

Ferolyn Angell

My name is Ferolyn Angell, an educator, small business owner and Pomme de Terre Foods board member. I have lived in West Central MN (Pope & Stevens Counties) for the past 42 years.

I have now read through 400 + comments regarding the West River Dairy expansion. While a good many comments are repetitive either in favor of the expansion or against it, the number of comments requesting an EIS, as well as in opposition to CAFOs in general, far out number those in favor of expansion (390 – 83 at last count and yes, I kept a tally of the comments I have read). It is also worth noting that more than half of those in favor of expansion are either employed by or business partners with Riverwood, the parent company.

I found substantial concerns and ideas expressed that I would like to bring to your attention.

The comments submitted by Mr. Kestner from the DNR on 3/17/26 regarding wells, aquifer replenishment, and river flow raise concerns about monitoring of aquifers and the need for benchmarks to be established for water tables and contaminants in the Pomme de Terre river and surrounding watershed.

Sensitive areas (marshlands, creeks, ditches) for water fowl, migratory birds, etc. may be at risk. Depletion and contamination of water resources and habitat is of concern.

Although a good argument is made for decreased use of chemical fertilizers by spreading manure, it seems that the impact of increased methane, ammonia, hydrogen sulfide, the release of anti-pathogenic chemicals (antibiotics, hormones, etc) into the air and ground have been overlooked.

There is also concern about how the guidelines for manure spreading are enforced when it is being done by outside partners on fields that are not controlled by the permit seeker.

The current EAW as it was presented on 3/28/26 does not address the impact of the proposed expansion on the marketing of milk and milk products, price impact and the effects on smaller dairy farmers.

The increased risk of disease transmission among the animals is also a concern expressed by many of the comments. The presence of dust and insect pests (a good way to transmit pathogens) is mentioned by nearby neighbors.

The call for an Environmental Impact Statement was repeated often in the comments because it would address the effects of the proposed expansion beyond the operations of the milking facility.

The project has far reaching implications that go beyond the immediate area surrounding the site of the West River Dairy. Some of the comments made by people in other parts of Minnesota and even other states point this out.

Up to this point, MPCA has not required an environmental impact for a 'feed lot' of this type. Since this permit would be for the largest milk production operation housing a herd of previously untried size, environmental impact is extremely broad and a review is vital for future health and safety.

I am personally concerned about the tremendously shortened life span of the cows that are subjected to the milking operations in factory dairy production. The dead or dying cows are either rendered or slaughtered for consumption. In some cases, I believe they are buried in pits.

At the public meeting held by MPCA in Morris on April 28th many local farmers and area residents were turned away at the door because the room was at capacity. Therefore the purpose of the meeting - to provide an opportunity for residents to voice concerns and ask questions - was not achieved. This will require another meeting in a larger capacity venue. It is now planting season so

scheduling a time when farmers can participate is crucial.

Given the changes in climate and the growing number of extreme weather events, many are concerned about the prudence of relying on currently available rainfall data. Changes in weather patterns will impact the likelihood of manure spills in the future. Minnesota's stated climate targets must also be kept in mind in reviewing this expansion.

In my estimation, an EIS is the best next step for this proposal. I am happy to share my list of substantive comments pro and con if that would be helpful in wading through the more than 1100 submitted so far.