy farmers, you are going to be losing the large dairy farmer at the same time because you don't have anybody to economically raise the replacement for the replacement heifers because the turnover and life on a 1,000-cow farm might be a year where life on your dairy farm would be 5 years or 10 years?

Participant: I can only tell you what I've read. The national average is 1.7 or 1.8 lactations, so you are talking less than 4 years. This is a national average, so I have no idea. It's not very much.

Participant: I raised beef. When I milked cows I was quite young and we brought a cow on and she stayed forever. So, I'm not familiar with this.

Participant: I have a degree in animal science/dairy. Animals that are put in these larger herds are also pushed quite hard. They probably produce double what your cow will produce in one year, so that could also be part of it. They are producing much more milk than the smaller herds are, so that's why they are lasting longer.

Participant: The smaller herd lasts longer than the larger?

Participant: Right.

Participant: Genetics is key. When I was milking cows 20 years ago, a 50-pound tank average was pretty good. In today's standards, you are going to lose your shirt trying to milk cows that way and the genetics have increased enough where you can get that 75-100 pound tank average now. So, the large dairy probably has an advantage by turning over the genetics faster than the smaller dairy that is going for 5 years in this county. Once a cow milks for 5 years, you are not getting the genetics that the larger dairy is enjoying.

Wynne Wright: It is a good time to turn the remainder of this discussion over to Barb and Lee, who will talk about the role of government. In a tradition of community neighborliness, I just found out that our neighbors are going to be quite loud, beginning at 3:30 p.m. I apologize. Maybe they won't be as loud, but apparently…

Participant: It makes us all feel free to be loud as well.

Wynne Wright: I hope it doesn't interfere with our tape recording.

Lee Paddick: I'm passing out a sheet of paper that has number of roles that government might play in relationship to feedlots. This may not be all of them but it is certainly a number of different places, starting with analyzing basic and environmental land use and health impacts through regulation. In Minnesota, the environmental review process, the environmental assessment worksheet, the environmental tax statements are certainly permitting the local and state level with state and feedlot permits and conditional-use permits. There is an information or educational role that government can play in providing information on environmental, health, and operational issues. There are certain technical assistance roles that governments play – some financial assistance roles and cost share. There is responding to complaints, inspecting facilities, and enforcement of the state or local regulations.

I'd like to go around the around the room and have you respond to two questions. Among the roles that government plays, is there an area where you have a real concern? Is there an area where you think there is a problem, whether it be not enough financial cost share money or no one responds to complaints or no enforcement being done, or there isn't enough research being done to support operators? We start with that and then I'll come back and ask a second question related to that. We can start any place and then just go around from there.

Participant: I just want to bring up a point regarding regulation, environmental review, permits, etc. At the Dairy Advisory Committee, one of the extension agents brought a point. He was talking to a farmer from California about the regulations in Minnesota being stronger than in some of the other states. This person said, "Do you know what they are making us do now? They are making us line our manure pits out here in California." The extension agent said, "Well, we've been doing that here in Minnesota for 20 years." So, the regulations are different from state to state and the perception of regulations is different. And it makes a different on the costs our farmers have had to put up with to stay compliant with Minnesota rules, versus California. Well, if they can just pile their manure up for 40 years and never haul it off, it's a little easier going. Some of our tough regulations come because of Chesapeake Bay, for example. All the poultry litter out there never got spread. I guess you could call it lax rules in that state. I guess they are lax compared to what our standards area. I feel that Stearns County has adequate regulations for getting rid of the manure and stuff like that. We're not going to tolerate it just lying around like that. I think that I'll just leave it go at that.

Barb Freeze: I'd like to probe a little more. Are you suggesting that Minnesota's regulations are just strict or that they need to be combined with the other states?

Participant: I don't like to see this, but maybe we need federal standards. EPA is not being equal in their standard per state. They are telling Minnesota how many animals we can have per animal-unit in poultry, hogs, and that kind of stuff. I think that they are lax in other states and we need some kind of… We need a balance of all the states.

Barb Freeze: Have you seen operators saying that they are not going to come to Minnesota or they are going to go to other states because of the different regulations?

Participant: Not in particular. I would relate to the Mennonites that moved in my area that they came from Indiana, I believe, and they expressed a lot of anxieties that they had to go through to get their permits approved and things like that. It was easier to get permits in the state they came from. Granted, we were just in our infant stage in getting this ordinance going, so I think that was some of the trouble…not knowing what all had to be done. We did get it worked through, but it took them 6 months to get a permit. I mean, there is nobody living within 3 miles of them. That's ..

Lee Paddick: Do you have any thoughts from your state where you have concerns?

Participant: I guess one of the biggest concerns that I have is the point of the perception of EPA's role. I think that a lot of times we are brought in when there is a land use issue and we really simply don't have a role in land use issues. I think that sometimes there is kind of a temptation on the part of… a lot of these complaints might be on land use issues. We have to come in for an order complaint or other kinds of complaints and it really turns out to be more of a bickering between neighbors.

Participant: One of the things that strikes me is that I think that we are going to be continually working on and streamlining our permitting process. Right now the worse case scenario is where a feedlot operator would have to start in a township. If that township had zoning, it would possibly deny granting a permit and from there, the feedlot might have to go through a variance and/or conditional-use permit as was the case with _____. From there they might need a state disposal system permit and a national discharge system permit. We have all of these permits. I think that any way that we can streamline that process, the feedlot producers are going to be happier, the states are going to be happier, and we can just make it a better streamlined effort.

Participant: I'm not that directly involved so I would just as soon give my time over to [another participant] or one of the people on the end. They can use my time here. They are a little more directly involved in this and this effects them a little bit more.

Lee Paddick: [Directed to a specific participant], is there anything on the banking side or the lending side that you are concerned about in regard to government role issues?

Participant: Boy, I agree with [another participant] there in regard to streamlining the process and the logical kind of chain of events. We need to have them spelled out to the individual producers so that they know where to go and who to talk to get adequate permits. I don't know if we need anymore regulation. Maybe we just need compliance on the existing (regulations) and a chain of events and some kind of flow chart based on animal units on where they go, etc.

Participant: I know that our township association has fought hard to keep the controls as much as possible at a local level. We don't need ECA or the state or the counties for that matter telling us what to do. I realize we have to have some oversight but I think that sometimes if we had a little more financial help from up above, without all the regulations, we could do an even better job on the local level because your neighbors know what is going on versus somebody from St. Cloud or St. Paul.

Participant: Let me ask a couple of things related to that. If you are going to operate that way in your township and you see a lot of other townships that you are familiar with around the state, what kind of technical assistance information would you need from other levels of government for you to feel comfortable doing your job? Or do you feel that you have that information or technical guidance that you need?

Participant: The cities of Melrose and (??) are currently involved in the Wellhead Protection Program. I'm sure that you must know about that. One thing new that we don't have and I don't think anybody has is the odor expertise on what the odors can do, so I think that maybe we are lacking there. As far as spreading the manure and having enough land, we can all get that information. I think that the neighbors know when somebody is over-buying manure versus calling St. Paul and saying, "Hey, he's not doing this right." I think that we can do it better at a local level than anybody else could possibly do it but we don't always have the money. The townships are very poor. They don't have assistance like cities do.

Participant: [Directed to another participant], I'm wondering if I could follow up a little bit on this because [another participant] just raised an interesting question about the competing jurisdictions. The question I have for you is, do you feel that you have not just the expertise but the kind of ability to set standards where you like them while your neighbors then might set lower standards and then the farmers would leave? Do you find that if you try to raise your standards then people are threatening to leave or simply go out of business because they are competing with people who might have lower standards than yours?

Participant: I guess you might say that is happening with townships and states all over the country? We certainly don't have that expertise but we can use whatever the universities or people give us as far as their application and things like that so I don't see why that has to be a problem. I think that down the road if things were kept at a local level we would all be better off.

Participant: I agree with [another participant] to a point. The only bad part about it is that as our farmers are growing, they are going to different townships with their operations and they may be in two or three different townships. So, you are going to have a little bit of a problem there. Adding to what Don said, I think that we farmers can compete with any farmer in any state in the United States. To add another part to that, we were down in Minneapolis/St. Paul a couple of weeks ago where there were a bunch of cattle trucks going by. Lo and behold, they all had Saskatchewan, Canada written on them. I know where they were heading. They were full of hogs. That is O.K. but Canada and Mexico should have to live with and be regulated under the same stringent rules that the farmers in the United States, in Minnesota, in Stearns County, and my township have to live with. We can compete with anybody. Our work ethics in the upper Midwest is second to none but if we have to compete with Mexico, where they have hardly any or no regulations or with Canada, which is very loose about it, it's going to be a long hard road for us. Especially if we have to meet all of these strict rules where we have to spend a lot of money. Even our governments are going to be put under a lot of strain to pay for redoing a lot of these manure pits and things like that. Do you know the dollars it is going to take to redo all this? How many farms does Stern County have? 3,000?

Participant: 2,500.

Participant: 2,500 farms. If 60%, 70% or 80% of them have to redo their pits, can you imagine what the cost for that is going to be, not only for the local governments but for the county and state?

Participant: I talked to some folks in North Carolina and they have a cost share program to do some of this. We have a (couldn't hear the rest)

Participant: I have no problem with that, but then let's require Mexico…or else we'll end up taking their food (hard to hear). You know we have a North American Trade Agreement. It was supposed to have been the cure-all for American farmers. It has been the death of us since it came into effect. Until we get Canadian farmers and Mexican farmers to live underneath the same rules and have their food federally inspected the way ours is, I don't see that we have too much of a future. You ask why young kids aren't staying on the farm. That is the reason. We have to operate under the same rules.

Participant: I would rather see it on a local level because I think that we can monitor our neighbors better than the EPA can.

Participant: I can't add too much to what has already been said. From a regulation standpoint in regard to turkeys, I was told by Hormel – we sell to Hormel – that they do not operate under the same regulations that they do in North Carolina as far as commendation and stuff. We did get that straightened out though Hormel. As growers, we couldn't have (changed) this but they (Hormel) fought that wherever they had to fight it to get the same regulations.

(TAPE ENDED - TAPE TURNED OVER)

Participant: Whose fault is this? Is that the (??) fault? I don't know.

Participant: Once that application is made, it should not take us long to process that permit at all. If that is something we are hanging onto and requiring new information, then I think we need to point the finger at ourselves. Once an application is made, it should be just a matter of 30 days or less before that permit is issued.

Participant: I don't know which one you are talking about but sometimes they take awhile because they have to go through different channels. The EPA or conditional-use permits could take longer, but otherwise it should just be a few weeks. Sometimes we have so many we have to prioritize them. We divide them up and do some right away and we do some last. Some we can do right away and others we do last.

Participant: If a permit came through the state there could have been some issues that we had to request for additional information for those that were not submitted in the proper fashion. If there is an EAW required, that could take a long time or EPA permits require

(some problems with the tape here). If it's a regular permit, it should take 60-90 days, I'd say.

Lee Paddick: [Participant], do you have any thoughts on this?

Participant: Yes, I have two issues that are of primary concern to me. The first and the most important, I think, is the amount of financial cost share funds that are available to farmers. Probably the number one issue that I hear is, "I would be more than happy to fix this problem but how am I going to do that? I just don't have the resources." I always hear references back to the state and federal grant programs to cities in terms of waste-treatment facilities. Why not for the farmer? So, I think we need to do a careful assessment of statewide need for upgrading these facilities and making sure that we have a concerted effort going to the legislature to get those funds.

I agree with [another participant] that we need to level the playing field when it comes to regulation. That is probably the number-two complaint that I hear from producers here in Stearns County. "Why aren't we on the same set of standards as North Carolina or Iowa or wherever it may be?" So, those are my two big issues.

Participant: I'd like to expand on what Don said about technical and financial assistance. One of the hardest things that we do is to go out to a feedlot, find problems, and tell the farmer that they have to fix them. They will respond with, "How am I going to do that?" The only way they can do that is to put a pit in or cover it or move it. All of this would cost about $32,000. The new state rules have alleviated that a lot but we are still going to have some… It's nice to have the means there for them to fix the problems.

Participant: Or a group or somebody who can put that into the planning process and promote it (couldn't hear the rest) is the big issue…

Participant: I'm sort of surprised. This is supposed to be an environmental impact study. Everybody around the table so far has said, "What can we do to streamline the process for feedlot operator?" I haven't heard one word about the impact it is going to have on the environment and I think that is really what we ought to look at. What will the effects of feedlots have on the environment for the animals? For the people? For the water? For the air? I think those things need to be considered. In California they can start spreading manure from the dairy operations now and they can do it 24 hours a day for 3-4 years and they would never be challenged. That doesn't make what they are doing right. An EAW from what I've seen is pretty much fluff. It's made to accommodate whatever the operator wants. There has only been one EIF as far as I know in the state of Minnesota that may have been Hancock Pork and that is being contested right now. If we really, truly looked at an EIF, Environmental Impact for Feedlots, we would be showing our farmers how to manage livestock in a different manner. Technical and financial assistance -- we have to remember that those are tax dollars and they come out of our pockets. Why aren't we encouraging farmers to operate in a manner that doesn't take the subsidies? Inspecting facilities and enforcement – I have never seen a feedlot shut down.

Once they are up they never stop. Once they start to pollute, there isn't a hog pit barn that is not going to crack and leak into the water tables. It's impossible. It's engineeringly impossible. It is going to crack and it's going to get into the water table. The particular issues with the poultry facilities – we have estrogens from laying barn and we have foss roots (??). In the state of Minnesota's feedlot rules, instead of staying within the recommended limits for foss roots given by the University of Minnesota (which were 25 graze, 20 oats, or something like that), they just raised the limit. Does that make the pollution any less? No, it made it worse, but to accommodate feedlot operators, let's just raise the limit. That didn't address the problem of lakes and rivers. So when we are looking at the environmental impact of feedlots, I think what we are saying is that if we are going to streamline the process to make it easier to operate feedlots, we are doing a disservice to the environment and to the general public. Regarding the government role in feedlot siting and operation, I agree that local control is absolutely the best. [Participant's organization] has fought the Minnesota legislature for years to keep local control. We believe that there should be uniform, national standards for environmental pollution. That includes feedlots and that includes the secondary impacts on communities. We are talking about processing plants and how they [effect communities in regard to housing]. I think those should have federal standards, but I think that we should keep local control and I really think that we have to look at the environment in the future. I don't care if California has a gazillion more cows than we do. If I can step outside and breathe the air and if I can drink the water, California can keep the cows. I can live here and I can be healthy and I think that should be the government role.

Participant: Some of my concerns are based on the new state feedlot rules and some of the timelines that we as counties have to look at. Staffing issues and prioritization are questions. How are we going to meet these timelines with 2,800 feedlots in the county? Consistency and fairness to the farmers are other issues. They have up to 10 years to fix problems under the new rules. There is no way that we can get to all of ours in that amount of time, so fairness so that everyone has the same opportunities is an issue, as is cost share availability. When we go out to sites, we may not look at odor issues as much but we do look at water quality issues. We do nutrient management plans with farmers. Those are the requirements of the permits. If we find run-off issues, when we go out there to do could potentially put them out of business and I have a hard time with that, coming off the farm. So, that is a personal concern of mine. I think the new rule has done some very good things to address those issues, giving people time. My concern is where is the money going to come from? We have a good rule now but do we have the money to back it up and the staff and time to get out to all of them. There are many issues. I think that there were many public comments during the hearing process that were incorporated in the rule and I think that is really good. I think that we have come a long way in just the two years that I have been here in getting things on more of a local level. I think there are a lot of farmers that we have worked with who are pleased with the work that we have done with them, in trying to work with them and giving them time. I don't think it's all negative. I think there is a lot of positive too.

Lee Paddick: Last word on problems.

Participant: I don't have anything more to add to that.

Lee Paddick: Now that we have covered concerns, we can probably designate the last half hour where people can take 2 minutes to say what is government doing wrong. Actually, I do want to make sure that we ask the other side of that question. Are there things that you see that are promising, whether it is some of these public involvement techniques, new regulations, or cost share money that is being studied. Are there things that you can identify that you think government is doing particularly well or that you think they need to continue to emphasize? I will just open this up to the whole table, rather than go around through the whole group.

Participant: I see the new feedlot rule, which has just been active since October, as being laid out with very sound technical requirements for protecting the environment for Minnesota. I see it as a real step forward rather than trying to develop policies to accommodate problems that we see at the agency. I think that it is a real step forward. It is complicated and it will take some time before we get into a good solid implementation but I see it as a real positive step.

Participant: It took a long time… I don't know how many drafts they had on the feedlot ordinance to…I think it was eleven or so…it was a good year, I think, or more in working on it. So, there was a lot of thought put into it.

Participant: The county feedlot regulations?

Participant: Yes, the county feedlot regs. There was a lot of thought put into that. It wasn't something that they just drafted and then snapped their fingers and put into law. They had a lot of hearings. I attended three of them and they were well attended by the general public. I think the county should be commended on the fact that they went ahead and did something like this.

Participant: We're one of the first counties you've done, right?

Participant: One of the first in this area.

Participant: Morrison has had theirs for quite a few years.

Participant: So I just want to comment that I think it was time. It was probably a little past time, but that is always the case. We never act until we have to react, but I would like to say that I think what the farmers do, and most of them are very good farmers – they are concerned about the environment just as much as those who live in town or live on the lake. We care too about what happens to our ducks and our geese, etc. Many of them are hunters and fishermen and such. The final comment I want to make here – because I have to leave here and go pick my eggs – I would like to say that things are still

driven by economics. As long as farmers have to make a living – We have to pay our bills. I'm not complaining. I didn't come here to complain today. I just want to make the comment that unless we can make a decent living, we don't want to have laws drive us out of business. We want to be able to work with the community. We want to work with the environment, but we also have to make a living. So, there is always the need for compromise. Show me a politician who doesn't compromise. It's going on in Florida right now. There are going to be some compromises down there. Anyway, that is what I would like to say. I'd like to stress the need to compromise. Adding the environmental issue is very, very important. It is top priority, but so is making a living.

Lee Paddick: Any other thoughts on government's role?

Participant: Yes, I think one positive thing is the amount of research that is going on in Stearns County right now regarding feedlots. We have an Offset project that we are working on at the University of Minnesota. As I mentioned earlier, we are going to be working with FBCA on the Articulate Manner study. So we do have research going on that is going to look at some of these different issues regarding the impacts on human health, so I think that is a real positive.

Participant: A lot of the environmental regulations, etc. etc. have to do with education. You have to go back in history to 65 years ago when we came out of a severe drought in this area. Fish and Wildlife folks were actually paying farmers to haul manure on to the lakes to feed the fish.

Participant: Yes, people do that all the time.

Participant: That's right, so that kind of gets instilled. "Heck, that must be fine in order to put manure on the lake." 60 years ago or 20 years ago farmers were getting subsidized to tile. We got lime. 40 years ago the University comes up and said, "If you guys fall plow, you are going to gain 10 bushel of corn an acre." What did that do? It didn't help us environmentally. I'm blaming all of this on the government. 20 year ago we still had farm programs where they recognized the farmer. 10 years ago and now it is a consumer program, so the farmers are kind of on the back end of this thing. Also, 10 years ago the soil and water folk, along with the state, started working on watersheds and started working on the water quality. By working on these feedlots and manure pits, etc. etc. some of the reports that I'm reading from MPCA say that our water quality is getting better and that has been strictly voluntary work. I think some of this stuff is working. It's just going to take time. We still remember 70 years ago when we were hauling manure out on the lake to feed the fish and it's just going to take some time to work all this out. I don't think there is any farmer out there who is intentionally trying to pollute. We went from fall plowing to chisel plowing. We are leaving materials on the land. That is encouraged by our extension service and the universities. It's going to take time. It's going to take education. We are just going to have to keep pounding at home and let these people know what works. We will need the regulations too to control how much manure is being applied out there. With minimum tillage and that kind of thing and

getting into phosphorus, soils can hold phosphorus. If you can keep soil in place, it's not going to pollute anything. You can have a million pounds of it out there per acre and it ain't going to pollute anything if it doesn't get into the water table.

Participant: How can it pollute?

Participant: Airborne.

Participant: Phosphorus?

Participant: Yes. It combines with the soil and it becomes air born.

(Many people speeking at one time…couldn't decipher what was being said)

Participant: Just a couple of thoughts. Here are some of the positives that I've seen. I'm looking at the permitting issue from both sides of the fence. I spent 20 years working at the ECPA before I came to the county. No offense against my state counterparts, but I think that permitting at the local level is a better process. I think it does involve the community into the process. That is one of the shortcomings that the state has in that they have no high land use, whereas the county does. So, we are able to process our permits in a more public setting and get more sides' input into the issue into the mix. Another thing, I think that by having the permitting done at the local level, we are better able to collaborate with other units of government. We spend a lot of time working between the environmental services department, soil and water conservation district, and the NRCS. We regularly meet and set our priorities based on the available funding so that we know which facilities we need to target for inspections and cost share investigations. So, those are two positives that I see.

Lee Paddick: Wynne, I'm not sure how we are doing on time.

Wynne Wright: We are doing O.K. if you have a couple of more questions.

Lee Paddick: We just have a couple of follow-up questions that Barb would like to address.

Barb Freeze: A lot of things have come out of the course of our discussions already regarding disputes. The one that we have heard the most about was about [name of producer] (??). More than likely, you've had some involvement with this. I wonder if you could just walk us through it a little bit with the type of facility it was, the process that it went through, the analysis, the outcome and how these people feel about it right now. I think that might be a good case study. Are there others? For our purposes, with and Lee and I working on the role of government, it may not be just poultry. We are also interested in dairy. Perhaps we could ask [participant] to start us off with this since you have mentioned this a few times.

Participant: I consulted on that too.

Participant: Why don't I let them give you the technical aspect, the size of the land use and those kinds of things and then I can tell you things from my perspective.

Participant: He applied for grants. He has two 100,000 chicken layer barns, so he has 200,000 animals.

Participant: Why don't you back up way before we had ordinances, etc. He had gotten permits…PCA didn't…way back.

Participant: O.K. I believe it was about '97 before we got our current feedlot ordinance. He got the state permits and set up his two barns. There were no state setbacks at that time. He planned on putting up three barns there but only put up two of them up to start with. Each barn holds 100,000 chickens. About a year ago he applied for a variance from two neighbors and the property line.

Barb Freeze: The variance was from the set back requirements?

Participant: Yes. Since he had built the barns, we created the feedlot ordinance and now there were setbacks. Now, in order to put that barn in he needed a variance from the two neighbors and the property line. Let's see..

Participant: There was an EAW that was required by the state…

Participant: Yes, he started with the EAW.

Participant: Our part in the process stopped then.

Participant: He applied for the variance and the Board of Adjustments said, "Let's wait until he gets his EAW done."

Participant: He was required to do the EAW based on the size of the expansion.

Participant: Who decides that?

Participant: EQB rules.

Participant: The Board of Adjustment waited until that was done. He came back and applied for a variance again. It was denied.

Lee Paddick: He applied for a variance a second time before the…?

Participant: I guess it was continued so it was the same variance. So, the EAW was done, they finished the meeting - his hearing for the variance and they denied it. Then

after that the feedlot rules changes again and now they were even less. They revised their feedlot rules in April in Stern County. Then he applied for a 2nd variance and at that time it was approved.

Lee Paddick: He needed a variance again or…?

Participant: Just from the property line that time.

Participant: Yes, that's right. I forgot to mention that. Since the setbacks changed, now he only needed a variance from his property line, instead of the property line and the two neighbors.

Barb Freeze: So, he really didn't need as many variances because the ordinances changed?

Participant: That's right.

Barb Freeze: And what was the result of the EAW?

Participant: A negative declaration on the EAW.

Lee Paddick: And it didn't condition the declaration on any particular condition being implemented at the litigation?

Participant: Nope.

Participant: Actually, the mitigation measures that our Board ended up putting on came as a result of discussion between the public input from June and there were a couple of other neighbors there, the applicant's attorney and our staff to this feedlot review committee. That is really where things started to get resolved as we were trying to mitigate some of the environmental issues that we were hearing about.

Barb Freeze: I'm trying to understand where this…the fact that there was difficulty in getting a variance, the fact that there were no county ordinances, and the fact that this had to go through an environmental review made it a complicated enough process that people were starting to talk to each other about the facility. The conflict really surfaced in those three different contexts but I think it would be hard to attribute which specific action began the conversations.

Participant: There were four public hearings in the course of this whole thing -- two variances, a conditions permit and a EAW.

Participant: So the lesson we draw from this is that the more complicated and difficult the process is…

Participant: Here is one thing that would have resolved a great deal of the issue to begin with way back when for the EAW. If the PCA, Pollution Control Agency, had come out to the site and done actual, on-site dust and odor collection, rather than base that on theoretical modeling, it probably would have resolved a great deal of the issue to begin with, because it would have established or not established the amount of dust and feathers and stuff that was coming from the barns. Another thing that we brought up was the concern about the estrogen quality of the dust and the effect on the environment. It's been a little dry lately but there is a wetland just east of that site. There is some research that covers the estrogenic quality of manure from layer barns, which is different than on grower barns because layer hens producing manure have more estrogen in their manure because they are layers. Layers have to have that hormone in the body to lay eggs. There is some research on this that raises some real questions about how to handle that. Those issues were not even addressed by PCA at all. They were never answered.

Participant: Were they addressed at all by the county?

Participant: No, because the county deals with land use issues, not pollution. It wasn't an issue that we should expect the county to have to resolve. The PCA - it should have been resolved there. If they don't' want to address the question, they just don't answer it or they just say that it's not relevant, even though it may be a very relevant issue. They just say, "O.K. We're not going to address that. We just won't do it."

Participant: I have to agree with [another participant]'s first statement in regard to the on-site monitoring. One of the reasons our Board of Adjustment gave for denying the initial variance was the lack of trust they had in the modeling data for the dust emissions from the facility.

Barb Freeze: It sounds like there was a fairly high level of controversy built up and then some of that got resolved through the process by discussion. What triggered the turn toward resolving some of the issues and a little bit lower level of controversy about the final action on the facility?

Participant: It's been my personal experience that I haven't been before a Board that has turned down a feedlot. You have to go in assuming that you are going to lose. Is there anything that you can do to help resolve the issue. It has been my experience that burms do help with dust and odor and if the Board was going to approve this anyway, is this a way to help solve the problem? Because they couldn't' get PCA to come do any on-site monitoring, let's try and stop it and stop the dust and odor from breaking from the facility. I think this is going to be a wonderful opportunity for students in Stearns County at this particular site. I think this is a wonderful opportunity to put a resolution in place.

Participant: So at some point, your realistic view was that you could get certain things and the producer was willing to say, "These are things that I can do to help deal with the conflict."

Participant: Yes. I think the issue of the quality estrogen and quality manure is something that has to be resolved by PCA. That is a state issue because that is pollution. For the counties, it's land use and I think that Stearns County has absolutely done the best they can. What the law allows them to do, I think that they have done well.

Participant: With respect to the burms and there was reference to hoods, did those solutions emerge in these hearings? Did they emerge through…?

(TAPE ENDED - TAPE INSERTED)

Participant: There is another method where you box in the fans that I thought would have been better than weather hoods that would have been more practical for the farmer or the operator.

Lee Paddick: Wynne, I think that pretty well covers our thesis.

Wynne Wright: Great. Before we close I'd like to give you one more opportunity to speak. Is there something that we missed or something significant that you would like us to know that wasn't raised today?

Participant: In the state, feedlot rules they are going to now require manure management training.

Participant: For applicators.

Participant: No, for operators…manure management plan. If that is a land management plan where they take into consideration not just the manure, but the fertilizer they have already put on, the previous crops, the quality of the soil… If that turns out to be a land management plan and we train the farmers and the people who receive that in a total land management plan, I think that is the most beneficial thing that would have come out of those feedlot rules.

Wynne Wright: So you are saying it would be preferable if it were a systems approach to management, rather than manure management or land management.

Participant: Yes, I think that the way the law was written it can be a land management plan.

Participant: It sounds to me like you are talking specifically about land application of manure.

Participant: Right. Nutrient management plan.

Participant: If it is applied in a location that is remote from the operator's land or if it is on their land, they should take into account prior cropping soils, water, etc.

Participant: Everything.

Participant: But not necessarily how they manage the pit? This is more…

Participant: That is what we do when we…

Participant: There is a process. What is it? USDA?

Participant: There are a number of cooperators locally.

Participant: And they will pay you? It is a 3-year program and they call it a water quality program and they will pay you to learn how to do these things properly?

Participant: EQB

Participatn: Yes.

Participant: This is in the new Minnesota feedlot rules. I think that needs to be a total nutrient management plan.

Wynne Wright: O.K. Anybody else have any more suggestions or comments.

Participant: I have one more comment. From an economics standpoint specifically to the poultry production in Morrison and Stearns County on a contract basis, those units provide income to those family farm units that are trying to stay on the farm. Close to 75% of the contract buildings are placed on 40-60 cow dairy farm units to help support family income and to keep those families there and in local communities and in the rural areas. I think that is an important part of contract poultry production, keeping the family farm unit.

Wynne Wright: O.K. I would have one other request. This is how I envision stage 2 of this process. In the next few months the 3 teams will be continuing to spend time in your communities, talking to people - maybe yourself or others. So, before we leave if you have other folks that you know of that you would like to recommend to us who would be good resources we would appreciate that. You can tell me before you leave…

Participant: Can we get your contact information?

Wynne Wright: Well you each got a letter with my signature on it, so you can let me know today or you can think about it in the next 2-3 days. We really appreciate your participation. We realize that you had other things you could have done today -- play in the snow or whatever -- but we do appreciate it. This is an ongoing process and we want to tap into as many residents and people that are involved in this issue as possible. So, thanks for coming!

Rock & Pipestone Counties Roundtable Discussion

Wynne Wright: (Tape begins mid-conversation) a little bit what you do? Your relationship to agriculture, animal agriculture, the swine industry in particular? You want to start?

Participant: Ok. Um, _____. I live in the Northeast Corner of Rock County have a place, an address. I farm about 600 acres. Used to be in hogs, I don't any more because I did run for County Board and did serve two terms and just was elected to my third term. Since I do serve on the Land Use and Environmental Task Force over nine counties which meets in (?) quarterly. We're concerned with planning and zoning and with the County Board, thankfully, I really am involved with a lot of things with agriculture, of course. . .

Participant: _____ (participant stated name)

Participant: I'm _____. I own _____ out of [name of Rock County town], Minnesota. We manufacture and sell swine equipment, mainly that's our whole line - swine equipment.

Participant: I'm _____. I'm from Luverne , Minnesota. I work for [local financial institution]. . . and I'm an ag. lender, financing production agriculture, which includes swine production.

Participant: I'm _____. I'm the [name of position] at the Rock County Land Management Office, which deals with all of the land use permits and also, regulatory part would be . . .

Participant: I'm _____. I work for University of Minnesota Extension Services in _____ County.

Participant: _____. My nickname is whatever anyone wants . . .in Pipestone. . . plan and sell and service livestock systems for the housing, handling, smoking of beef, dairy and swine. I have a career, I'm an employee with the (??) office of [business name] deal with the permitting and legalization of. . .

Wynne Wright: Thanks for coming.

Lee Paddick: I'm Lee Paddick. I 'm one of the researchers on the project. I'm working particularly on issues related to the government's role related to animal agriculture. . .All the way from, everything from the financial systems to some of the regulatory parts, and inspecting. . .

Participant: [Name], retired farmer, sometimes I live on the farm yet. . .

Participant: I'm _____ from Pipestone. I'm a consumer, I guess that's why I'm here and [name of person] wanted us to represent the group.

Participant: I'm _____. I'm kind of a tagalong too, but [name] and I have [name of company] in Pipestone, which is a P.C. (?) fertilizer company and. . .

Participant: _____. Transferred here from _____. Live on a farm and raise a little cattle and hogs. . .

Participant: _____. Live on a farm in south . . . Raise hogs, crops. . .

Participant: I'm _____. I work for Pipestone County. I work on the zoning side of things.

Participant: _____. I live just outside of . . . Live on the farm, raise livestock. I work in a hog. . .

Participant: _____, I live on the south part of Rock County. I farm 600 acres. I own two 1000 head (??) barns with a custom feed hogs in. I also have a broiler barn where I custom feed chickens in. I'm a member of the Rock County Planning and Zoning.

Participant: _____. President of the _____ County Township Association.

Participant: _____. I'm a farmer that lives in Jasper, Minnesota, Pipestone County side. We raise pigs, corn, soybeans.

Participant: _____. I live between Pipestone and Edgerton. I'm a grain and livestock producer.

Wynne Wright: Ok, great. Do you, do you. . .

Participant: _____ I just couldn't resist going to a GEIS meeting within two miles of my own place, rather than going to the cities for . . .

laughter

Wynne Wright: Ok. Lets see. [Name] - oh, that's a used one. We're running out of name cards. We have a really good turn out. Usually some people turn us down. But not in Pipestone and Rock County, and you don't have a name thing. Is it [name of participant]?

Participant: _____.

Wynne Wright: Pass it down there. You can write on the back of Jean's. Well thanks again for coming. Before we begin I would like to pass around a sheet, asking you to sign your name. We need a record of how many people participated and we would also like to

send you a follow up information about the on-going nature of this research. So, particularly those of you who did not receive an invitation, maybe you're filling in for someone. It is important to have your address. Ok? Just pass that around as we begin.

And I want to start by throwing a general question out there. If you could tell me a little about how animal agriculture has changed in your communities in the past 5 to 10 years?

Participant: I think that a better question would be maybe how it has changed from 20 years.

Wynne Wright: Ok.

Participant: A lot of changes have happened in the past 5 to 10.

Wynne Wright: A lot have happened in the past 5 to 10.

Participant: Or, more concentration.

Wynne Wright: Ok, concentration. Can you elaborate a little bit on that?

Participant: Um, well it depends on how far back you want to look at it, but I mean, say thirty years ago everybody had some pigs and some cattle and some chickens, or whatever. Now everybody's got to, more or less, specialize in one thing.

Wynne Wright: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

Participant: And instead of having four farms on a section, there's maybe only one.

Wynne Wright: And if this does, process, does, sort of occur at different rates of speed, in different areas - so maybe you should tell me, is 30 years ago about when you started seeing this trend in Pipe and Rockstone Counties? Or . .

Participant: Pipestone and Rock.

Laughter

Wynne Wright: What did I say?

Participant: Rockstone and Pipe.

Wynne Wright: Rockstone and Pipe!

Laughter

Wynne Wright: I did know where I was at.

Laughter

Wynne Wright: I'm dyslexic.

Laughter

Wynne Wright: Terribly!

Participant: We do have rubber tires on our cars.

Laughter

Wynne Wright: Ok. Maybe you-all should ask the questions.

Laughter

Wynne Wright: Getting off to a good start. Tell me a little bit about how the changes of concentration, maybe, or other factors in animal agriculture have impacted you communities?

Participant: Well, in the swine industry, really in the last ten years we've really seen the changes there. Um, I have no numbers for sure, but, you know, 50, 60 customers that all have (??) finish offers of their own. Maybe 50 cells, 100 cells, 200 cells. That number is down to five or six, less than ten. But we do have several that combined now and concentrated their hog production into, what is it, custom feeding for somebody. Put up custom feeding barns. Or they're investors in co-ops and they own a portion of pigs and their custom fed in large custom barns. So, the modernization of the concentration of the pork production in our county is one thing that has really changed in the last ten years.

Wynne Wright: So, it's become much more narrow and specialized in the service that they provide to the hog industry?

Participant: Exactly.

Wynne Wright: Is that correct? Do other people agree with that? Have you seen new populations come in to your communities? that are working in agriculture or the swine industry? Where's this neighbor coming from?

Participant: I've seen a decrease in the population in the community.

Wynne Wright: Decreased?

Participant: Right.

Wynne Wright: So, it has been more of an issue of out-migration for this part of, these two counties.

Participant: Correct.

Wynne Wright: Ok. And are people leaving farming?

Participant: That, too. (??)

Wynne Wright: Ok. Where are they going into - What are they going to do?

Participant: Working in the Cities. . . to get jobs. Young people won't go and start any more and as older ones retire, we don't have the young ones to take over.

Wynne Wright: Uh-huh.

Participant: That's what is driving our industry to a more specialized industry. One person can do so much more in today's agriculture than they did twenty years ago. And we have to because there isn't the labor to do the things we did twenty years ago. And that doesn't matter if it is agriculture or industry or any kind of processing. Mechanical stuff takes over people.

Participant: We do things on a more volume basis now. We have to gross more. . .

Wynne Wright: Who's providing the labor for a lot of the farm operations? - for Pipestone and Rock?

Participant: I'd say its - go ahead.

Participant: I'd say the farmer himself does most of it. That's the reason for doing it, because the margins have gotten so tight that he needs something to do - he needs a way to make more money just to make a living. And he has to do that on his own somehow, because the margins are so tight. That's why there is more, more hogs, probably, on each place, than there was thirty years ago. Plus the cost of living is astronomical compared to. . .

Wynne Wright: Uh-huh, uh-huh. What did you want to add, [name of participant]?

Participant: Well, I was just going to say that people with the smaller farms are working awfully hard to get themselves into these other operations. It adds something to the farm income.

Wynne Wright: Part time job is the higher-paying, in addition to their own farm operation?

Participant: Right. Right, that is where they get some of their other employment.

Wynne Wright: Um, are you seeing any Hispanic, Latino labor? Or other ethnic groups moving into your communities, providing any farm labor?

Participant: There's some.

Wynne Wright: Some in Pipestone and Rock County.

Participant: For sure. . .

Participant: I'd say very little in Rock County.

Participant: Yea, I wouldn't say that Rock County has very little, but maybe Pipestone has more. More than you realize.

Participant: The thing that probably Rock County would be Golden Plump or something, but food or something. I don't think they're employed too much in. . .Swine production has not brought in too much.

Participant: No. I think the processing industry has. The processing industry.

Wynne Wright: Alright, I guess I'm a little surprised because I would have thought being so close to Marshall that you would have seen …

Participant: It's coming. It's coming.

Participant: Nobles' got 'em. Has quite a few.

Participant: Nobles' got a lot.

Wynne Wright: Right.

Participant: It's coming.

Wynne Wright: But sometimes there's a flow of that packing plant labor into production, as well, in some counties, we've noticed. Um, has there been any conflict over animal agriculture, in Pipestone and Rock Counties?

Participant: Yes.

Participant: Yeah.

Wynne Wright: Ok.

Participant: You'll see that when there is a small versus a large - and times are changing. I mean, what are you going to do about it? I don't care if it is business, you know, the whole buying out, the corporate buying-out of other elevators combining farmers, getting bigger, you know. And sure there's some resistances but you probably, from the forty-about people that are, been out there awhile, you know, you hate to see them change sometimes, you know. And once it's gone, it won't be back. That's good or bad, but, you know, its something that's happening.

Participant: I'd like to add a little bit, too. Along with the change in agriculture, for example, in our county, the acreages that are being moved into now, particularly people that aren't working in the ag. industry, you still have the same amount of land out there that needs to be farmed, you still have farming practices that need to be done whether its concentrated or not concentrated and that causes animosity because they buy these acreages because they want to live in this new, nice domain out there, which is great, you know, but that's part of the troubles I see in the office - change in land use.

Wynne Wright: So, you're saying that these are non-farm, people with a non-farm history maybe.

Participant: Exactly.

Wynne Wright: People who are looking - moving out of the city. Re-establishing.

Participant: Acreages are all very well . .

Wynne Wright: And that's elevating the cost of land?

Participant: It's keepin' it there, lets put it that way.

Participant: I only see one person, young, a farm that is going to be taken over by another farmer, from the same family. I see maybe one, maybe two in six months from my place to Woodstock which is five miles wide. And from my place to Pipestone, two. Now, who's going to farm that ground, I have no idea, 'cause I'm not going to. So, I don't know what changes are going to take place, either the farms are going to get a lot bigger, or somebody's going to step in and straighten this thing out and I don't know what the answer is. But there is a generational farming that is disappearing fast. [Directed toward another participant], I don't know what the rest of you farmers feel when you travel to your counties, how many are going to take over, there just isn't in my area. Who's going to farm it? I don't know.

Participant: I think that part of the problem is the cheap food policies that this country has. The farmers aren't getting paid. If the farmers were making a better living, there would be more of us out here, because it wouldn't take 2000 acres for one man to make a living. It might take 500. So, there would be more of us out here. The United States has the cheapest food of any industrialized nation in the world. We look at Japan, or China,

or the Europeans. They spend a lot more for food than we do. And the, the lifestyle that the United States people enjoy because they got all this extra money to spend on entertainment and big cars and all this kind of stuff because they aren't spending it on food, where in these other countries are. They don't have all these nice things because they have to spend more of their income on food.

Participant: That's why we're not having a revolution, probably, in our country right now because it's to keep the people happy.

Participant: Keep the people happy, exactly. That's exactly the reason.

Participant: We might not have a president, but …

Participant: Yeah, but we have cheap food and everyone is happy!

Wynne Wright: That's a discussion for another day! We don't have time to go there.

Participant: I'd like to add something a little bit positive, though, to the - I think there was also some opportunities that some of these - on their own it wasn't panning out too good, the money wasn't here. They did some grouping together. We've seen - I can think of four or five people probably my age or so - we won't get into what age that is (I look a lot older than I am) - but middle age farmers, producers that have pulled their resources together. One part of them have become the farrowing, one part become the nursery and one becomes a finishing. I've seen that on several occasions around county. I've also seen on some of the permits we've done, you hear from the father, "Well, I really don't like doing things this way, but my son really wants to stay on the farm and we see it costs too much to add more land." so this is another option that they've chosen. So they have a quick keep, even though they may work in town on the up-start. We see that in the hog industry, and the cattle. We're seeing more and more cattle where it used to be they raised 300 head and everyone was fine. Then they went to custom feeding 300 head was ok, but the magic number now is 5 to 7. You see, so if one of the sons want to stay - I know of one we just worked with, they went to 700 head of cattle and they have a truck, low and behold, and the son helps with the cattle and plus he drives truck. But all his family members have moved back. Both sons have been gone from Rock County for a number of years, they've come back and they are in the agriculture industry, whether you want to call it farming or not. But they are raising a product. We've seen that with a couple of the swine and now we've got one with dairy. So I think that is a - it seems like the wheel goes like this - all of a sudden someone will find an opportunity in the cog. You know what I'm saying? The population - we just did our land use up again. The actual number of people that live in Rock County has not gone down in the last few years. Now whether the tax-payers are the same, I can't tell you that. You see what I'm saying?

Participant: Is it because of the farming aspect of it, [name of another participant], or is it because of your closeness to a big city like Sioux Falls?

Participant: I have to agree that some of it is Sioux Falls. Even uh, nobody thinks of anything - I talked to a fellow the other day, he works in Sioux City. Lives in Rock County. He drives a, a, well he drives a peat truck. He drives a peat truck, but he drives to Sioux City to get in that truck. Unbelievable.

Participant: There's a lot of women that are living from Chandler to Leota, or whatever that are trying to (??).

Participant: Yup, everything.

Participant: And they do. Fifty, sixty, to seventy miles, you know, up to around-trip 150 a day.

Wynne Wright: Wow.

Participant: But that's where the jobs they're after.

Participant: Do you think the reason they do that, though, is for more income, to support their farm?

Participant: Oh, definitely.

Participant: Exactly.

Participant: Well, to start the young farmer he comes out here and his dad isn't willing to help him. He needs some sort of, ah, risk - low risk income. Right? And hog buildings will do that through custom feeding. So ah, if we were - we're one part of a group of individuals, maybe they're older individuals, maybe they have the money to risk in hogs. They can help this young producer get started by reducing his risk. Yeah, he's going to need a little bit to get going, you know, at first, but once you get him going, ah, that's about the least risk, highest asset kind of operation.

Wynne Wright: Would you say that this is pretty common among young beginning farmers? this attitude?

Participant: Mmm, yeah, yeah I think so.

Wynne Wright: And would you think that the mentality would be that this is a long term strategy, or a five to ten year get my, you know, feet grounded before…

Participant: No, I think it's the long term.

Wynne Wright: Long term.

Participant: I think that the younger group is more willing to work with each other. Where the older group is more competitive. They'll eat the neighbor up for a thousand dollars, or something, you know, they would, they would, they've had to do that all their lives - compete against their neighbor and now we need to work with our neighbors versus compete with them.

Wynne Wright: Uh-hmm.

Participant: That's why, when you start farming, you work together.

Participant: I'll tell you, the older generation worked together more than the younger generation does as of today. Cause, the older generations, we always worked with neighbors, we get that all the time, by the way. When got done with stuff, corn shucking, with harvesting and things. We worked together with our neighbors all the time, where today the younger generation is getting so much bigger and they got to grab the next one out in order to keep operating in order to make enough money to exist anymore.

Wynne Wright: Uh-hmm. Is it possible we're talking about a different frame of reference of young and old?

Participant: Probably.

Wynne Wright: Are we talking about maybe a middle-age farmer?

(Positive noise)

Wynne Wright: The 45 to 55? Yeah?

Participant: Three generations we're talking about…

Participant: Yeah, we are talking about…

Wynne Wright: Yeah, we are talking about a little different here. That is very interesting.

Participant: It might be the younger ones they could buy a combine it might cost you a couple of thousand dollars more and you can't afford to own anything. It becomes - hey, we're going to have to own something together and work together.

Participant: Well, they really don't own it together anymore. They lease it instead.

Participant: Whatever it is. You still have to have people out there to help you.

Participant: Well I got someone that's partnering. And, ah, I don't know how he really got going if it wasn't for - he started running before I quit, a little bit. He started buying into stuff and I gradually kept selling him more stuff. He kept going into it. It was a good

way for me to get out of it and also it was a good way for him to start. But I don't see how he could have started, just to go out and start on his own. He would have never made it. Now that isn't fair always to all families, either, because now I got eight children. And you help one guy, what are you going to do for the rest of the children. You got to look at - each farmer has got to look at his own individual family situation and know how - what is best suited for the family and what the family thinks of it. We've always had an open communication in my family, where everybody knows what's going on and what I'm doing and they're all very happy with the way we're going.

Wynne Wright:Are there things - I'd like for us to, I guess expand this discussion a little bit to talk about your community, rather than individual farmers. Are there things your community could do to help ease this transition? What are they doing? Mentoring programs? Special loans for young farmers?

Participant: Since 1978 was the adoption of our county's ordinance, Pipestone County's ordinance, and that addressed feed lots. And from 1994 to the year 2000 we changed that four times. It wasn't changed from 1978 to 1994. And after this last change, there was a fair amount of controversy still left out there that some townships - I think it is eight townships out of twelve - went one step further and have their own policies about feed lots. One thing that we've done that seems to help ease that, since then, we haven't had the big expansion of hogs that we had a few years ago to test this out, is we bring in a producer with the local township, who kind of acts as the feelers for that centralized community, to let them know what's going on. I haven't seen the controversy with the few buildings that have gone out this last year compared to what we've had. So, when you ask the question about what we can do, I think it's just the idea that, that other people know what's going on whether that should happen or shouldn't, I don't know. But it seems to alleviate some of that controversy. Just that the neighbor knows what is going on. I don't know if that's right that we have to do that, but it alleviates controversy.

Wynne Wright: So, you're telling me that local control, then, is preferable…

Participant: At least that perception.

Wynne Wright: …to helping you sort of smooth the transition period.

Participant: Yeah, at least that perception.

Wynne Wright:Yeah, that perception. That's interesting.

Participant: You can look at it another way, too, that with the townships, the counties, getting more into the enforcement or overseeing of where the barns go, even - could be in the sense of a new person's perspective somewhat restricting their, you know, their options of what we have to work with based on where your land is located and things on that matter - if they buy this quarter they may, may not be able to do what they want with

it versus another quarter. So, in a sense it could hinder their getting started, too. I mean, just look at it…

Wynne Wright: It depends upon the leniency or liberalness of the policy of the township. Right? I see.

Participant: Township or county.

Wynne Wright: Yeah, you're both making an interesting point. Would you say that your communities are characterized by high levels of trust?

Participant: We just had a bond referendum go through in Pipestone school district and it was a controversy area outside of feedlots, of course, but if you read the letters to the editor without knowing any stories, you'd have thought there was a bunch of liars on both sides. There's just no trust on either - I don't know, maybe I'm speaking out of line here, there's, there's - everybody thinks somebody has a one-up on somebody else. That's my perception.

Wynne Wright: I do know a little about this subject. I've heard other people talk about it, ah…

Participant: But the grass is always green on the other side of the fence, it seems like and that is really true around this area.

Wynne Wright: Do you think that there is any connection between that issue and maybe community conflict over animal agriculture?

Participant: I lay awake a night thinking about that, I don't know, I kind of go in circles. I think there might be.

Participant: Um, we had a little deal out there in township, Springwater. I'd call it commercial producer come in before Rock County had land use in effect, big open lagoon - I got nothing against hog guys, now don't come down on me too hard. Don't make any difference if you do, I'm going to say it anyways.

laughter

Participant: We've got a guy that lives a half mile north of this operation, boy when that baby stirs up, she's pretty strong. Well we don't have a problem like that anymore because land use has pretty well got this thing under control. [Name of county staff person] was out to the big meeting we had out there. Township building was just about full. [Name of vertical integrator] all this was going to talk to anybody, wanted to know what we thought of their operation. Oh, it was pretty all much pushed through before we all knew what was going on. There's that open line communication thing and uh, I guess I receive a slip of paper from [county staff person] every time someone applies for a permit.

Otherwise Jones down the road says, "Did you know this," and I said, "No, I don't." It seems like if you can kind-of keep this thing out in the open, nobody really, well, you can have some dissention, but, ah, if don't try to kind-of keep this communication thing open, it can get a little tough.

Participant: [Directed toward another participant], you wouldn't want to have control as a township board member of who can, who cannot build. I don't think, would ya?

Participant: I don't think, don't think you'd want to do that.

Participant: I'm not sure you'd go to do that as a township, having that kind of responsibility and it can go buy out along with the hired help (??). You know, I think that's where we have to keep it, in the county level.

Participant: I guess the biggest thing is, ah, I'm sure that nobody, ah - the farmer's going to put this out - nobody really says too much.

Participant: Oh, no.

Participant: But you get a, and I call it a commercial producer, that's what they are, argue with me if you want to, and they track down the road in trucks, they don't buy anything from Rock County. I don't know how these rules are going to stand up under this truck traffic that's coming there.

Wynne Wright: Maybe you should take a minute to tell me what you mean by "commercial producer" just so I'm clear on that, [name of participant].

Participant: Well, I'd say there's no farmer involved in it. He's just strictly a commercial producer. They call it [name of vertical integrator], I don't call it that.

Wynne Wright: Are these people typically from outside the community?

Participant: This one is.

Wynne Wright: Uh-huh, ok, so, do you think that has something to do with it, whether they're local versus moving into the community?

Participant: I think it does, I think it does to some extent. I think it does. We as a township out there, uh, this thing really caused, really caused a havoc out there, this first set-up. It's on a township road. It ended up on a township road. About a half-mile of township road, of course, you know, its not quite set up for all that traffic that went in there. We met with these people and any extra maintenance that has to be done on that road now, gravel, whatever, that is paid for by [the company name]. So as part of public relations with the township, there, it's been pretty bad. Of course you kind of have to keep

it up a little bit because there is a little still sour - there's still sour feelings out there on that deal. [name of another participant], you know that probably better than I do.

Participant: I think, the point, the good point you made there, [name of another participant], is in these communities when we all need (??) changes, communication is probably the most important. I think up front, when we first started our feedlot program, that was a big push to start the program because somebody would apply to the state, the neighbor wouldn't know, or somebody would apply to the state, the state'd never call back. You know what I mean? It was a two way street. I think this is going to go on. I think that the local control is very important for many reasons, you know, for making sure things are up to snuff because our local people riding around, the (??) producer, whether it is commercial or some farmer owned input, but a place to go to see where they're going from here. I think the other thing is, its just not economics, alone, cheap food, that's driving the market out of business, its rules. Environmental rules that don't make sense. I'll probably go to jail for saying this, someday, but there's no sense. Making a rule, number one, you can't import, number two, there's no environmental benefit to be proven and just to have it because somebody did something wrong in the past. What these new rules are going to do, is make it so that the guy that only has 500 head of cattle, the open sinus(?) building with the cardio building that was designed for run-off, they're going to have to fix these up. The new rules are coming in such they guarantee zero, zero environmental impact, which is almost impossible in any kind of agriculture. The city of Luverne gets to let their human waste go into running water at a tolerable level. What they're proposing in the new rules is, no tolerance. So, if you want to get rid of all the local farms, your doing a find job, by promoting some of this environmental things.

Participant: The zero part also affects the town of Luverne, also? Or not necessarily, or is there a seperation?

Participant: There's a seperation. You get a permit to do it.

Participant:If I could add to that, I think that your (??), [name of another participant], probably was a good point, we're getting right back to this local thing and we got people up there in the ivory tower. I shouldn't say that, I mean, you're writing this down. We got people up there in the ivory tower that probably don't know a lot about what's going on down here. It's pretty easy to make rules, to set up there and make rules, boy some of that just - how you going to handle it?

Participant: Yeah.

Participant: And some of that, I think, too, to take into consideration, I started to bring it up before, but - the livestock industry is so mobile you can, if we miss the boat here, we've missed it. They're going to build other places, what ever it is. You do things with internet, cellular phones, whatever. It's mobile and you're going to go, they're going to go with the place with least resistance. That's not here.

Participant: I got a little, neat story, its not very far from here and then I'll take a drink so that everybody else can talk.

Wynne Wright: Ok.

Participant: Inwood Iowa is only 22 miles from where I live in Hills, Minnesota. West of Hills, Minnesota there was, at one time, the thought of putting up, now this is dairy, but its, its animals, a 2000 head dairy. The person wanted to put it there because, if you draw a circle around this here, we have the cheapest grain market in the world. That's a sad fact, you don't want to be there. Because it costs us so much for us to ship it out of here, he said, "I got it made. I can have all this feed right here and I'll ship the milk out. That's cheaper." He started the permit process and it was just, he just went, "Wow! I can't believe it." Went to Inwood, Iowa and started with 2000 head, that person is at 7000 head today and he's thinking about expanding with another 1000. The social story here is, I got family that live down there and my wife does, I should say my wife has, whether that's a good thing or not. There was a lot of animosity when this started, the draw back is he's doing it all with foreign help, I mean they can't - they understand pay (??) and other things and but they are very good at what they do, they milk cows very well. The producers there sell corn sides (??), I don't know if the numbers are exactly right, but it is very lucrative for the local guys there, they say, "Ok, you come chop your sides, bring us manure back." If you weigh the sides and turn into bushels of corn and sold it in town, it is $4.11, for a bushel of corn. All of a sudden now, the producer says, "I kind-of like this guy. I don't like him, but I kind of like this guy." And more and more of them are getting involved. And there's more of them raising the calves and so I hear them saying, you know, don't let us take away opportunities, even though it is a concentrated effort. I mean, I have two boys who wanted to farm really bad, I wanted to farm and couldn't get the job done. Dad says, "Nuh-uh, bowing out, it's over. Your not going to do this." This is as close as I can get to farming is watching over it, you know. I tell ya, you know, so there was a deal, I can't remember how many pounds of soybeans, you know, this place uses. One of the elevators, I know, the soybean meal they use, now its got to come from somewhere, you know, and the corn they grind, you know, like even in Luverne, and I'm thinking they have three and they employ local people. So sometimes, maybe, that _____ exactly does it employ somebody from the community, but somehow it is still using the product that was grown in that region, in that circle. Because there is a reason to build these here, we have cheap, cheap grain. It's terrible. Every time you listen to the markets you get Sioux City higher than us, but not quite high enough to haul a semi load down there, to make it pay. That's just a story I had that this crew, everybody knows who that dairy farmer is. Guess where this guy lives? Canada.

Wynne Wright: Oh, Really.

Participant: He's a Canadian.

Wynne Wright: How many of you all in the room been involved in some conflict over animal agriculture? [Name of participant] told us a little bit about a situation he was -

anyone else have first hand knowledge or involvement in a conflict over animal agriculture?

Participant: Um, this is been a number of years ago, a producer wanted to put up a big barn about oh, a mile from our place. The water table is very shallow and he was applying for permits. I don't know, what is the word, local or how local they were, but the idea went through the Minnesota Pollution Control and the neighbors were all excited about this because they live in Pipestone and get their water, their water out of that water table and certainly were not interested in getting that contaminated, for a variety of reasons for all of us. Anyway, it was a lot of controversy and was turned down. One of the things that sticks out in my mind, we went to one of the meetings, where he was there, and there were, um, Pipestone, the water people were there, the pollution control people were there. Um, they were making him test the water, when he had certain application, you guys know about this stuff way more than I do, but they can test the water, of course, once its contaminated. But who was going to have to do this? Himself. We were to refer to trust. We don't know whether that water come out of that well or what well, or whoever, 'cause he was not going to have someone else drill, send those tests in and have them tested. But nobody was going to be there to look over - what to do about it if they were contaminated. There was no enforcement. Minnesota Pollution Control said, "No, we make the rules, but don't enforce them." And, so, we're all wondering, then, you know, why they're there at all. You know, just, at that time it was very disorganized. It sounds like it has gotten better, since then, but there was a lot of community involvement in that finally did not get built.

Wynne Wright: It did not?

Participant: No.

Wynne Wright: How many years ago?

Participant: Maybe it did somewhere else, but I don't know. How many years ago? Six? Seven? Maybe longer ago? '93?

Participant: Yeah, probably 1993.

Participant: About seven, seven years ago.

Wynne Wright: And, what avenues did you have then, to express your concern?

Participant: We could go to that meeting and ask questions.

Wynne Wright: Just a town meeting, is that what your, ah - have you seen many newspaper articles, editorials about these subjects in your local newspapers? Media reporting this issue in Pipestone?

Participant: We lived it for three years.

laughter

Participant: Oh, my.

Wynne Wright: Ok, you want to tell me a little bit about that, [name of participant]?

Participant: Well, we just, we had a lot of meetings and it was, uh, it was a real hot issue. Um, people involved in animal agriculture saw how competitive the industry was, they needed opportunities and, uh, there was a lot of resistance. It was really unfortunate because it was so misunderstood it was all looked at as commercial applications, but it wasn't. Locally it was almost - I'll go out on a limb - I'll bet that it was almost 90% family owned. It was just families joining together so that they were larger families. What do you call a family farm? There's a family dairy in northern Minnesota it's got 37 family members. Yeah, they're not all brothers and sisters, that would have be active parents. No, it was cousins and [laughter]. I mean, what do you call a family farm? And, so we had all these meetings, we heard a lot of things, people's fears about water and I firmly believe that if we would have allowed the science side of this - to make sure our ground water wasn't contaminated - and allow the science side of it to work on odor. If we didn't have an offensive odor, most people would have a problem with it. If they'd have never smelled _____, would the neighbors really have been upset? If people had come and asked me, "What economic impact does my business give Pipestone?" And I told them, "Oh, meat." But if they smelled my business, before they ever heard anything about it - not so good! They'd like me to get out of town! And that's kind of the way that farming's gotten, especially in animal agriculture.

Wynne Wright: Do you sense that there is still some residual hard feelings, lack of neighborliness, animosity, over those conflicts?

Participant: Somewhat, some of its almost, ah, generational. And I say that out of all respect for anyone older than me. When I was a senior in high school, the guys that I chummed around with were all very active in animal agriculture. They had fantastic enterprises. Now, I didn't grow up on a farm. I would have loved to be a farmer, ok? This is as close as I could get. I love what I do. But they all had a lot of animal agriculture projects. We were all members of FFA, ok? The parents of the four guys I ran along with, three of those had parents present at those meetings asking that we have tighter controls for animal agriculture. Yet, twenty years before that they were some of the most progressive animal agriculturalists in our county. But their perspective on life, was a whole lot different now. They would like to retire in the home that they built and not have to deal…

(END OF TAPE – NEW TAPE STARTS)

Participant: (middle of comment)That's what our kids said, when they were in high school. So, do you want to talk about the social effect of that, now what's the deal?

Participant: I really believe it is. But, I hate - most people don't understand because we're such a small number of the populace, the farm enterprises. I mean there's only, what is it? One percent, or less than one percent that are actively involved in farming. So is it really logical to expect more than one percent of the children to stay on the farm? [Name of youth, you must be way more interested in computers, than farming? You go after what you're interested in. And the problem is that if was that much more interested in farming, and couldn't get into farming, then we should be having meetings about the social part of it. I thought this meeting was more about the environmental part.

Participant: That's why, I was waiting for this to come up.

laughter

Wynne Wright: Yes, and no. But not maybe as directly, I guess, as what it sounds like you had hoped. But, that is one aspect, but isn't necessarily what we've been charged to do. There are other people that have been contracted with the Environmental Quality Board that are more specifically looking at those impacts.

Participant: I have a real problem with, ah, city people coming out and buying acreages out in the - it would be like if I moved to New York City, downtown and, I ah, "God, I hate the smell of that diesel fuel, the buses and the taxis. Get them out of here! I don't like it." That's what the city people are doing to use out in the country.

Wynne Wright: Uh-hmm. Is it going to happen?

Participant: No, no it's not going to happen.

laughter

Participant: That's what they're trying to do, I think.

Participant: Let's put it this way, it could happen. We've got these acreages out there and if a whole lot of people come to them, a bunch of them show up and we have that gravel issue in Rock County right now. Every time we have an application for a gravel permit, happen in an agricultural area, we got 25 people showing up against it because we don't want noise, we don't want devaluation of property, we don't want…

Participant: They're taking over.

Participant: Dust in roads.

Participant: We want dead roads(??). We've been shot down lately, you know, and we're wondering where we're going?

Participant: Yeah, where's a guy to farm?

Participant: Yeah.

Participant: See, four years in Pipestone and the arguments, the majority of the arguments were - they pick one thing out of a whole, a whole book basically and concentrated on the one issue, like a road, except somebody built a road, a building over here and they ripped up the road and it's never been the same since then. And that was the only issue that they were looking of saying that because this is what happened at this one site. And same way with another one. You know they see one little thing of the overall industry and say its bad because this is going to happen on every site. And that's all the further people really look, just the one issue that they have on it, and said bad. I mean, some said bad and some said good, but the conflict was really over minor issues, I think.

Wynne Wright: Did the conflict come from any particular groups? Uh, environmental groups? You don't have lakes here…

Participant: People in general, I think. More neighbors than anything.

Wynne Wright: Just, just, just your neighbors. We're they very organized?

Participant: By the end everyone was.

Participant: By the end they probably are. They probably don't start out that way but they end up getting themselves organized if they want to fight something. But there wasn't an organization there to start with.

Participant: There were some people hired to come into talk at our public meetings. Some other people - professionals coming in, environmentalists speaking against.

Wynne Wright: Against, the impact.

Participant: In general now, though, the last two years for sure, [directed toward another participant], would you agree with me that there may be some concern, there may be some animosity for something in the ag., you know, especially in the hog (??). But I get the feeling that the general public is ok with where the standards are, for regulation, on the local level. Well, maybe they just quit calling us and telling us all they hear, I don't know, it just seems like, you know, like the notification that you sent out, the notifications to everybody, and I know, that's a state mandate now.

Participant: There's some tweeks and quirks, like I haven't received a phone call for a long time, but then this morning, that's all I did, was answer phone calls at work. I haven't got this for two years.

Participant: I smelled it this morning, I didn't tell anybody, I figured they were just getting a change from the ethanol plant.

Participant: It smelled bad?

Participant: Yeah.

Wynne Wright: In the past when you had these conflicts that you were referring to, how were they ultimately resolved?

Participant: Change in the ordinance. A lot of times the structure that was asked to be built, wouldn't get built because it was denied based on of the five findings of (??). So, I think change in the ordinance and then the way the permitting process has eliminated a lot of those, uh, I think the set backs - basically they were set because of orders. I think the set backs were one of the most important things we touched on. It limited a, where you could build in Rock County. You had to pick smart, you know, in order to . . I think the other thing is ah, with the set backs is that the animal unit numbers spread things out a little bit more. It seems there was an acceptable level of 1000 animal units or less that was ok on one site. It seems like once we reach that threshold that we got into the state permitting process, part of the problem was lack of trust in the state because they need to do some of their permitting and also, you know, all of a sudden it became huge. It went from ok and iffy to, to huge. And that was the letter (??).

Wynne Wright: Ok.

Participant: One of the, one of the last, you know, [directed toward another participant], you say that we're starting to get, people are starting to accept some of these hog barn. One of the last public hearings we had was for a hog barn that was two miles from Luverne and nobody came.

Participant: That is so surprising.

Participant: Not one person came.

Wynne Wright: Was that an expansion or a new facility?

Participant: Expansion of an existing, but still, I mean, they should've, if anybody was concerned you'd think they might of shown up.

Wynne Wright: How long ago was that?

Participant: It was what? A year?

Participant: A year or so.

Wynne Wright: A year.

Participant: They cut (??).

Participant: Yeah! That's a whole other story.

laughter

Participant: The hog farm. The public, the city people they got more tolerant of them now. They know what they're like, you know, and the odor's been an issue, gosh if you live right next to it and the wind's the right direction maybe it does, but people in town, it doesn't really bother the people in town.

Participant: What I think the zoning board, with their making their changes made a lot of difference to this because we went to the half mile set back from the neighbor - 300 feet area and, you know (??). I think that helped, I mean it did make a difference in how people could smell it.

Participant: Sell, location, location, location, they talk about physical. I took the same advice(??).

Participant: 'Cause we talked about what we're doing socially. I think, I think ag. is like twenty years behind the rest of the industry and we talk about local family farms and talk about all this stuff. I ran into an old friend of mine last weekend, she's working in a convenience store. You know what used to be there? Their Mom and Pa gas station.

Participant: Yeah.

Participant: Now she's working for a company that owns twelve of these convenience stores and she ends up working back in there through her retirement. And, wow, you know, it's just like agriculture. City of Luverne, main street, where are they growing? Outside, there’re new Pamidas, you know, Luverne isn't so much like, I would take like where they're building Wal-Marts and ah. You know? What are we saying? I mean, it's technology, it's . . .Do you say absolutely not?

Wynne Wright: One of the things we're trying to get out - we've been asked to get out is, how some communities most effectively dealt with conflict and resolved in a way that didn't cause a lot of animosity and community fragmentation? Um, one of the things I heard you all saying is that sometimes the land use policies, the set backs, for example, have been instrumental in solving some of the conflict. Do you have anything to add to

that? Or are there other ways that land, particularly has been used to mediate some of these issues?

Participant: Well, Manure Management has had ah, quite a lot of impact. I mean, policy (??), too. You know, it's mainly (??).

Wynne Wright: Uh-hmm.

Participant: I think another issue that should be brought up is - I think a lot of people in the community really don't understand the importance of livestock. How it affects the community. For example, Pipestone County has a more heavy concentration of livestock in the southeastern corner. Much more of the stable wealth is in the southeastern corner, due to the influence of livestock - that's pretty obvious. We got to the northwest corner, very few livestock, a lot more animosity, much poorer community. Uh, the city of Pipestone, I feel that a lot of people in that town just do not understand the effects of livestock in the community, how it effects the main street. You take the example, Sioux County, Iowa, it's directly south of Luverne. As you travel from Pipestone County towards Sioux County, you run into Rock, which is a lot more livestock. Communities get more prosperous, and as you move to Sioux Center - you lived in the town of Sioux Center, if you go to their private college there, you get up in the morning, (sniff, sniff, sniff) the kids are complaining how it stinks so bad in Sioux Center because of the livestock. And they go, "Uhhhhh, it stinks so terrible." But the people of Sioux Center says, "That's money." That's what makes Sioux Center top in Iowa - is livestock. And so the community of Sioux Center, or Sioux County, realizes that livestock is king. And I'm afraid that people, as they get away from livestock also fall away from what importance of livestock to the fixed community. You go to Sioux County, you don't see anybody who complains about smell in Sioux Center, 'cause that's what brings dollars and it's a very prosperous community, extremely profitable. I think Rock County is more profitable than Pipestone because of livestock.

Wynne Wright: But you can anticipate that this problem will get even, you know, more severe

Participant: Yes.

Wynne Wright: As even fewer and fewer young people go into farming.

Participant: Yes, yes, exactly.

Wynne Wright: So, how are you going to resolve that?

Participant: That's beyond me. I don't know.

Wynne Wright: I mean, yeah, there is that huge educational opportunity there.

Participant: I, I don't know. Maybe those guys got a better idea of how, 'cause every one of us realize the importance of livestock. And that's an ace in the hole. But what [another participant] is saying about cheap grain - that's ace in the hole in a prosperity of community, 'cause it draws money in, it's ah, value added products in more ways than one. But how you teach the people of the community that's the way we should go, I don't know. But it does create hard work and a lot of people don't like work. And they'd rather have an 8 to 5 job and they just don't want to be involved with livestock. I don't know, I'm just throwing out ideas. You guys can grab from it or shoot me down. I don't know, but you take our county of Pipestone, you go to Sioux Center, it's just a whole new ball game. And I think that most of you know what Sioux County's all about - very, very prosperous. But they realize the issue that livestock is king. If you got livestock, you have prosperity, in more ways than one. And, I think that Pipestone County's a transition. Like I pointed out the southeastern corner's got livestock, the northwest corner doesn't. And if you drive through the county, you can see the difference - where the prosperity is. Because it just ain't dollars moving through that farm, it just ain't money moving all that driveway.

Wynne Wright: Do you think that the government should take a role in agriculture?

Participant: I think that's a big key - I think that, that, ah, you can compare the whole state of Minnesota compared to Iowa. I don't think it's just synonymous with, ah, agriculture

Participant: I agree, but I didn't want to go that far . . .

Wynne Wright: It was easier because it was Iowa!

Participant: Because, ah, you go down into central Iowa, each of those communities you drive through and ah, I'm really generalizing, but they, uh, they make everything from duck decoys to lifejackets to - there's a business that's small, employs 15 to 20 to 30 people, good paying jobs. I don't know if it's our tax structure or what it is in Minnesota, but you go ahead south, and it's there. Maybe its weather, I don’t know what it is, but it's something different.

Participant: Do you think eventually they're going to be in the same boat as we are in this area here?

Participant: I don’t think so.

Participant: Smallest isn't profit anymore. Everything's getting bigger and bigger and I don't care if it's farming or it's business, or agriculture, or what. Everything is mergers and acquisitions.

Participant: They're a couple of years - I think they're a generation or two older than us. I think that country, if you look back at the history books that that's been developed forty

to fifty years ahead of what Minnesota has been. So I think they're actually - if everything was even we'd be following them.

Participant: Yeah, but farming down there isn't the answer, I got a lot of family down there, down in Iowa a ways.

Participant: You're right, but generally speaking.

Participant: They're running into the same problems we are here.

Participant: But there's areas of Iowa that's not prospering, either.

Participant: Right, that's what I'm saying. A lot of farmers down there are in the same boat as we are here.

Participant: But I'm pointing out the difference between a livestock community versus a non-livestock. And I think that's the purpose of this meeting.

Participant: But you said southeast Pipestone County is much better off - they have more livestock than the northwest. Don't you think a little bit of that has to do with the soils from one area to the next, too?

Participant: Edgerton community, I think, has the poorest soils in Pipestone County, it's mostly estoline(?). I don't want…people in this area…this agreement…[directed toward another participant], you live in this area.

Participant: Don't make me feel bad.

laughter

Participant: I've got very, I've got very poor soil. Some of my land is extremely poor. And I think that's why - one reason why livestock is in this area, due to the Rock River. But I think that there's some very good ground northwest of town, too, but I, I don't know. It's a point you can bring up, but I feel as though it's a lot far as land - you go down to Pipestone, great township, ah, number of townships around there, they got very good ground. Your area is very good ground.

Participant: Very good.

Participant: To me, personally, I think [name of place – not clear] one of the - well, you get (??)Ridge is not too great, that's pretty poor too, but still there's livestock that's king of southeast corner. [Directed toward another participant], what do you say? You're in business.

Participant: Livestock is what turns the dollars. It's what turns the dollars.

Participant: On every main street.

Participant: Every main street - it's livestock. And you asked earlier about what's happening now, today versus a couple of years ago on this. There shouldn't be much happening. We have the tightest restrictions in the tri-state area. Just now South Dakota is trying to do something and they've gone to extreme also with using…If you have someone thinking of moving their family dairy from California or from the East Coast, to get away from the populous, come out here with a feed-lot, they're going to choose South Dakota, Nebraska or Iowa. They're not even going to consider Minnesota because they can't do it. You couldn't own enough land to have a thousand cow area in Minnesota. It's almost impossible to get the set backs. You'd have to buy up sections of our county in order to do a thousand cow area because that's more land used than what's allowed. So, no, we don't have the controversy because we've already constricted ourselves. And, if we're all happy with that, that's great. As a community, that's fine, but lets not make it worse or we (??) the young people. Even if [name of his son] wanted to be a hog farmer, he couldn't stay here, 'cause, it's all about dollars. You touched on that earlier. If you don't have enough dollars to live, then you go find another income producing unit. Well, that's another hog. That means you have more hogs. [Name of another participant], you don't like to raising as many hogs as you got, do you? That's the whole thing.

Wynne Wright: I, I think now's probably a good time to - now that we've gotten on to the subject of tighter regulations - to turn over some of the time to Lee. I don't want to - we could go on forever before I forget that Lee's going to talk to you a little bit about the regulatory climate.

Lee Paddick: Well, actually I wanted to talk a bit more about more general issues than that. 'Cause government playes a role in regulation, but it also plays a role in other issues starting from, you know, some of the education part, whether it's extension or other educational (??) to land use areas, um , certainly the permits - the conditional use permits for land use - the state permits. As you know, there's government funding out there for things like cost share, ah, there are technical assistance programs of one sort or another and there's the kind of regulatory (??). And I'd just like, you know, think a little bit about - some of you are in government, it's your work and just give me some idea, in any of those areas, what the government does particularly well? Where can it be helpful, where should it be helpful and on the other side, what is the problem with what the government's been doing with animal agriculture? What don't you like? What shouldn't they be doing? And, I'm going to throw that open for anyone to start, but, ah, we're just going to focus on that set of issues. Primarily this one does work into the environmental factor more than some of the other issues.

Participant: I'll jump where the government's concerned. The biggest draw back to the issues is they make the rules and do not have enforcements to it. Make a rule and not be able to enforce it, is bad because, in fact, if they don't give you a way to enforce it, why do they make the rule in the first place? That is my biggest concern on that issue.

Lee Paddick: Do you have any specific kind of examples of that, or is that a…

Participant: No, its kind of a general overview of it.

Participant: I don't think they ah, necessarily think real smart when they're making up regulations. They're going to make up a regulation just because [name of individual] screws up repeatedly, I think., that's time to come down on [that individual], not to make a rule that everybody else has to live by. I mean, if there's a bad actor, go get him. If he's repeatedly screwing up, pretty soon its going beyond being that stupid, he's doing it on purpose. I have another story in Iowa, where the fine to that man for his lagoon settling and loading into the river was less than what the commercial application to empty it was. That wasn't real smart. I mean, he'll do that next year.

Participant: Yeah.

laughter

Participant: That is the difference between neglect and an accident. You know…

Participant: Yeah.

Participant: And I think you've got to define that. If this guy does this problem three years in a row, he's neglectful, but if it comes up once in ten years, you got a problem, or five years. You can't really - that could be an accident.

Participant: You make a rule for a guy like that and everybody else has to abide by them. But you didn't make him any better of a manager - he's still going to screw up.

Participant: That's a - I like that point, there's a - in the new rules it says we need to go to five inch concrete. For the life of me, I couldn't figure it out. Why we would want to go to five inch concrete. I asked the planning engineers, "What do you think?" He say, "We thought they were going to get hurt by someone, if you do good work, three inches is adequate." So, I called back to the State and said, "Mr. _____, talk to me. Why in the world did that get slipped back in there?" He said, "Because not everybody was pouring four inches." Because they couldn't enforce it, they said, "Ok, we'll make the rule five inches." But the guy that wasn't pouring four inches in the first place - what makes them think he's going to do it five? But the guys that are going to abide by it, it's going to cost them extra money. And we didn't gain anything environmentally. That, that, that's the sad part. Same with the rebar, you know who's going to abide by it. You know, some of these things just drive a person crazy. We have three dairy projects going on. I don't know if you're involved in those three or not. But one of those is about three-quarters done. They're all the same case scenarios. Under the old rules, this person's getting done. Under the old rules a guy (??) everything else, gained perspective, really hammering on this thing. Under the new rule, we're looking at over doubling the money that this person

has to spend to achieve the same thing. We want to talk about economic impact. One's already said, well, actually four, one's backed out. That's dairy, but it's the same as hogs. So, as a reinforcement as I started these things years ago, I always still found to achieve what you needed to achieve as far as environmental safety, without being on the public (??), you still do it from the technical standpoint. If you have a bad player, make sure that player doesn't play again. We seen that with a contractor in Pipestone County. That player just couldn't keep playing this game. He had rebar sticking out of the wall, well so, do you make the wall twice as thick, or do you get rid of the player? It is a real simple on what to do. Now you have achieved environmental benefits, you've made - done good to the record.

Participant: You've got to make a fair playing field, too, when ah, when - when I see some real problems with manure on these odor complaints I've gotten today. The biggest question is (what do you??) get for gallon an acre? In this case it's 4300 gallons per acre, there, but ah, which is, which is a good rate for the building (??) worth there. If you're going to throw in the parcel side of things, some of these people actually complaining, I'd sure, I'd sure like to know how many pounds of enmenty (??) went on this fall. And in a competitive marketplace, I'm not saying put regulations on it, I'm saying if they're going to compete against the grain farmer, livestock farmer, you gotta make it - it's a capitalistic society - you got to be playing fair.

Lee Paddick: One of the issues that came up when you were concerned talking about this, is the ability of the farmers to get the manure out of they're fields. To get, ah, agreements from other producers, how's that work here? Is it hard to get those agreements? Is it hard to get the information to understand - how much to put on per acre - those kinds of issues, or is it difficult to get that done?

Participant: I would say it's not difficult at all.

Participant: I don't think it's difficult.

Participant: If tomorrow I wanted to allow you to ask my neighbors - who wants my manure on their - out of my pits? There would be guys coming to the door, walking.

Participant: Yeah, it's different in the (??), it's different some of the producers really have a problem getting, still getting agreements.

Participant: Well and it depends on who's owning the land. If you have an absentee land owner who lives in New York or someplace, you may not want to give a permit to somebody to dump manure on his land because he might not understand it. But actually, it's a huge benefit. Makes the soil much better and, overall, I mean, I don't buy any commercial fertilizer anymore. And natural fertilizer is much better than any commercial you're ever going to buy. People don't always understand that.

Participant: I don't think there's any problem in our area.

Participant: There's several things they have to return to us, and that's one of them. You know, their attitude. That's usually the first thing that comes back, it's that easy. The notification can be kind of consuming because there's land owners in California or whatever. Some of the other things they have to get, but usually manure is…

Participant: It's almost gone over backwards where fights begin because is, 'cause I get manure and he said I was going to get some because there are ten other people waiting for it. That's usually the argument we're getting into now.

Participant: It's significantly different than other parts of the States.

Participant: Other issues on the developments of…

Participant: Well, the time for getting a permit for over a thousand animal units, too, can be a problem. Um, [name of another participant] can verify this. We had to wait a long time to get a permit. And that effects the interest rates, too, because of the time lapse. Um, I know in the new rules you got set-up which is supposed to be pretty good at answering the interest rates (??), isn't that right, [directed toward another participant]?

Participant: I don't think it's going to get addressed like it needs to. I think its only fair to get 'em answered one way or the other.

(People talking all at once)

Participant: But I don't think we can wait four and five months.

Participant: (??) or town. The rules are passed on the 25th of October, they go - the 23rd of October - they email MPCA (??) on the 7th. I got a call back today after the new rule, so that it's actually 15 days.

Participant: I understand, you know, they're busy up there, too. That's not it, but they must have (??) staff or something. They can address those situations.

Participant: One word down there, too, duplication. If you're going to have delegate counties, if you're going to give them jobs, if you're going to request it if the county has a hearing, the state says, "well, that's great, but we want to have a state," then they send it through the state. It's never, ever come back to someone in Rock County. Duplication is just a terrible thing the government pushes through all the time.

Participant: That really gets to your credibility, too. 'Cause all that time Rock County doesn't know what they're doing 'cause of the State. That has happened to Pipestone County several times.

Participant: We're just full of answers here, isn't that something?

Lee Paddick: Do you have answers on the other side - any the government does well in this area, education, financial, ….?

Participant: Banks have low interest.

Participant: AB&B (P) program.

Participant: That 3% loan program has been a huge success in our community. It's been easier to work with, the reporting has been easy, it's not a hard core to work with program.

(Some one speaks, can't understand)

Participant: Yeah, that's a very good program. We write the department of ag. all the time to tell them to make sure to keep that going. It's very important for existing producers to use.

Participant: I think it's the only way for some of the small producers to be able to abide by some of the new regulations that were brought about and to be able to stay there. They have to have some kind of help 'cause, you know, if you put enough animal units behind it, suddenly everything becomes feasible. But at 50 or 100 hogs, you can't afford some of the things you've asked them to do.

Lee Paddick: Is there, ah, money to do some of that - has there been enough money in this program?

Participant: We have, ah . .

(END OF TAPE - NEW TAPE INSERTED)

Participant: (Middle of comment) kind of help that you need/want to deal with some of the issues as you're size of your operations are increasing?

Well, you see [name of another participant], he's in the research page, the improvements presentations of the University of Minnesota on several of the research projects that they're doing, obviously something that not only the industry funded, but participation by the University of Minnesota.

Participant: Not only Minnesota, but in other University, also. It takes time, to restructure our cooperation with the University of Minnesota and the Extension Services.

Participant: We have an industry called a Check-off, where we actually we, through a pay check goes into a fund, actually the producers direct that, they have in one of the areas that they have chosen to do research in is in the …

Participant: There's millions of dollars going into that research, isn't there?

Participant: Correct.

Participant: I think the other thing the government seems to be willing to step up to the plate for, but the source of funding isn't quite figured out is cost-share dollars. It seems like they understand the system, but I think the downfall of cost-share dollars is the increased amount of technology to build the same - say you build this cup, that'll cost you a dollar, cost you five dollars. If you put cost-share dollars in, and now you remember cost-share cannot go over 75%, so you build the same cup cost $85, you get 75% of that paid for. You tell me which way would have been better to build this cup?

Lee Paddick: So, the issue there is that there is so much add-on, requirement, that it'll cost you a dollar, it actually doesn't reduce it that much?

Participant: Right. Right it is a Federal program, it's a good program. Say you have this problem - and that's 95% of your problem right here, this is your problem. But you have this land, you're fine. So it's got to be addressing this problem, they say in order to take this problem, we want to address all your problems over a ten year period. Well, you know, it's a tough sell, it's hard to sell a producer that. So, I think that is one of the things we have to watch - realizing that cost-share money is other people's money. That's one reason they don't want to deal with debt (??). You know, we got to understand.

Lee Paddick: You might, on the equipment side, is it in focus? Is the money in focus more on the primary problems and less on other issues? Obviously, the other issues weren't causing significant problems that might be a better way, a more efficient way.

Participant: I've said this over and over again, and instead of going from (??) to everybody, our water quality problem didn't start yesterday. It's been a long time ago it started. So lets, give agriculture an issue, lets put money in those areas, let's take care of that issue, at least. Maybe 70 - at the top 90%. You know, try to fix everything 100% at one time, there is just never going to be enough money. We fix up things to 70%, just think of the huge gain we got. Back to the town¼ Spread the money out where it needs to go, instead of one guy getting it all. If we could have fixed up seven of them, we would impacted a way larger watershed. And, this allows people to hopefully to get out of (??), to get more money and then could get another 3%, 3% loan. Sounds like good ideas, but I don't know if they'd work.

laughter

Participant: I think the point of education, too, and we've had feed lot rules and meeting all over the State. I was in one in (name of community not clear) here, and a producer got up and was really bashing MPCA, really saying "who's the watchers" and what ever else. That's the time I wanted a big screen TV and out in front so everybody could've seen this

is your feed lot, this is what your doing to the Cottonwood River. It was horrendous. And the public knows that, the public sees that and, the bad actors, I don't feel, are really getting slapped. It comes to that point you made, [another participant], about the fine was less than the cost of hauling it, that's a big problem in Minnesota. We can go through the new rules, they haven't been enforced what-so-ever. And, ah, I'm not saying we want a bunch of people out there with badges on, I don't want that either, but the blatant violators we take care of. And until we get that done I don't know how much public respect will be out there, because we had this little speaker (??), and that thing's the same as the Bald Eagle, and I can just see the Minneapolis Trib(une), the headline, as soon as we get our first kill down here and somebody did something stupid. I've actually thought that it is ...

Lee Paddick: In other industries, there's a lot of concern about this bad attitude side and sort of the average, the average person in that industry the desire to make sure that there is enforcement to take care, very clearly, the bad actors, because they give the whole industry a bad name. We give you those distinctions - several people mentioned that we need to have enforcement for the bad actors, show those people that that's not where the industry's at. Is there other reactions around the table to that issue on enforcement? Where should enforcement be focused?

Participant: Well, I wonder if, like, locally they kind of do a whole situation. I'm wondering if it could be controlled locally? Better than from somebody coming down state who has no idea the situation. Maybe ah, locally they know the person, they know their background, doesn't have to tell you a lot about the person if you've known them a longer period of time. For instance, if I came up to the Cities and some guy just [didn't?] mows his lawn for a week, or something, I had to get down on him for that. Maybe he mowed it every week before that, but, you know, skipped that week, I don't know that. So, I think everything could be handled on the local level. Whereas, they need to have the authorities to be God.

laughter

Participant: Our County Attorney system, I respect our County, I think a lot of our attorney is from Pipestone County, so I think he's tremendously underpaid and overworked. But, the way our system works, um, we need that legal person to (??) for us.

(Comments hard to hear)

Participant: It's probably now that some producer in Murray County, the County Attorney for some period of time permit (??) misdemeanor corn. He took people on, but also he used the criminal system that also brings with it a whole different moral and so clashing wasn't exactly the needs other than those of the criminal system or what the other County Attorney could get to do that, the enforcement of bad actors.

Participant: I especially like the idea to run industry like - if you get caught cheating, here's the rules, here's the guidelines. And say you go out and find some property, everybody will have a different vision, of course, I think, get it right, then go ahead and take it to court. I think if you're a first time offender, there should be something in place so the State will support the officer. But now what you have in that system is, you have multiple counties saying, "we don't want to be liable, we don't want to get sued. We never want to get sued." Nobody wants to be liable or be an enforcer, even the FDIC(??), I mean, it takes 'em forever to get the work done. Forever. I mean, say they catch you doing something, it could take three years before the fine comes down.

Participant: That's true, [directed toward the previous participant], but also another thing that concerns me is the interpretation of the rule. The classic example is the interpretation of what is a wetlands.

Participant: Oh, sure.

Participant: The interpretation of a wetlands around White Bear Lake, Elmo Lake, up in the area of Stillwater is total swamp. They have totally different rules of what is a wetlands, than they do on my ground in Pipestone County. So, I think you got a good point, but what really concerns me is if you have an inspector who comes in, monitors the farm and he interprets the rule different than I do, or different than the inspector from three counties down, is the concern I have with that.

Participant: Well I was talking a little more about enforcing the (??) - about complaining about somebody.

Participant: Ok?

Participant: If somebody sees something.

Participant: Ok, ok.

Participant: That type of thing. There's just beliefs and incentives. I mean, right now we're supposed to call the big guys. They might be four or five days before they get here, the problem's already gone because the rain has washed it away. So, where was the enforcement and action? There wasn't any taken.

Participant: Oh, ok.

Participant: You see what I'm saying? It needs to be more on the spot.

Participant: Somebody got their snowblower backing down the hill to the (??), blowing that path of snow so that the manure runs down there. We should be able to have, you know, not wait three years and say - or if that guy's got his tank backed up to the ditch -

and not one load because he had a flat tire or a broken axle, but 40,000 gallons. That's what I mean by wasting time. You see that more than I do, you know. I don't see ...

Participant: That's not that many people.

Participant: No. No, there isn't.

Participant: It's not like every other guy out there is pulling something.

Participant: Maybe three cases in five years.

Participant: We have (??) commission in our County and our County said that there is no sin in our County, so I doubt we have it.

laughter

Participant: The devil flew it in.
Participant: I think with other industries they talk about the 3-5% of, you know, sort-of bad (??). But any rate, a small number.

Participant: The vast majority of the producers want to be good stewards, want to be good neighbors, they'll do what they need to do to control odor when they're spreading manure, makes sure it gets incorporated into the ground somehow. Sometimes, can't get it done, I know you said right now there is some concern about odor because the ground is frozen. You can't get it into the ground. Yeah, you're starting to smell that stuff right now. That's the only reason for that. Otherwise I think that there's some producers out there that enjoy unloading. I came into the same thing last weekend, I mean, to me it was a bad (??), I mean there must be better places.

Wynne Wright: I just have one other comment I would like to ah, make. At each of your place-settings, send down some note card and a couple of pens around for you to indicate if there's someone else that we didn't invite to this round-table that you think would be very interesting, would like to talk to us. Please pass on their name, a little bit of information on how we could get in touch with them. If you know what county or township so we could look them up in the phone book, we'd appreciate that. And, lastly, is there anything we've left out? Is there anything that wasn't raised today that you think is significant regarding this issue that we need to pay a little attention to? It's your last chance.

Participant: Well, a concern I have is the movement of people away from the counties. That the numbers in schools get smaller and smaller. The tax base gets smaller and smaller. I don't want to see everybody moving to the city. I like to see - my relations from the Netherlands, are from a highly regulated farming industry - extremely small farms, they don't complain about bigness, they get paid good. I don't know, they seem to do a good job. Of course, they're regulated from, a guy watches it - a pig dies and they watch him bury it, you know, they get to that extreme. But I'm afraid that we're going to the other extreme where

everyone's fleeing from rural. I don't like living like western South Dakota, where your neighbor's fifteen miles away. Your roads get poor, your transmission lines of electricity are getting poor, your movement of energy gets bad, the lifestyle just goes down hill. So who wants to live in this area? I don't know if the government has to regulate industry, I don't know what to do. I don't know the answer, but I don't like the small community disappearing. I like to see my brother come back. I think everybody of us wants to see the rural society prosper. But how to do that? I don't have the wisdom for that. All I know is if it keeps going like it is, it isn't going to prosper.

Wynne Wright: But you think there needs to be some intervention to stop this out-migration?

Participant: Well, my dad is 76 years old. And he's still farming and is healthy. Works nearly every day. He was in World War II and he went through the '50s with bad times and he said from that time on the farms began less and less and less. So he said he's been going for a long time, if he keeps going long enough, he says, it's just going to be - what? fifty farmers in a county? Right now this stands right now with me, I really don't need a banker. 'Cause Pioneer, I can get my cheap loan through Pioneer for my seed, for fertilizer I can go to Simpal (??) or Cargill. Cargill could support you the whole way. Soybeans, you could go. My livestock industry It's almost to the point now where I almost don't need a bank. I almost don't need main street no more. And I don't like it. And how to solve that issue, I don't know. Maybe you realize that too.

Wynne Wright: Yes, we talk about that in our meetings.

Participant: I mean the big boys are coming in, guys, it's obvious as I'll get out. I'll put it blunt, if ah, Smithfield wants my farm, they can have it, 'cause I don't have to farm. I'll go to the city, I mean if I have to, I'm not going to cry about it. But I don't like to see what's happening to rural - and unless you have got better ideas, it isn't good. I don't like to see government stepping in because when the government steps in it really creates chaos.

laughter

Wynne Wright: Go ahead.

Participant: I have a comment too. Um, you alluded to the big corporates, the guys that (??) and don't do anything locally. We're local, small, been here for 25 years, and, you know, my husband and I it's not a deal. We're about ready to be done and so there's a big bald spot on his face, it's not a problem. But 20, 15 years ago, I would say that our feed - we have a feed mill that provides all the nutritional information that any kind of a (??) would want. We're computerized and all that. I would say that 75% of our business is hogs, concentrates or completes. I don't think that now 5% of is hogs. Because they don't buy from us. They don't

even give us an opportunity. And I don't know how all these big guys are hooked up or connected or what ever they are, but I do know they walk right past the house.

Wynne Wright: So, you're also referring to those family farmers that we were talking about earlier, not just those commercial producers?

Participant: Yeah, and they group together. And I'm not saying they shouldn't do that, they got to do what they got to do to survive. And I don't know how all this is going to fit into the future but when you talk about main street, we're part of main street. And we've seen a lot of changes, now we're still there, we're trying to, you know, get that son home where he wants to be. Get involved in that new - but then on the other hand, I'm thinking, do we really want him to do that? Do we really want him to get into the (??) maybe he'd be better off if he had no (??) with us. The flip side of it is - this is the way it works for [type of hog CAFO building] type unit, makes good money. So, we have family involved in both sides. And I just don't know.

Wynne Wright: _____ is that a hog operation?

Participant: The _____ units is - they do is ship clean up to hog units and there's got to be room for all of us, somewhere, somehow. But in the process of all of this happening, how it evolves, how is it going to happen, you know? And so, when you elude to the fact that, you know, I don't know what will happen in five years, what [her husband]'s going to do. God, we don't know what's going to happen next year. We don't know. If you asked me eight years ago ... We don't know where our family's going to go and in which direction they're going to take. We've had to back fill the hog business with something else. And there's been something else there, but as populations decline, farmers go away, is there going to be something else? Are all these acreages that are selling off - you know, we're trying to get into a few little things. Now the goat population is coming up.

Wynne Wright: Goats.

Participant: Goats. And horses. And these guys getting into horses. I don't know how many horse (??) it's going to take to make up the difference, but we've had to evolve as well and as long as there's a place to evolve to, we're ok. But bigger does not help the little guy. It does not. And the wives that drive to Sioux Falls, they don't just work there, they also shop there.

Participant: Yes.

Participant: Yes.

Participant: Um-hmm.

Participant: And so that's been a loss. The internet has now also taken away this and that from main street. You can buy airline tickets, we don't need the travel agent. You don't need a banker, you can now get loans on the computer. I'm a little scared of that, but these young people aren't going to be because, because that's the world they live in. That's how it works, so we have some real issues here and we don't even really know for sure what they are.

Participant: Yeah, most of the farmers here if you ask them ten years ago, would you be where you're at today? And they would say, it would be impossible, no way - financially, technology-wise, and help or physical aspect of it. So the change in the last ten years has been phenomenal. So, to say what's going to happen in the next ten years, I have no idea. All I'm concerned with is the movement away. And, I don't like it.

Participant: Well, of our seven kids, we've got two of them back here. I can't foresee any of the others, I mean, wage raises and offers away from them to stay away. Why would they come back? They can come home and visit.

Participant: I've got three kids and they have no reason to come back.

Participant: It's amazing.

Participant: And yet the youngest one wants to.

Participant: Be child abuse if a guy did that, wouldn't it?

laughter

Wynne Wright: Well, that's a positive note to end on.

Participant: Guy asked me, he said, "Your two boys come back home to farm?" "No, that would be child cruelty if I did that."

laughter

Wynne Wright: Well, thanks again for coming this afternoon and for participating. We appreciate your inputs. And, again, if you can think of anyone else you think we should talk to, please jot that name down.

Participant: We want you to do is come back with solutions.

laughter

Goodhue County Roundtable Discussion

(Unlike other Roundtable Discussions, the introductions were not taped in Goodhue County)

Wynne Wright: A question for us to start thinking about, what's the situation like in Goodhue county, how has animal agriculture or more specifically the dairy industry changed in this county in the past ten or fifteen years?

Participant: Larger than they used to be, it seems that that's the only way to function these day is to go with the larger expansion of feedlots that's one area that I have seen a great deal of change in over the years

Participant: Less farms, we've been here ten years now and the drive from Zumbrota to Goodhue when we moved here was just one ear of corn after another and now you can count on one hand how many are actually milking cows

Wynne Wright: So when you say larger do you mean cattle?

Participant: Yes and expansions - if they expand it's a lot they expand quite a few

Wynne Wright: Do you have anything to add?

Participant: We're about out of that ten year stand now the dairy buy out has been in Goodhue county as it has been in many other counties I think it was eight to nine percent of our cows in the county at that time but in recent years the last four or five not only have our cow numbers been very stable but we've seen a modest increase in cow numbers so we're losing some of our herd numbers but our cow numbers are stable because the rest are expanding and the herd concentration

Participant: Thus far the numbers they've stayed about the same some have had flux

Participant: Yes, we have about twenty five thousand, five hundred cows in the county, from twenty five thousand from (??) each year fifty to a hundred in the past five years.

Wynne Wright: My charge in particular piece of research is to look at how these changes , the impact these changes have had in the people and the community and particularly anything that comes to mind that this process what have been the impacts of this process for producers and their families or for the general community at large?

Participant: You mean the numbers?

Participant: For us when we expanded we were thinking of going to maybe, we were at about a hundred and fifty and we expanded to four hundred but we were thinking maybe three hundred. When you run the dollars and cents of it that's fine until you have to meet all the requirements as far as if you want to build a holding facility for waste and then after that it becomes kind of a chase with your money you have top add numbers to cow to pay for a manure facility and it's a big step because a person can tell the extent of the equity and you have to be real creative able to continue to expand for anything less than what we did wasn't feasible and then one of the impact that are these large dairies polluting any worse than anyone else? And I would say no, they're actually better facilities because they meet the most recent criteria. And I went to a meeting and they were saying our one (herd) structure covers one acre and one of the guidelines is that we can only we have to stay within 500 gallons per acre out of a (herd) structure. But most houses septic systems are putting out at least half that and we did a water balance test on our and our came out to about 250 gallons per acre which is allowable and so for ours it gets down to if they're going to treat animal agriculture with higher restrictions than urban, we should be playing on an even playing field

Wynne Wright: Now [directed to previous speaker] with an operation of that size your family probably doesn't provide all the labor for that

Participant: No

Wynne Wright: So you have hired labor that helps you. Interesting impacts we are seeing in a lot of communities are new populations moving in to help take the place o the lack of local labor, do you have any examples of that? New Ethnic or racial groups?

Participant: We have Hispanic labor for the most part

Wynne Wright:And how prevalent is that round the county?

Participant: It's getting to be more all the time.

Participant: The larger dairies are a most common source of a good chunk of their labor right now.

Wynne Wright: so when these workers come are they bringing their families?

Participant: Yes, two years ago our district had zero students with English as a second language last year we had three this year we have eight so you do the math, exponentially it's on a small scale. Kenyon-Wanamingo is having a larger influx of Hispanic workers. Zumbrota to my Knowledge has not had any that I know of and I don't believe Red Wing has.

Wynne Wright: [Directed toward a specific participant] From your perspective was the school district, how is the school board meeting your special needs?

Participant: Well the state gives us aid provides us dollars for English as a second language students so we do get some dollars, but then we also have to hire the teacher that is licensed as an English as a second language person. To find one of those people is almost impossible. We have one person now that we're lucky to have to share with Kenyon-Wanamingo. Her load is well beyond what it should be.

Wynne Wright: Is she an elementary school teacher?

Participant: K-12 but she has to be certified in ESL English as a second language but she's teaching them multiple subjects, not just English. She's more like a special education person that helps kids that have a hard time reading a test or if they have a hard time communicating with their teachers, so she interprets, she's not an interpreter, she's more like a broad range tutor.

Wynne Wright: Kind of remedial work for students?

Participant: Yes, she's not an interpreter either so if we need an interpreter we spend for one week 500 dollars just to have somebody interpret test results to Spanish speaking families and the first rate was 25 bucks an hour then it was 40 bucks an hour now it's 50 bucks an hour so there's a very high need for those people but in the legislature right now there are some legislation going through trying to raise the dollar amount that we get for teachers that can teach ESL, but it's not a major problem right now it's just that it's starting to come.

Wynne Wright: So have there been any other thing on behalf of the school system that have tried to bridge or to integrate the parents of these children into the school system, could you give me some examples?

Participant: Well there's been, you should talk to the ESL teachers yourself. She's done a lot of things for the community, she's brought these families together she had an open house where people could come and meet the people who have come into the community, so she's done some things herself, I think it's been more her although she's been part of the district, I think she's been more responsible

Participant: Goodhue has done that too, that same thing

Participant: That is Goodhue

Participant: Oh okay, you're in Goodhue

Participant: yeah

Wynne Wright: Do any of you others have experience working with these non-traditional populations in the work or in the community involvement?

(silence)

Wynne Wright: Would you say that you've had conflict over animal agriculture here in Goodhue? Would you use that word to describe it?

Participant: Trying to think back it's been a while since we've had any real big issues, seems to me that when I first started 7 years ago there was a lot of conflict regarding, well there still is, regarding housing and feedlot expansions mostly

Participant: I can think of 2 situations that one of them probably a relatively benign issue it became quite a controversy about location about a byproduct waste compost facility it over in (Carver) county became a very hot issue at least in that community the committee was heated more also by the fact that it was actually (college) the sources of manure was not within the county. Had it been their manure it might have been received differently the fact that that becomes far, so not that far if it came across the county line and that might have heated some people more than others I'm not sure. There was a case where there was a product we were dealing with where there is low odor potential and odor becomes an issue in a number of livestock sightings but that would be a non-issue. There the expressed concern is largely on water faucet issues, another one that seems part of the county is a discussion that went on for a while and died away of how many facilities of livestock, confined facilities can we handle the manure farm in a given township. It's hard to think about how many acres are available to put manure on and how many animals can we handle in this township. And given that how many barns can we have filled for hogs that was the primary feeding system considered at that time and it became contentious for a time but at the same they never became extremely volatile they didn't (seeker) kind of died off again too.

Participant: What's happened in a lot of cases is you get these large ones that come in and immediately people think it's corporate funding and they say well because it's not they don't think it's family farming even though the family is farming and taking care of the facility because somebody else is financing it becomes corporate or an operation and what's happened out there in a lot of southwest part of the county I guess is they feel when somebody comes in and wants to propose a large feedlot the townships all the sudden get excited about it and decide that maybe that's not where it should go or there is too much manure concentration in the area and so the townships go ahead and decide they're going to have an open (ordinance of) feedlots as well. Not realizing sometimes I don't think what they're getting into because if they want to put an ordinance in place they don't want to necessarily want to enforce it so what happens is that a lot of the townships now have

ordinances that also regulate feedlots and our county ordinance we have different zoning districts that say only two or three and any one area to go for five hundred animal units it triggers you to come in for a (??) if it's at any two and it's over 300 animals that triggers the conditional use and so at that time they have to come in and go through a public hearing to stand over those particular over those so many animals and so then they go through a planning commission and get a conditional use and then go to the board for final approval and through that process then they have to go through a manure management plan through the water or whatever and then they have to submit all this information that we have to look at and go through the PCA and get the PCA permit and everything before they can expand, but the larger ones are what people really get excited about but I agree with Dan when they say that those are probably the best round here

Wynne Wright: So you say there's a misperception that sparks a lot of frustration or dissatisfaction, how are people expressing their dissatisfaction are they writing letters to the editor are they picketing funds

Participant: They come to the meetings, but it gets political at that level too and it also gets neighbor against neighbor at the township level a lot.

Participant: Personal, a lot of them are going on emotions instead of facts, we're so hard to change and what's harder to change if you have a farmer that's been dead and your cows say 50 cows 40 goes out of business and is semi retired and all the sudden this hog year comes up (??). And to go back to that first question as about how to change the community (??) set right we're losing all of our (??) and becoming (??) and everybody is retiring and going to town those places are still there but they're being replaced by doctors, lawyers, educated people rather than the (??).

Wynne Wright: So non-farm populations

Participant: Absolutely

Participant: Now that we're here we don't want anybody else coming in, that's the way it goes

Participant: And it's that mix between the feedlot and the not, you know we have separations we have businesses requirements and the ordinance and it's that non-farming farm controversy all the time you know where people want to live out in the country you know we have a 2000 foot set back for a feedlot from what's going to go up and visa-versa. And so we have a separation but it still causes conflict because they're out spreading manure or whatever it is and they only do that a couple times a year and like you said you're sitting outside and all the sudden you get a whiff of this and it's like "whoa" but they should realize that when it's out there that it's out there and I think that's part of our thought too in our

ordinance is that we want to put a better 'right to farm' language into our ordinance and so that's another area.

Participant: One of the biggest thing to deal with is that these people move out to their hobby farms, you're not just getting the farm family kids. They all have jobs, higher paying jobs, and moving all these extra funds. They still understand farming business or what their grandparents did, you're getting people from the city that are fourth and fifth generations or more away from the farming. But its not only do they not understand it they just didn't know about it and what is involved and they have no idea what farming is really other than it's a glorified life in the country and so you're either dealing with education with these people and they want to be the last ones in the country but they don't want to except what being in the country is all about they just want the ideal lifestyle.

Wynne Wright: Tell me a little bit about these town meetings where people expressed their dissatisfaction, are these people, you keep saying these people, are they individual citizens or are they organized groups is there someone who…

Participant: There's one organized group that I know of.

Wynne Wright: An environmental group?

Participant: Right and that came up with what [another participant] was talking about that manure story. There still is a group that came up at that time from that particular area there was. I don't know how many people around there.

Wynne Wright: It was a local group?

Participant: Right, it was a local group.

Participant: But they're speaking on behalf of their organization.

Wynne Wright: Right they have some environmental concerns about the way the manure was (??)?

Participant: I think they probably started out as individuals but became an organization, small organization.

Wynne Wright: And tell me about these meetings - do they have an opportunity to sit through a situation where a farmer would get up and say you know here's my proposal here's what I'd like to expand I want to add another new building this is kind of what its going to look like he gets ten or 15 minutes on the floor and then there would be an opportunity for anyone

who'd like to express dissatisfaction is that pretty much how it goes, now do the dissenters get the same amount of time as the producers?

Participant: Sometimes a lot more depends how many they have vocalizing.

Participant: I was going to say there's way more of them at the meetings.

Participant: Ya.

Participant: When we went to our town board first and the person that we hired to the engineer we hired to design it he said the best thing you can do is bring it all out at the local level first. Like when we went to the township we called all the neighbors within a vicinity of us and invited them to come. We encouraged them to come so that their opinion gets voiced on the local level because there's nothing worse than going to the county level and then not having them talk and then have it come out at the count

Wynne Wright: would you say that, and again I don't really know and its not really important about the specifics of these cases, but since these cases have been somewhat resolved do you sense that there's still strange social relationships in your community among some of these actors?

Participant: In some cases.

Participant: It's a lot less.

Participant: Ya, it's calmed down.

Participant: You get a feel in the neighborhood if you're the first one going in the neighborhood it's hard, after that they kind of settle down and say "well, oh this ain't so bad."

Wynne Wright: You haven't seen any examples of these relationships in your church?

Participant: There's one case that I can think of where a producer told me that they were asked to leave because of their friend, because they expanded their feedlot against the wishes of their community

Participant: And we had a situation where they expanded their feedlot and it got to a point what I was told was that they were ridiculed. Even kids in school. They were running people off the road. I mean it got pretty hot and heavy but that's since calmed down too quite a bit, but there has been some incident that have happened.

Wynne Wright: Would you say this would be a community that would be excepting or very tolerant of controversy or different opinions?

Participant: I think so, the county has got zoning that's pro-agriculture and with that I think it tends to relay the message to everybody in the community that that's a strong stretch into the could you call anyone to the state

Wynne Wright: So either then you're having a lot of these new people from non-farm backgrounds move in I guess from Northfield and even from the Cities. Possibly meanwhile you still have a very pro-agriculture community you think?

Participant: Well the zoning is set up so that there isn't a lot of non-farm dwellings going up especially in A1 districts anyway.

Participant: Ya we're pretty limited in our ability to build out there right now and the mix between farm and non-farm is its hard to find a place to build. With all the restrictions and so in the A1 area we do not have the setback of a feedlot and there was a situation that happened out here where our dairy farm. And then a guy built right next to that now he's put up a large car facility next to that. And that's brought a lot of discussion the feedlot operators and the town ship and everything but that has died down too. But we are a pro-agriculture county and that's essentially what we're trying to stay at but the a1 areas should stay A1 and that's basically the areas where expansion should occur, there are some other situations out there too, conflicts.

Participant: The majority of the planning commission they get over there boiling mad because they don't get joy out of this.

Participant: Exactly, we hear it all.

Wynne Wright: Where does a complaint, how would that be registered?

Participant: It can start both at the township or at the county. And the townships hear a lot of it too. And that's why I say a lot of the townships now have their own regulations for feedlots. But they're always calling on the county to help them out with it or if they come to the county with a feedlot proposal before they go to the township. They're really irate about it. They really want the locals to go to the local (??) county, and that's really important to a lot of the townships.

Participant: I think physically what's happened is that a lot of the townships have more restrictions than the county has

Participant: Exactly

Wynne Wright: So it's just an activity for the producers to go out and try to permit for expansion?

Participant: Do you mean with there own local ordinances?

Wynne Wright: Ya

Participant: That's exactly right and what happens is that.

Wynne Wright: And so some of the townships in Goodhue are more strict than the Goodhue County

Participant: Yes and we're more strict than the PCA. Whichever is the most restrictive is the one that responds.

Wynne Wright: Do you ever see people or subjects of the dairy industry or changes in animal agriculture in general ever a part of newspaper articles editorials? Any coverage of these subjects in your local newspaper?

Participant: Very rare

Participant: We get an issue like back in Cannon Falls or Kenyon for a while it makes some news, but it doesn't usually make the hot editorial page. It may get a couple letters but doesn't get much farther than that you know.

Wynne Wright: So would you say that the media is doing a poor job then of covering these concerns or just the way they define it its not newsworthy

Participant: They want to make it as easy as possible for the feedlot operator to go through. I don't think we've made it a big issue - not the county. I think sometimes the township, probably the local papers like the Kenyon Leader, some of the local papers because of the townships and the issues out there they may have a little more coverage than say the Red Wing paper where the county seat is. And so I think more locally - maybe even Goodhue paper or some of those probably.

Participant: The paper that's the news that covers Zumbrota, Mazeppa, 52, Pine Island - he's very urban located so I have agricultural issues he's very (??)

Participant: Who do they got for writers? It's not like the paper, the editors, in others they have 1 or 2 community people that do some writing and a committee decides on how much writing you get.

Participant: We're dealing with a paper that the cover of the paper is the golf course, but any time they've been called for a dairy issue well they can't make it.

Participant: Right and they don't come to our planning commission meetings nobody from the paper comes to that they go to the board meeting but by then it's a non-issue.

Participant: There have been a couple attempts for work study and we denied that and no news after that.

Participant: In our paper in Cannon Falls there's a country page in there but that ain't the second part of it right before the classifieds, on the back page.

Wynne Wright: How many of you all have been involved in a conflict over animal agriculture? [Directed toward a specific participant], you said you had, do you want to tell us a little bit about that?

Participant: A gentleman moved, purchased some land directly west of our farm, and he moved out from the cities I think from Prior Lake. And he went to get a permit to get a house there and he only purchased 30 acres of land and it was not buildable.

(TAPE ENDED - NEW TAPE INSERTED)

Participant: (Middle of comment) agriculture properly we can't afford to be sticking a lot of money into hiring attorneys to fight for you so it gets to be who has the most or can last the longest.

Participant: And the applicant can't find an attorney to take his case, he's fighting his own battle.

Wynne Wright: Can you think of any examples of how people might have used land in your communities in turn to resolve conflict?

Participant: Yes I can. In one township they actually would like to permit housing. The more big houses they can put in the township they feel that that would keep lots away from them.

Wynne Wright: Oh interesting. I hadn't heard that. So is there a campaign to lure people into their township?

Participant: (??) If it weren't for the (??) their entire township would become residential.

Wynne Wright: What township is that [name of participant]?

Participant: (Name of township is not clear)

Participant: There too though there's a lot of money for (??) because of colleges.

Participant: Ya, it's an area where its kind of a bedroom community in a way its access off of 52 you're going to the cities or you're going to Rochester and that's the vast majority of it.

Participant: Ya there's some money out there but you find out that those people that live in the area want to have a few horses they could be considered a feedlot after (??). I remember a discussion at a board meeting where somebody says "Well, can't we just make horses exempt from these feedlot ordinances, no they're producing waste as everyone else does." Animal agriculture verses the opponents. You're talking about the suburban and rural interface is what you're talking about. And it's a matter of understanding the rural setting and what does it take to survive, not necessarily from a social standpoint, but from an economic standpoint and how these people have to operate. They don't operate the same way that their parents or grandparents did. It's a whole different business today and that's hard for people to understand.

Wynne Wright: In some of these conflicts that you all have been involved in or know of can you identify one key element or key event that might have helped resolve is there any ingredient that seems to be very important toward resolution?

Participant: Well, I think you have to give the time. You know it's a big jump, people all have to express themselves. If you try hard to have hearings and so forth, well you're in for trouble.

Participant: And sometimes it gets blown out of proportion at the township level. I think they do have more conflict at the township level than they do at the county. By the time it gets to the county it's a little bit more resolved and by the time it gets forward it's way resolved. I don't know, people just get upset about it right away for some reason its they're going to do what over here. They just don't feel that it's the larger ones are better operated. They're engineered, they're inspected, they're done properly. It's the smaller ones that are probably causing more of a problem right now as far as pollution.

Participant: Except that the larger ones have a greater potential for disaster to happen because of the quantities you're dealing in so that's why a lot of people are critical.

Participant: And when you get too many of them in a small area there is that concern too. Plus Goodhue County is dealing with carst region. And that's part of the engineering process and the better off in that type of thing and so we have to be careful there too.

Participant: Goodhue Township is high livestock townships in the county, and on the same plane its one of the whole ones probably in terms of non-farm wealth but how does it play off in Goodhue township?

Participant: Well this is not animal related but this is the [name of specific business] movement and it's more of an agricultural business. The conflict is more of non-farm businesses that are moving out into the township other than the bigger areas that are expanding that causes problems. But people get excited when non-agricultural (??) activity.

Participant: And the ones getting excited are the ag community then.

Participant: Ya and like I said there isn't a lot of non-ag in the area.

Participant: I think its kind of unique because you've got several large feedlots within city limits. Kind of unusual. You hear people complaining about the feedlots 2000 feet away from them out in the country, but look at this community that there's feedlots a lot closer than that around all these elderly.

Wynne Wright: Tell me briefly what you were saying when you talked about larger farmers verses smaller farmers we need a working definition of that.

Participant: That's a hard question to answer. But I guess my thinking is anything over 500 or 300 depending on the zoning district you're in. That's not really a large feedlot. That's when it requires a hearing to expand it over that. I would say you're talking a large feedlot when you're talking 1000 animal units and above.

Wynne Wright: Okay what's a small one?

Participant: Well a small one there's probably 50 cows on a farm.

Participant: It depends upon the community. I bet if a 150 cow dairy nobody would raise much of an eyebrow.

Participant: No they wouldn't.

Participant: You start talking 350 then, oh yeah, that's a little bigger. But even that doesn't raise much when you start talking 700, 800 then they notice.

Wynne Wright: And most of the owners of these operations are would you consider these family farms?

Participant: Yes, for the most part.

Participant: That's a good issue but how do you define family farms?

Wynne Wright: Well, I'm asking you.

Participant: I don't think anybody has been able to solve that.

Wynne Wright: Because this is an important issue we've found that in other counties that sometimes if the ownership is local then there's a lot more willingness to work with the operator. Are there any examples in Goodhue of new people moving in and starting up an operation?

Participant: Oh ya, [participant gives two specific dairies].

Participant: Most are local ownerships.

Participant: They buy all the land and they are the lenders.

Participant: They hire a family.

Participant: There hasn't been anybody new moved in for a while.

Participant: Most of them have grown from the community. I mean they've been there, they're powerful owners but still community people that are coming together.

Participant: I think you're forgetting a big thing that the price of milk has a lot to do with it right now it's at a low.

Participant: You nailed that one right on the head.

Participant: Same as the hog industry.

Wynne Wright: Ya, I think that one of the unfortunate things is that the timing of this process is not the best. We might have gotten very different responses 2 years ago if we had these conversations around the state. One last question I have on my mind before I turn it over. I'd just like for you all to talk a little bit about the youth in your communities. Particularly [directed toward a specific participant] can talk about the aspirations for farming I guess it sounds like to me that your goal is to go into farming with your farther probably full time?

Participant: Probably.

Wynne Wright: Are you still in high school [name of participant]?

Participant: No I attend [name of 4-year university]. I'm a sophomore there.

Wynne Wright: Okay, so you're coming home on the weekends and on holidays to help?

Participant: Oh ya I have to.

Wynne Wright: [Name of university] is far enough away that . .

Participant: No, its not far enough away.

Wynne Wright: What would you say about people your age who you went to high school, how many of them are interested in going into farming, and I said interested, okay?

Participant: From my high school in Cannon Falls there ain't a whole lot of farm kids that I graduated with. It's getting more urbanized there. But I got a lot of other friends from around the county and I think there's through 4-H and FFA and stuff. It really encourages a lot of them to stick with it and go into it some more and keep farming and stuff. I don't think, I think there's some interest out there in it but there's not as much as I'd like to see. And my age there's some, but the younger ages of kids. A couple years ago I represented the county as report (??). I went around to different schools in the county and I was really surprised at how many kids did not know what a farm was and how a farm worked and what hogs were and stuff like that.

Wynne Wright: You went to different schools in Goodhue?

Participant: Yes in Goodhue County. Cannon Falls was one of the worst. Cannon Falls and Red Wing had very few kids who had ever been on a farm or knew what agriculture was. Kenyon was a good one to go to. There was a few kids there that know what was going on. Zumbrota was good, Lake City was kind of in-between. I don't know if there's a whole lot of youth interest.

Wynne Wright: Sometimes when we talk to young people they distinguish between interest and opportunity. That they're interested but they're going to college to get a compute degree because they think that the farm operation isn't big enough for dad to bring them in or whatever. Does anyone else have any sense of that maybe have any children?

Participant: I've seen a little bit if that just from a modern perspective and I haven't been in this business for too long. I'm only a few years older than [the previous participant]. I've only been in this business for 3 years and I've got a few people that I work with that are farmers they say the heck with it they're not going to keep doing it anymore. And part of the reasoning now is that they don't want to go through all the hoops they needed to go through to get permitted to have a viable livestock operation. And that's really sad. I mean they were

going to have a pretty decent financial situation in a lot of respects even though they were still young. Even still I think it was a viable one but didn't pursue it because of the concern over feedlot ordinances.

Participant: Somebody else said something that comes into this. Around the county I think, and I've worked very closely around Goodhue, about 20 years ago we had pretty healthy turnover among farm ownership from one generation to the next. so we've got people like [name of participant] and his brother and others in our area that are in that 40 to 50 age range now, so we've got to start thinking ahead to when does that next rollover place or how its going to take place. What's complicated it we've got a number of young people that have interests in agriculture. We had a number of people like [name of participant] who had some type of ag degree in college or have done some and they may come back into production in ag. It's hard telling if they aren't there now. But a lot of these families also there's a big gap in there with a lot of younger kids and they won't be ready to take over. And now some of there parents are ready to roll over from that farming operation and so we need to see some significant - then who is going to be that next set of farmers is the question. I think could come into our communities is it enough to make that transition without forcing the large farm operation into a relatively small number of hands of owner-operated, ownership they say is families but as non-operators.

Participant: Put a little twist on that too. In education our classes are 8 hours a day and we have quite a few students that go through the program. Last year the state legislature tried to pull away our secondary vocational agricultural funding from all the schools in the state of Minnesota which amounts to 12-15 thousand dollars in funding. This year they're scheduled to pull it off - the funding as well at the same time we're seeing a shortage in students interested in going into agricultural fields. What have you the state is pulling some of the funding away from agricultural educational programs.

Wynne Wright: So you said that your school got 12-15 thousand?

Participant: Well they reinstated it after that second legislative session went through, but it was with the understanding that that funding would zero out for the next fiscal year so this year we're scheduled to lose our agricultural program 12-15 thousand dollars and in a small school that's pretty substantial.

Wynne Wright: Was that substantial enough for you to have to terminate your teaching?

Participant: No, what we do is we make it a program but we have to allocate from different funds to support this program. So you take away from one fund and put it into this fund.

Wynne Wrightt: Approximately how large is this program how many students are involved in these courses?

Participant: Well, it can range from 15-25 kids and its 8 grades a day so 150-200 kids in the program.

Participant: The irony is at the same time as your doing that in outstate schools your opening an ag school in St. Paul.

Wynne Wright: Ya, very interesting I think. I think it's probably my turn to let Barb take over but okay [directed toward a participant].

Participant: Yes, one last thing. What bothers me in a lot of these schools is they want to cut off the ag programs. But I think they should start out the kids younger and make it a mandatory ag class for a lot of these kids. I know we have to take music and art and different classes like that to make us a more rounded person, but why not have these more urbanized city oriented children take ag classes and get them more familiar with agriculture and stuff? That really bothers me.

Participant: Why don't you start that up there [name of previous participant], I'm sure [another participant] would listen to some interesting exciting curriculum proposal.

Participant: But the problem is that there's too many generations removed - they don't have that grandfather hope anymore.

Wynne Wright: Okay. Barb is dying to ask you questions about the government and I know you're dying to talk about it

Barb Freeze: Well I want to make it clear that I'm interested in the role of government but not just state government, local counties and townships. I'm interested not just in the regulations of things and the ordinances and permits, but also the aid, the cost of your programs, the (??) programs, the civil markets paying for assistance, and what not. Now having said that, I'd like to start with the conflicts just because those tend to focus the mind so nicely and to deal with my situation. And there have been references that you've made today about there's a conflict here and that's a conflict there. And I wonder if we can talk about those a little bit more directly and just get kind of a map of what the conflict was, how the government responded to it. Was it that a feedlot expanded, was it the operation of an existing one and a new neighbor showed up or is it a situation that just got more tense and the government had to step in?

Participant: I have an example that can start the discussion. One is the potential problems with different township ordinances. Depending on which side of the road you live they dictate what you can or cannot do in future livestock operations, that's one thing. I think that's a potential for a conflict. Not wanting to concentrate livestock perhaps you push it all in one place or push it out entirely. (??) government creation not as hot today as its been in

the past where (??) Wabasha county line. And a long time the types of things in conservation projects and livestock waste facility cost and so forth is different in Wabasha County than it is in Goodhue County. So again, depending on which side of the county line you live, you may be eligible to get help to do something on one side that you wouldn't on the other. Same soils, same subsoils, but have a different ability to deal with and that creates a conflict.

Barb Freeze: You've mentioned the composting facility that have been proposed where would that place be?

Participant: Well there is one there. There was some questioning of what they would need to do as far as the layout underneath and water control and monitored wells.

Barb Freeze: Was there an issue of whether they should just close it down or call the state department with what the limits are?

Participant: Well, I think they wanted to, but there wasn't any way that they could.

Barb Freeze: This is a facility that has been around a while?

Participant: So they were just going to start it.

Barb Freeze: When was the vote?

Participant: Early eighties, mid eighties.

Participant: Ya, its been a while.

Participant: But that created the environmental group, that sparked it a little bit to create this group.

Participant: You remember the name of the group?

Participant: Ya I do, concerned citizens.

Barb Freeze: Okay and these were. .

Participant: I think it was Holden-Kenyon-Warsaw group for concerned citizens or something to that effect.

Barb Freeze: How did that play out? Did citizen groups form? Was it announced that there would be this composting facility? This was dairy?

Participant: I think this was before the townships even had any ordinances. I think this kind of sparked them to create an ordinance as well and I wasn't directly involved with it at the time. (??) involved in it, and I mean they tried every way possible to try to prevent it from happening. And they couldn't - the citizens group couldn't come up with anything to stop it because they met all county state requirements.

Barb Freeze: They would need to see a permit for each facility and were the appearance?

Participant: Yes

Participant: The main big concern was there was just a few people that live on a small stream and that was real . .

Participant: There wasn't any way for the citizen group to stop it however they

Participant: So they were using a stream as a tool

Participant: Ya, and we have a lot of streams in Goodhue County. We have a lot of water and wet lands and so on.

Barb Freeze: And you think that their concern for the stream wasn't their real concern but that it was for something else?

Participant: Well I wasn't that close to it, but there was a stream that they were using for leverage to keep it from happening.

Participant: The fear of the unknown basically. The county really had no problem with it.

Participant: I think the fear of the unknown can go farther. When the local townships is working in ordinances in the past years and was coming to its final forms early this summer and as it was going through at one meeting at one session this summer composting was one of the pieces being addressed. Those who had been working on it for a long time they wanted to prohibit composting first as something that can't be done. And I said to them second one of the options that we talk about today is a viable option for handling livestock waste is to compost it reduce it - change its nutrient contents and its odorless and it gives you a product that is more stable than the law of the door you're shutting that out as a management tool. oh okay didn't realize that I think at the end result its to take back in. There's a couple things related to that one of them was manure generated a farm expand a farm and that isn't going to work. You get these larger facilities and they need more acres to put it on and five men we say but that concentrated so you've got the education and knowledge and lack of understanding. What its about that becomes a government issue.

Barb Freeze: When this debate was going on was it in Kenyon.

Participant: No this was in (name of township not clear) township. It was developing an ordinance, a different situation but related to the composting was one of the issues.

Participant: The reason the township is going through and re-looking at their zoning is because the city of Red Wing came out and wanted to put up a waste facility in (the) township. And they wanted the storage facility, but the township the zoning said agricultural facilities are waste facilities and the city of Red Wing is not considered an agricultural waste. And the city went so far as to buy 200 acres. Probably twice the value of the agricultural land they paid for so that they could (stretch). So there you have one form of government trying to over-ride another shall I say. But yes they're both, townships are the smallest form of government and I guess Red Wing was a township at one time too but, no.

Participant: I still don't think it's resolved yet.

Participant: Ya, I think its in court now.

Barb Freeze: So to get back to this composting facility what's happening now? Is there continuing conflicts, water problems, voter problems?

Participant: They're waiting for something to happen.

Participant: You wouldn't even know it was there.

Barb Freeze: t's being watched huh?

Participant: It was default anyway like anything else

Barb Freeze: (??) Is there a single facility elsewhere or is it drawing from…

Participant: I think its all the one facility - a large turkey operation.

Barb Freeze: But is it coming in from across the (??)

(unclear)

Barb Freeze: Do you think that was put in because it was probably the most friendliest area for them to do it than other areas other counties?

Participant: Given the location probably, its livestock friendly, ya.

Participant: And there probably weren't any controls at the township level at that point either.

Participant: There were a lot of housing in that area. Closer to that facilities there isn't that much.

Participant: Rice County has been very restrictive about feedlot issues.

Participant: When they were going to do it they probably looked at, well where's…

Barb Freeze: You said you've just gone through an expansion

Participant: mmhhmm. We had to get a conditional use permit because we went over the (line) on the family unit level, we got a conditional use permit.

Barb Freeze: And did that involve a hearing?

Participant: Ya it was a county hearing.

Barb Freeze: And now did you say that the (county) invited them in?

Participant: Everybody that was within a mile, half mile of our farm we asked to attend the meeting, township level.

*Barb Freeze: A*nd how did that work. Did that meeting help? Did that help people avoid the misperceptions?

Participant: Well we introduced it to them at that point. What we were going to do, and of course right there at that point they voice their opinion or you find out who isn't happy with it and it's probably better at that level than at a higher level of government.

Barb Freeze: Did you find a lot of opposition?

Participant: One that still remains to be opposed to it, and it's a non-farm resident.

Barb Freeze: Is it somebody who has recently come here?

Participant: I guess their parents had owned some farm, and the children moved away and took jobs in town. And when their parents were going to retire and move to town one of the sons purchased it from the parents and moved in. They don't farm, their parents did farm for a while but they ended up renting it out so the siblings didn't ever farm.

Barb Freeze: So when were you doing this, within the last couple of years?

Participant: A little over 2 years ago that we were going through the permitting process.

Barb Freeze: So you had township hearings people were invited in to voice their views, then you had a county hearing before the planning and zoning board?

Participant: Zoning board, ya.

Barb Freeze: And the people coming to that hearing, were they saying - the same people, same thing?

Participant: Same people - opposition from the same people.

Barb Freeze: Did people have proposals that they wanted you to do differently?

Participant: There was some discussion, there's always someone downstream from a facility regardless of where you're at and these people happen to be downstream.

Barb Freeze: These are the neighbors that oppose you?

Participant: Right. They're looking for anything. Like I was talking about the creeks. They're looking for a lot of work also and they're worried that what would happen if the manure structure would break. Well they're built to twice the specifications of an earthen damn to hold back water, and that's basically what it comes down to. One of the (??) on the county board got up and said if we had that big of a rain that damn above your house is going to bust and you'll have a lot more problems than at our facility. So that kind of quieted him down because he didn't really have factual information to go off.

Barb Freeze: Was he concerned about odor as well?

Participant: Oh, I imagine.

Barb Freeze: And did he raise those issues or was he mainly talking about catastrophic possibilities?

Participant: Catastrophic was probably the biggest issue.

Participant: If I could just comment. I think that when they presented their application it was the most thorough well done application I've ever seen. They spent a great deal of time and energy on their design they had an engineered design it was a pretty thick packet of information.

Participant: This engineer we hired, when he goes to his meetings he not only has option A, he has option B and C there with him. So that if one fails, you pull out the next one.

Barb Freeze: And did you do that?

Participant: No never, just option A.

Barb Freeze: And have you built it, is it operating?

Participant: Yes.

Barb Freeze: And how's it going, have you had any more contact with the neighbors?

Participant: Well we're not sure.

Barb Freeze: They haven/t told you?

Participant: We were hauling manure down, well one thing that happened is the gravel county road that used to go in front of us has now been paved this last year. So that tends to be a whole nother set of problems. When you have trucks hauling manure on a gravel road and something drips it doesn't tend to be a problem because you don't have the traffic. It's organic matter it's going into it soaks in. And we happened to have a truck that was going down the road and all the sudden the gasket blew off the manure tank and we left a small stream of manure for 2 miles down the highway before we got them off the road. Well, we had 6 cell phone calls within an hour to the sheriff. But before the sheriff could get out there we had already addressed the problem and we were already cleaning it up and taking care of it on our own. But we heard that there was a neighbor that called.

Barb Freeze: Have you had issues in terms of operation - odor from the basin or when you're spreading it have you..?

Participant: No we haven't got any odor problems so far. One thing that a large facility like for us we needed land to spread manure on more than just our own. And so you tend to work with people in the community because we also have to buy crops from them. So you work and exchange crops for fertilizer and it tends to be a lot more favorable to your neighbors when they see that coming because not only are we generating income for ourselves but we're helping them generate income.

Barb Freeze: You've got these reciprocal relationships with the crop farmers in your area.

Participant: Right. And that tends to, not only does it help create good relations with the neighbors but all the sudden your neighbors around you want to work with you. And the one that is opposed to it all, the sudden he sees that the rest of the neighbors are working he sees that, well, maybe we don't have a lot to say about it.

Barb Freeze: Does the MPCA have much of a role in this?

Participant: Oh, yeah.

Barb Freeze: And how did that process go?

Participant: Well, anything with MPCA you have to meet their criteria and we are on a carst area. We're fortunate that we have a lot of soil before we hit bedrock in our area.

Barb Freeze: Did you have to do additional engineering on your (basting) because of (??)

Participant: Yes. Well I would say it's probably because of the type of soil we have rather than the carst.

Barb Freeze: And so you were able to get that MPCA permit that involved separate hearings as well as local is that correct?

Participant: Well, we hired an engineer to go back and forth with the MPCA to get the specifications. He introduced a proposal and they looked at it and I guess they accepted it and then after they accept it you have to meet the specifications that you propose in the final project.

Barb Freeze: Are you familiar with the new MPCA rules?

Participant: Yes, well my facility meets those criteria. We saw it coming and so the engineer said we might as well get the engineering to meet them and so we met those.

Barb Freeze: Well maybe I can turn that same question out to those of you that had thought about the new MPCA rules. What do you think of them, do you think they're going to work here? Are they raising a lot of controversy?

Participant: Well I don't think everybody knows what they are.

Participant: I think until you go to apply or go for an expansion you don't realize all it entails.

Participant: The engineer that I worked with he said he gets so frustrated because he'll have the guidelines set up and he'll have the proposal to the farmer. And by the time the facility gets to where you think it's going to go all the sudden there's a rule change and he has to change the design. And so he has to go back to the farmer and make the design change and he has to charge some more because he has to do more work on it now and he gets frustrated because of that.

Participant: I have a question we're talking about government involvement but what actually does all this government involvement cost per cow per unit that's what I'd like to know the engineer and all those expenses.

Participant: I probably spent close to 16,000 dollars just on engineering and probably the whole facility probably cost $160,000. That includes engineering too. There is county engineers available too, but I understand that they're swamped all the time. But ya, there's limited resources to help producers with engineering but if you want to do something in a timely manner you probably end up going with a private engineer.

Participant: Now since you were expanding we've also (??) some retro fitting that would make the levels of the cost of sharing.

Participant: Definitely

Barb Freeze: Okay, so you were able to get that assistance as well?

Participant: Yes.

Barb Freeze: What do you thing of those programs?

Participant: Well I don't think that we would have made our expansion if we wouldn't have had them fiscally I guess.

Barb Freeze: Can anybody tell me if there was a situation in the county a siting that actually involved environmental (protection) the EAW.

Participant: No we haven't had any yet. We've come close but we haven't had any.

Barb Freeze: Have you come close and then not needed it because the facility was downsized to avoid it or it just wasn't quite big enough?

Participant: Well there is one where they downsized it a little bit to avoid it. The question was it was in different properties. It went over the threshold but it was considered 2 different

facilities because it was on 2 different properties owned by 2 different people, yet run by the same family.

Barb Freeze: Well maybe I can ask a more generic question unless somebody has a more specific story about one particularly revealing dispute that they want to talk about. If not I'd like to ask a general question and anybody can just speak up. What do you think government is doing wrong what could they do better? Put a more positive spin on it.

Participant: Speed up the MPCA permitting process.

Participant: I think the speed of permitting. I think that the MPCA needs to have a set of guidelines that they come up with and stick by instead of changing all the time because with them changing you cant expedite a permit very fast.

Barb Freeze: The guidelines have been changing

Participant: Well I suppose it has to do with, well I think they're conveniently changing. Don't you agree with that?

Participant: Ya we're actually going to have some meeting coming up in January discussing the new feedlot rules and the new registration and so on. So I would like to comment about that too a little bit and without offending any of the townships I hope. But I really believe that feedlot regulations should stay with the county just because when somebody goes in and wants to expand they've got to go through some case of township planning, the board, the county planning, the county board, the MPCA, soil and water by the time there's so many different areas that they have to go through before they even get to come. And I think that kind of frightens them a little bit. And then the fact that the MPCA does have such a long time before they issue any permits and I know they've been working on it too. And now we're not a delegated county. We don't have a feedlot office at this time. There's been discussion at the board level about whether or not we want to pursue that or should it be a soil and water with land use.

Participant: Sometimes it's different government agencies conflict between themselves and you get caught up between the two.

Participant: And the township has one set of rules the county has another and the state has another.

Participant: Well I'll give you one example. [Name of an individual] works for the MPCA. We spread manure on fields. Well he came out while we were doing our expansion for an inspection and he had found some manure that we had been applying on the fields and he said that we should get them tilled under, the manure tilled under. Well then our soil and

water conservation plan calls for that we have soil cover on our ground and that we only spring till and so there you have two government agencies going at each other and its like well do you have manure packed manure to hold the soil from washing away or if you plow it under to put the fertility in and then have it wash away because it's loosened up at the risk of having soil wash away. Ya, and so I wasn't going to challenge it. I just I just called up soil conservation and asked them what they wanted me to do and he said why don't you go ahead and plow it. They are very willing to work with you on those types of things. I think that's one thing that is different between the state and the county is that the county organizations are probably more attuned to what the farmers need to do than maybe the state, even though the state has their points too.

Participant: And that's why, and I don't know but it would seem to me that they would want it more local where we could issue permits up to a thousand animal units without having to go through MPCA and through that timely thing. But I mean, sometimes the townships forget to tell these individuals that they have to go to the county so that when they get to the county and now they have to go through public hearings that will delay them another 6 weeks. And so the townships might have their control over it, but then they don't get to go to the county and apply for their permit at the same time. No they want you to do it there before it even comes to the county and then they get to wait another 6 weeks.

Participant: How many hoops do you have to jump?

Participant: After we got permitted by the county to go ahead with our expansion that's when we sent our application to the MPCA. In fact we had sent it in prior to that just so that we could get the ball rolling. It took at least 6 months before we got approval from the MPCA to go ahead and do it. And all this is contingent upon financial people too because they aren't going to let you, give you, financing until you have MPCA approval. And so it becomes a vicious circle and all the sudden you're waiting for a piece of paper that's sitting on someone's desk.

Participant: And you're stuck, you can't go forward and do anything until you have all these things together.

Participant: And then even in the midst of, we were toward the end of our expansion but the MPCA people leave and this is the person you were working with and all of the sudden oh no! And they have different personal ideas too - its not just how they interpret things too - that can change.

Participant: It's difficult.

Barb Freeze: Other suggestions for how to speed up the permit process?

Participant: The new MPCA rules, where if you have a permit from the past it kind of makes it doesn't make that valid anymore. You have to start over and re-register and stuff. And what I'd like to see here is you get a hard copy piece of paper that says you are a feedlot, you are a permitted feedlot. You have been there so you can have some proof and have a hard copy of something to have some evidence and background for these urbanized people coming out to the country and questioning that kind of stuff.

Barb Freeze: So the permits that were sent out before there weren't actual paper permits or you're concerned about ? process?

Participant: They were, but with the new ruling now you got to reapply or reregister.

Barb Freeze: So you might not get a response to your registration that says…

Participant: That piece of paper you got that says you are registered doesn't mean you are (anymore).

Participant: And they finally got a certificate of compliance after all these months and months too. And now we got to start over and register. I think that's a concern of a lot of feedlot operators out there that they have to come in and register and it's just a registration process at this point, but there is concern there.

Participant: There is future concern about these smaller operations that are not permitted and plan on doing. Where are they going to go up? Are they going to receive funding? How strict is it going to be at that level? There's a lot of unanswered questions out there.

Participant: And that's something coming up at a lot of these educational meetings.

Participant: They have a lot of impact on livestock raising.

Participant: I think for some smaller producers to comply they'll quit. Financially it will come down to they can't afford to make those changes and they'll just give it up.

Participant: My feeling on that is that it's one of the reasons there are certain timelines on compliance, kind of letting it take its toll rather than forcing. Recognizing many of those operations are the older. Ones that are at the time of, that operators time to retire, that that operation will not be continued. So it may not force as many off as it will shut down continuation of an operation by a new operator. I think that's part of what's in the time line, smaller operations in time are going to disappear. Another piece of it if we go back to the social side and the environmental side in this part of the state this whole southeast Minnesota our land cover is important to us. What we have on the land in terms of water quality, erosion control issues and if we lose especially the cattle industry various aspects of cattle

where we're using for forages. What are the alternative uses of the land and what is the impact of those alternative uses on water erosion and water quality that's one that I don't think enough are thinking about it.

Participant: That's a big issue, as we (??) through these areas that have lost their dairy.

Participant: Somebody's happy that there isn't the livestock and manure and odor there, forgetting that side of the issue. That okay, what's the alternative use of the land and the impact of it?

Barb Freeze: So you're saying that with the dairy presence you're going to have more hay growing and pastures, but with.more corn and soybean and therefore more erosion?

Participant: Ya.

Participant: Usually it's not the fact that it's (??) verses hogs. As the dairies go out there's people that are still farming (??) decided its worth it when they go out they don't resort to hogs they resort to agriculture.

Participant: The issue for me is what was worse soil erosion, black soil going down onto the creeks and the rivers or some manure runoff. I mean its nutrients whichever way you look at it isn't that right?

Participant: Absolutely.

Participant: And so we may have been better off with livestock there with the forages holding the soil and manure after the livestock is gone and the soil is washing away.

Participant: Hasn't there always been manure running into waters? Back when there was all that buffalo (??)

Participant: That aspect is one that does not get enough interest.

Participant: And it happens to be in the Carst region and that's another big issue.

Barb Freeze: That raises a question of the sensitivity of this region, how well do you think the government is doing at protecting the waters how's your water, your surface water your ground water?

(unclear)

Participant: Well I guess you're talking about several different types of concerns you know - your water quality concerns, the surface water, and the aquifer system.

Participant: Well let me give you an example. We've had a couple of incidents in the region not just with the (??) and small streams, but not attributable to livestock operations necessarily and in most cases I don't think they find for sure source of problems (??)agriculture. Never found the source either for the most part though the issue of our surface water is small.

Participant: Ya, it's something that the (??) is just a very small percentage of the entire region. Everything goes into the Mississippi here so they say our percentage is so small. It's not something that people really consider because of the fact that it's such a large water body.

Barb Freeze: The Mississippi compared to streams and what not. The effort (??) what is the question for you in terms of the information that you have? What is the perception really? how do you feel about it, are you worried, do you feel like it's being well protected, do you think its being under-protected?

Participant: Under-protected.

Participant: I think the farmers are doing a good job of protecting even with fertilizer runoff and the waterways. Various types of conservation farming and stuff. I don't think there's actually that much runoff. (??) farmer, I would be more concerned about the polluting the surface water, these urbanized areas. There's no place for that to go except down the streets.

Participant: I think that's an educational issue. There is a lot of concern with both sides - the urban people and the farming community - about water quality about farm practice and all that. I think there's a misconception also about (??) because to another person they see all we put on and they think of runoff. But they don't realize how much how farming can A, be ruled by economics and they cant afford it, and B, you've got precision farming that they require (??) needed so a lot has been done that hasn't been done in the past. And on the other hand when they're complaining about a manure source and they don't look, there's not enough education about what the urban communities are doing themselves as far as their sewage. They just think of farms. They don't think of their own stuff and the fact that when there's an unusual amount of rain there is a lot of discharge. As amount percentage or more into the river to alleviate their products they never take that into consideration they don't look at the figures that show that the average in the areas around Minneapolis apply 10 times the amount of fertilizer per acre than the average farmer does.

Participant: Also the runoff. All those paved areas, the water isn't filtrating through. It's going straight for a river

Participant: Well, I think the soil and water in Goodhue County they're doing a good job, they have drills, they have education programs, and the list goes on and on. There are management programs.

Participant: If you look at it 20 or 30 years ago I would say there's a heck of a difference.

Participant: Whoever put all that mulch on top of the ground in the fall. (??) and no-till - everything organized matter on the top.

Barb Freeze: And how bout the with respect to the animal agriculture system there's been a lot of change in practices in the last 20 or 30 years that would include?

Participant: Absolutely

(section not clear)

Participant: Economics.

Participant: Economics and education.

Barb Freeze: Higher education or local education?

Participant: Is that why more kids go to universities to get an education? Well? More of them than people that work with the farmers. Cooperatives and agencies are able to, if they're taught, intelligently learn also about spreading the manure over more acres instead of all winter long. Your spreading this knoll because you can get out on it wait a minute store some manure for the winter if you get out onto more acres you don't concentrate you lower some of those issues of nutrient concentration.

Participant: Still se a lot of people that are on northern (??) see way too much fall applications even, which is particularly a big deal in the area that we live in because of down water contamination. Ya it's not recommended to be done at all for annhydrous for this part of the state, and yet the last few years I've seen a lot of that going on and they put on a lot extra nitrogen because they know they're going to lose it.

Barb Freeze: How many farms have nutrients management plans now do you think?

Participant: I would say probably around 20%.

Barb Freeze: So it’s a long ways to go.

Participant: They may be on their own doing a pretty good job, but they don't know for sure what they're at.

Barb Freeze: But then what percent of those farms that are in that 20%? Are they of the..

Participant: They're the larger operations.

Barb Freeze: And what percent of dollar value do they represent?

Participant: They may be a larger percentage of the land base and environmental value.

Barb Freeze: And out of those 80% that don't have the management plans how many do you see going out of business?

Participant: My question would be those who have those plans why do they have them?

Participant: The biggest reason has probably been regulations the majority of people that I have worked with have done it to meet requirements.

Participant: Locally we've had some legislation that says if you need a condition to use permit, you need to get it. It's one of the conditions. Ya, and the larger facilities probably all have to get MPCA permits although (??) they didn't all need plans did they?

Participant: No, the MPCA rules have been out since the early seventies so anytime you're doing any kind of expansion to your operation is (??). But they haven't really required any nutrient management plan until the last five years.

Barb Freeze: This is a small question that hopefully will not discourage you from answering. What is the government doing right? What should I report back that is being well received?

Participant: Well, I think they are really trying to get a set of rules that are stable and that's a big step.

Barb Freeze: I'd like to follow up on that because earlier you talked about your engineer. My understanding was that these rules had been fairly stable for a number of years and then the turmoil was basically in the proposals for the endless process for five years or so nobody really knew during that period what was happening is that what you were referring to?

Participant: Ya that's why we don't have a feedlot out in Goodhue. We're waiting for it and then its this day when they say that this is the way its going to be, jump on the bandwagon.

Participant: It's probably cheaper not having one

Participant: If and when you get one will you have enough funding to cover it that person or will you need to use some…

Participant: We are working on that now. I think we're on the waiting list for state aid.

Barb Freeze: The new legislation for the past couple years for education most, and credit, some of the tax laws for tax relief with the agricultural homesteads. Has that been sufficient do you feel or do you think that has not been enough?

Participant: I feel it's not been enough - its going to have to be changed.

Participant: The changes increase again a little bit this year.

Participant: Ya but its definitely a person who sells a farm and a new person buys it the taxes go up like 300%. So its is hard on the people that buy land and are trying to expand. Things are having to expand - that's the way it has to go because its just not monetarily there for the small farmers.

Participant: There is one question I'd like to bring up. Thinking outside of the box here of Minnesota, we, at least in dairy, we're competing with the west. So their dairies out there are well established dairies that are in probably better financial shape than the diaries in the Midwest. And my question is if the Midwest is going to continue to be in the dairy industry, and if the west is going to continue to expand itself at the rate that they are, can we financially catch up to them? They're expending a cash flow out there for the most part because they are in good financial shape and environmental issues hit there at about the same time as they hit here except were at a smaller size. They've probably got more cash to deal with environment issues and in Minnesota my dairy would be a small dairy in the west and the 50 cow dairies …how's the Midwest going to survive or how are they going to keep the dairy industry in the Midwest?

Participant: What they're doing is crop raising. If you look back ten years ago, 80% of Californians were insolvent because of the high grain prices the grain prices we have now (??).

Participant: Okay, then that's another question that comes to my mind. We've had bumper crops for 3 years in a row and I think the genetics in corn and soybean has come ahead so fast. Are there ever going to be higher grain prices? Is it always going to be cheap feed? It would take a drought to really knock it down.

Participant: If the grain prices go up the (??) prices go down.

Participant: But just over in China.

Participant: And the value of the dollar is so strong that the export market isn't very good.

Participant: That's the other thing, ya, it is if the economy is closed and the value of the dollar (??) you will see agriculture do better.

Participant: But its like the Midwest has - we have rain here, we have water, and we have that of course gives us lots of crops. But cheap feed has probably kept the Midwest alive but the west has cheap feed now.

Participant: It has kept the Midwest alive but not thriving.

Participant: Right, and we talk about family farms. I don't know what you call the west but there are Portuguese families that own those too and quite wealthy ones. But I mean that's what I saw out there too. But how's the Midwest going to compete with the west in the future?

Barb Freeze: Thank you. If you want to get in touch with me afterwards let me know and I can give you my card

Wynne Wright: I just have one comment. I've put a little index card in front of each of your place settings. If you know of someone else that we should talk to - a neighbor or someone in the community that you think we should have invited today but we missed - please write down that name and a little information about how we could get in touch with them. What township they live and so forth. We would appreciate that. In the next couple of months we will be interviewing people face to face to collect more data so thanks so much for coming.

ATTACHMENT 6:

Abdalla, Charles, John C. Becker, Celia Cook-Huffman, Barbara Gray and Nancy Welsh. 2000. *Alternative Conflict Resolution Strategies for Addressing Community Conflicts over Intensive Livestock Operations.* Final Report for Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. The Pennsylvania State University

ATTACHMENT 7:

Grey, Mark A. 2000. "Those Bastards Can Go to Hell! Small-Farmer Resistance to Vertical Integration and Concentration in the Pork Industry." *Human Organization* 59(2): 169-176.