

Bonnie Haugen

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes and updates for the new NPDES and SDS permits. My name is Bonnie Haugen, and I truly believe that Farming is Everybody's Bread, Butter, and Water. What I do on my farm in Fillmore County does affect the water quality and quantity for everyone, not just us on this farm. And farming on the karst geology makes my farming practices even more important for the protection and clean up of water for drinking (people and livestock), fishing, bathing, recreation and cooking.

As a farmer, I understand the fear and frustration of having more regulations for my business to implement and follow. They may add cost and burdensome time needs. However, any business should be careful with or water, and fully aware of how that business uses and changes the water before it is put back into the water cycle. And the bigger the water use, the more that water use should be checked on and overseen. When businesses - manufacturing or farming - pollute and mismanage the water they use, I am in favor of enforcing actions such as huge fines and/or permit withdrawals and shutting down the business.

I support the new changes proposed for protecting our shared groundwater. Using cover crops, incorporating manure, visual inspections water sampling, and having consistency in regulations on spreading or buying manure, as you propose, are all good to implement.

In addition, where nitrate contamination is rising, limiting the number of permitted feedlots in the region should be considered. For example, Ten 1,000 a.u. CAFO's within a 5 township area can be as bad or more risky than one 10,000 a.u. in the same 5 townships. And perhaps this regional consideration, be it townships, county, or group of counties such as our karst region, or the sands in central region needs additional regulation considerations even if the nitrates are not increasing. The 10 ppm of nitrate level was set with the best intentions years ago. As we learn more, it may be higher than is prudent, especially since more and more studies are showing more health issues and also, there is often other contaminants in the water if nitrates are there. Manure application anywhere should get basic attention, and especially when a business is spreading over many acres.

Record keeping that involves protecting water for all should not be secretive. Extensive water testing and monitoring before, during and after construction of a C.A.F.O. should be done.

This all may seem "too much". However, considering the ways and places water moves, and how tough it is to clean up the aquifers once they are contaminated, I believe it is extremely important that we monitor and protect or water. Our bodies are over 70% water and our planet earth's surface is close to 80% water (percentages may not be accurate). I think we need to be careful and wise with our water usage and minimize the pollutants already in us and our environment. A raindrop may travel many places after sliding down my cows belly in the pasture (we rotationally graze). Perhaps it goes in the ground to the aquifer that my neighbors well brings up water for their C.A.F.O., and then the water drop gets drank by their cow, peed into the slurry, pumped onto the hillside. Hopefully, this water drop can stay in the soil, but it could slide into a sinkhole, or a stream or Donaldson Creek, and flow into the Root River, then the Mississippi River, then the Gulf of Mexico. Anywhere along those areas, it may find a crevice and travel into one of the ground water aquifers.

Please do not hesitate to make and enforce protective regulations for C.A.F.O.'s using our water. Truly, Farming is Everybody's Bread, Butter, and Water. What I do on my hills affects the water quality and quantity for Everyone.

Thank you for reading my concerns. I am willing to answer questions, clarify, or share any studies that may be helpful.

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