

## Sandra Simonson

In order for Minnesota to have strong rural communities, we need to preserve the beneficial economic impact of small and medium sized family farms. The approval of such an extreme large-scale operation such as the West River Dairy expansion only serves a single corporate interest not the economic and environmental well-being of rural communities.

Environmental protection needs to be a top concern, especially for an operation that would be the largest scale operation in Minnesota if approved. The requirement of an EIS is the responsible action needed to be taken by the MPCA and to not do so would be an extreme disservice to Minnesota residents. All of the previous operations previously determined to need an EIS were significantly smaller than West River's proposed operation.

The protection of water is a key concern in Minnesota! A corporate interest with a poor environmental record should not be allowed to pollute such an important resource. It is gravely irresponsible to other water users and residents of the area to move forward with this permit process without a full understanding of the potential impacts, especially in a sensitive watershed.

I submit these comments as a life-long resident of Minnesota who grew up on a farm. Since an ecology course taken in 1982, I have understood the importance of water as a resource. The two well renown ecology professors who taught the course implored us to be diligent about the protection of Minnesota's water. These professors correctly predicted the future attempted misuse of Minnesota's valuable resource - water.