

Susan Elwanger

Chelsea Morris,
Washington State Department of Ecology
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Dear Chelsea,

I oppose the CAFO rules as drafted and concur with the comments of Okanogan, Thurston and Yakima County Farm Bureaus. We need to partner with those who raise livestock on a small scale providing local sourced food. Applying CAFO standards to small operations, will be devastating to local food production and our overall food security. Ecology must recognize the work of the Volunteer Stewardship Program, Future Farmers of America (FFA), 4-H Groups, and local conservation districts. Instead of regulating, Ecology needs to encourage participation below:

1. Voluntary programs,
2. Attend fairs and listen to kids and young adults on raising animals;
3. Listen and reach out and understand how our farmers work to produce our food--most US citizens have no idea how and where food is produced. Most US citizens know they go to the store to pick up milk--how did the milk get to the store? Who took the time to raise the animals? Does the US citizen know how much hay and feed prices are to feed animals?
4. In 2021 Yakima Valley working with Northwest Harvest donated several thousand pounds of beef to our people who are needing help with food. Each year I hear the dairy farmers always providing butter, etc. to our food banks. State of Washington has many refugee families who have made their home here; if we continue to lose our farmers we will not be able to provide food to our own families and others.
5. Proven water quality--we have Ecology rules we have to abide by as farmers; how about this homeless population and the waste on sidewalks, roads and going into the water, soils, etc.
6. Instead of continuing to keep putting invasive and planning and reporting requirements, can't we all partner together--farmers always help farmers--how about we all help one another--see everyone has a purpose here. Let's come together help one another instead of penalizing.

Thank you.
Susan Elwanger