

Kevin Van Winkle

I am writing this letter from the perspective of a fellow Dairyman and grain farmer.

#1. Nutrient management, River View Farms are built with some of the highest standards i have seen, covered storage ponds to help mitigate odor, when you drive onto a Riverview Farm you do not get the odor of a livestock facility the only thing I smell is fresh feed being delivered to animals. They also catch all rain water from the facilities which is stored in fresh water ponds. All nutrients are injected into the soil which is used for crop production and replaces the use of commercial fertilizers that are spread on top of the ground. Also crops grown with animal waste tend to yield more per acre than commercial fertilizer which is better for the environment. So less commercial fertilizer means less petroleum used to produce that fertilizer which is better for the environment.

#2. Creating a market for locally grown feed. The corn and soybeans that are grown on Farmland in the United States are used for feed for animals or made into ethanol to replace gasoline as far as soybeans go they are crushed and processed into vegetable oil for humans and the byproduct is soybean meal which is used for animal feed. We do not use all the corn and soybeans that are produced in the United States, about 15 percent of the corn crop is exported and around 45 percent of the soybean crop is exported. So if a livestock facility is built in any given part of the US it creates a new local market for grain. This creates competition for that grain which leads to a better price for neighbors in the area that produce the grain. Also it means less transportation of grain around the world which uses less petroleum which is better for the environment.

#3. Food security for the US. As for most Americans we do not ever think about running out of food because US farmers are great at producing it efficiently and with environmental stewardship as a high priority. We as farmers love our animals and we love our land, we have a personal connection to them and will do anything to take care of them. I know River View has the same philosophy when it comes to their animals and the environment. Dairy Farming is very hard work and requires a special set of work ethics and commitment, with that said there is fewer and fewer of us out here willing to do this. So with fewer of us willing to tackle this type of lifestyle it requires a somewhat larger scale farm to supply high quality food for our fellow Americans. So if we do not allow some new facilities to be built to replace the dairy farmers that are retiring around the US we will eventually have a problem with food security.