

# Becca Golden

These mega-dairies are one of the worst things to happen to Chippewa and Swift County. They are nothing more than massive land grabs by a small group of people who claim these operations "help the community," when in reality it's simply greed feeding greed.

What they don't tell the public is the real cost--paid by local taxpayers:

1. Damaged roads: Rural roads are deteriorating under the weight of constant heavy truck traffic, leaving counties to foot the repair bill.
2. Subsidized labor: These operations bring in H-2A workers and then receive subsidies for their food, housing, and wages--another hidden benefit that doesn't help the community at all.
3. Strained schools: Our school districts are overwhelmed, especially as they work to support students whose families come to the dairies and who are still learning English.

Take a step back and ask: Who actually benefits?

From where I live, it's clear that the dairies and the large farming operations tied to them are trying to grab and control every acre possible. They are not your friends or your neighbors; they are businesses determined to expand at any cost.

On top of that, they work to place their people on township boards, planning and zoning boards, and other local government committees--giving them influence at every level while the broader community pays the price.

Mega-dairies don't strengthen our counties--they hollow them out.