

## National Farmers – Minnesota State Board

### President

**Joe Neaton**  
15230 County Road 20  
Watertown, MN 55388  
952-955-1427

### Vice President

**Gregg Klinkner**  
20509 County Road 11  
Sleepy Eye, MN 56085  
507-276-9403

### Secretary

**Pam Henry-Neaton**  
14715 22<sup>nd</sup> St.  
Watertown, MN 55388  
952-955-1140

### Treasurer

**Bruce Zeidler**  
12612 360<sup>th</sup> St.  
Eagle Bend, MN 56446  
218-738-5438

### Public Relations

**OPEN**

### District Presidents

#### First District

**OPEN**

#### Second District

**Gregg Klinkner**  
20509 County Road 11  
Sleepy Eye, MN 56085  
507-276-9403

#### Seventh District

**OPEN**

#### Eighth District

**Steve Koering**  
2401 65<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Fort Ripley, MN 56449  
218-251-8650

### Trustees

#### Bob Arndt

6325 140<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Echo, MN 56237  
507-925-4371

#### Mark Bauman

2109 72<sup>nd</sup> St., SE  
Delano, MN 55328  
763-972-2431

#### Carmen Fenholz

2484 Highway 40  
Madison, MN 56256  
320-212-3008  
Fenholz001@gmail.com

March 31, 2026

Governor Tim Walz

LT. Governor Peggy Flanagan

75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. #130

St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: **Request for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Riverview LLP's Proposed Expansion of West River Dairy, Stevens County**

On behalf of Minnesota National Farmers with our state board voting on this action, I am writing to request that the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency require a full **Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)** before any permit is approved for the expansion of the Riverview LLP's West River Dairy in Stevens County. The scale of this expansion poses significant environmental, economic, and community risks that cannot be adequately evaluated through a simple Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW).

### Environmental and Public Health Concerns

- **Groundwater depletion and contamination:** Large dairies of this scale require millions of gallons of water annually, placing pressure on aquifers already stressed by agricultural use. Nitrate contamination from manure is a documented risk in regions with similar operations, threatening drinking water safety for rural households and municipal systems.
- **Surface water pollution:** Runoff from manure storage, land application, and feed storage areas increases the risk of phosphorus and nitrogen loading into nearby rivers, streams, and wetlands. This contributes to algal blooms, fish kills, and long-term ecosystem degradation.
- **Air quality impacts:** Emissions of ammonia, hydrogen sulfide, methane, and particulate matter from large dairies can harm respiratory health, reduce quality of life, and contribute to climate change. These impacts are especially concerning for nearby residents, schools, and vulnerable populations.

### Economic and Community Impacts

- **Local infrastructure strain:** Heavy truck traffic associated with feed delivery, manure hauling, and milk transport accelerates road deterioration and increases maintenance costs for county and township governments.
- **Depressed property values:** Numerous studies show that proximity to large concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) reduces residential property values due to odor, noise, and perceived health risks.
- **Harm to independent farmers:** Sadly, Minnesota is losing many dairy farms annually due to unreliable and most often below cost of production milk prices. Massive dairy operations like this one affects the market in a way that small and

medium sizes family farms are put out of business and off the land. Any new producers will find it hard for a creamery to accept their milk because of the large amount of milk that is produced by these larger dairies. Loss of family farms have a trickle down effect on the local economy which affects Main Street Minnesota.

### **Cumulative Impacts and Precedent**

Riverview LLP's Dairy is one of the largest milk producers in the country. They own 16 permitted dairy Concentrated Feeding Operations (CAFOs) in Minnesota. The cumulative environmental burden—including groundwater withdrawals, manure spreading, and air emissions—must be evaluated comprehensively. Approving this type of expansion without a full EIS would ignore the broader regional impacts and set a troubling precedent for unchecked growth of industrial-scale livestock operations.

### **Need for a Full Environmental Impact Statement**

Given the scale of the proposed expansion, the potential for significant environmental harm, and the long-term economic consequences for local communities, a full EIS is not only justified but necessary. An EIS would provide:

- A thorough analysis of cumulative impacts
- Transparent evaluation of alternatives
- Opportunities for meaningful public participation
- A science-based foundation for regulatory decision-making

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the MPCA to require a full Environmental Impact Statement before considering any permit approval for Riverview LLP's West River Dairy expansion.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your commitment to protecting Minnesota's environment and rural communities. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Joe Neaton  
State President  
MN National Farmers Board

CC: Commissioner Thom Peterson, Mn Department of Agriculture

Commissioner Katrina Kessler, MN Pollution Control Agency