

Laura Thielke

Please require a full Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed West River Dairy Expansion. The thought of over 20,000 animal units in one location is blowing my mind. I have several concerns. Will that many animals in one place require more vaccines, antibiotics, and disinfectants per animal compared to an average herd? Will the cows consume so much water that the aquifer that feeds the well for my residence will dry up? I can't afford to pay for a new, deep well. How likely is manure spillage and contamination of streams and rivers and other people's drinking water? Can the dairy be held liable for other people's contaminated or dry wells? How far will the wind carry the manure smell and feed dust generated at the dairy? When the owners of nearby farm sites want to sell their property, will they have trouble finding buyers? Will local property values decline? Will the additional truck traffic to haul in haylage, silage, and other feeds and to haul out milk and waste damage the nearby roads, increasing the property tax burden of Stevens County residents and nearby townships' residents? Will local farmers haul more grain to the dairy, so ethanol plants will have to buy corn from farther away, increasing the need to repair roads in the region? Will small family dairy farms all go broke? Since this livestock operation would be nearly double the size of the next largest livestock operation in Minnesota and huge compared to an average Minnesota dairy, please give this permit lots of scrutiny.