

## New Alliance Calls for Moratorium on New and Expanding Factory Farms



Chris Petersen of the Socially Responsible Agricultural Project speaking at the launch of the Iowa Alliance for Responsible Agriculture. Photo: Fred Rosenberg

By Diane Rosenberg  
President and Executive Director

On September 21 at the Iowa State House, the Iowa Alliance for Responsible Agriculture (IARA) launched with a campaign calling for a statewide moratorium on new and expanding factory farms until Iowa has fewer than 100 water impairments, down from a record-breaking 754 impairments in 2014.

JFAN is a member of the new alliance that brings together over 20 national, state, and local environmental, family farm, and community organizations that oppose infringing factory farms. IARA qui-

etly met for two years before publicly launching with a press conference before a crowd of 150 supporters from all corners of the state. At least 20 members of the Jefferson County community attended the event.

Five representatives of six member organizations – JFAN, Poweshiek CARES, The People Vs. Prestage, Des Moines Water Works, Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement, and Iowa Farmers Union – spoke at the press conference describing why Iowa needs a factory farm moratorium immediately.

Media coverage resulted in dozens of

**LAUNCH** continued on p. 8

### In the News.....

## UN Commits to Solving Global Antimicrobial Resistance Challenge

In a high level meeting in late September, global leaders meeting at the United Nations passed a historic declaration signaling an unusually strong commitment—with a broad, coordinated approach—to curbing infections that are now resistant to antimicrobial (antibiotic) medicines. Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is considered an urgent global threat with significant social, health, and economic repercussions requiring international and national attention according to a UN press release (9/21/16).

The UN declaration calls on countries to produce a two-year plan for monitoring and curbing antibiotic use in agriculture and medicine, developing new ones that work, and increasing cooperation and funding internationally—including innova-

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## Bill Stowe • Reclaiming the Soul of Iowa

JFAN Annual Meeting • Wed. October 26 at 7:15 pm • Fairfield Arts & Convention Center

# JFAN NEWSLETTER

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FARMERS & NEIGHBORS, INC

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## In the News.....

# Resistance to Last-Resort Antibiotic Found in US

For the first time in the US, a strain of E. coli resistant to the antibiotic colistin has appeared, reports *The Washington Post* (5/27/16). Colistin is considered a last resort antibiotic for infections difficult to treat.

Doctors discovered the antibiotic resistant bacteria in the urine of a 49-year old

patient resistant to colistin. But the gene is also located on a plasmid, a highly mobile piece of DNA that can replicate and transfer to other bacteria, making the resistant gene highly transmissible.

The mcr-1 gene was also found in samples taken from two US pigs.

China widely uses colistin in livestock production. According to Yohei Doi, an infectious disease doctor at the University of Pittsburgh, the gene likely leapt from livestock to human microbes through food. The US doesn't use the drug in livestock production, although a related antibiotic is legal. According to the Pew Charitable Trusts, officials haven't provided much information yet on the two pigs that tested positive for the antibiotic resistant gene.

"It...underscore[s] the importance of what many specialists at the intersection of public health and animal agriculture have emphasized for years: Data collection and monitoring, and the surveillance of antibiotic use and resistance in food animal production, are critically important to protecting public and animal health," they write.

Colistin is not widely used in the US because it can cause serious kidney damage in patients, but it is a tool used to fight off some of the most difficult infections.

The news of the discovery contributed to the scheduling of a Congressional House and Energy Commerce subcommittee meeting on June 14. Testimony from government scientists warned that the US must take a stronger approach in protecting antibiotic efficacy.

"We find that this gene has made its way into pigs and people, and people in the US," said Lance Price, Director of the Antibiotic Resistance Action Center and a George Washington University professor in a *Boston Globe* article (6/15/16). "If our leaders were waiting to act until they could see the cliff's edge – I hope this opens their eyes to the abyss that lies before us."

*Additional Sources: Philly.com (5/26/16),  
BuzzFeed (5/26/16)*



Photo: Jarun Ontakrai/Shutterstock.com

Pennsylvania woman who sought treatment for a urinary tract infection. While the woman's infection was resolved with other drugs, the medical community is sounding alarms at the appearance of the resistant bacteria in the US.

"It shows us that the end of the road isn't very far away for antibiotics – that we may be in a situation where we have patients in our intensive-care units or patients getting urinary tract infections for which we do not have antibiotics," said Tom Frieden, Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the *Washington Post* article.

Authors of a paper appearing in May's *Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy*, a publication of the American Society for Microbiology, said the occurrence "heralds the emergence of a truly pan-drug resistant bacteria."

The antibiotic resistant bacterium has appeared in the United Kingdom, Italy, Canada and China, but the Pennsylvania woman had not traveled outside the US during the five previous months before being diagnosed.

The discovery is concerning for two reasons: The bacteria carries an antibiotic resistant gene, mcr-1, which is re-

# Think U.S. Agriculture Will End World Hunger? Think Again, Says New Report

## U.S. Agribusiness 'Feeding the World' Claim is Dangerous Myth

by the Environmental Working Group

U.S. agribusiness spokesmen routinely defend practices that pollute air and water, and destroy soil by claiming that American farmers are doing what it takes to "feed the world," reports an Environmental Working Group (EWG) press release.

The facts tell a very different story. U.S. agriculture is not feeding the world's impoverished and desperate people, according to a new EWG analysis of trade figures. Eighty-six percent of American agricultural exports in 2015 went to 20 of the world's wealthiest and most developed export destinations, including Canada, China, Mexico and the European Union.

"We wanted to dig into the fictitious notion that America's farmers are feeding people in undernourished countries, and the assertion that so-called 'modern' farming techniques are our only option if we ever hope to do so," said Anne Weir Schechinger, EWG's senior analyst for

economics and author of the report.

"This is simply a myth adopted and deployed by U.S. agribusiness to distract the public from reality. The indisputable facts are that



Photo: Great Divide Photography/Shutterstock.com

we are sending mostly meat products and animal feed to wealthy countries, and we are not sending much food at all to those nations struggling to feed their people."

Weir Schechinger's analysis determined that the 20 export destinations that consumed the vast majority of America's agricultural bounty scored medium, high or very high on a development scale created by the United Nations Development Programme. None had large numbers of hungry people. Half of all U.S. exports going to these relatively affluent nations consisted of meat and dairy products, and animal feed.

The EWG report soundly debunks the myth promulgated by the agribusiness lobby that a hungry world is counting on U.S. farmers to double their production, to meet a U.N. projection that world food production must double to feed a global population of 9 billion people by 2050.

Only half of 1 percent of U.S. agricultural exports last year went to 19 nations, including Haiti, Yemen and Ethiopia, that the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization determined had very high or high undernourishment. The value of U.S. food

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Factory farms are responsible for polluting local waterways and groundwater resources, fouling the air and treating workers and animals inhumanely - all while undermining the economic viability of family farmers and ranchers, and ruining the quality of life for rural residents.



SRAP works throughout the US helping communities protect themselves from the impacts of factory farms by empowering family farmers, ranchers and rural citizens with the tools, information and expertise to become powerful advocates for their communities.

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# With Factory Farms, there is no Middle Ground

By Dr. John Ikerd  
Professor Emeritus  
University of Missouri at Columbia

We are slowly winning the war against factory farms, even though we are obviously not winning every battle. The recent exposé of factory farming in *The Chicago Tribune*<sup>1</sup> is but the latest in a continuing barrage of negative publicity, reflecting growing public concerns about how America's meat, milk, and eggs are produced.<sup>2,3</sup> The inhumane treatment of animals in concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) tends to capture much of the public attention. However, Americans are becoming increasingly aware of the multitude of environmental, social, and rural economic problems that invariably arise from the industrial approach to animal production – commonly called factory farming.

In reality, factory farms have far more in common with factories than real farms. There are numerous well-documented problems associated with CAFOs. While air and water pollution typically are treated as environmental issues, the pollution from CAFOs represent significant, well-documented risks to public health.

While factory farms are often touted as the future of agriculture and a logical strategy for rural economic development, decades of rural economic and social reality provide compelling evidence of the direct opposite. Whenever and wherever family farms have been replaced with CAFOs, 90% or more of the independent family livestock and poultry producers have been driven out of business. This has not been a simple matter of competitive markets replacing inefficient family farmers with more efficient CAFOs. Corporate agribusinesses use their contractual arrangements with CAFO operators to manipulate markets in ways that prevent independent farmers of even having access to competitive markets.

CAFOs may increase local production, but it takes people, not just production, to support rural communities. Factory farms gain their economic advantage by employing fewer people in lower-paying jobs. We don't need sophisticated economic



Photo: lstock.com/agnormark

impact assessment models to tell us what factory farms do to rural communities. Whenever and wherever family farms have been replaced with factory farms, rural economies and social communities invariably wither and often die.

People in rural communities are led to believe they must suffer the negative environmental, social, and economic consequences of factory farming because American farmers have an ethical responsibility to help “feed the world.” Again, this is pure propaganda. First, American agriculture isn't even feeding all Americans. We have a higher percentage of “food insecure” people in the U.S. today than in the 1960s. Second, contrary to popular belief, food for more than 70% of the people in the world still comes from small, subsistence family farms.

Animal welfare has garnered most of the negative factory farms publicity, perhaps because it goes to heart of the factory farm controversy. The treatment of farm animals ultimately is an ethical or moral question, not a question of cost-benefit ratios or productivity. In CAFOs, animals are treated as inanimate mecha-

nisms in a factory, not as living, sentient beings in a herd or flock. People obviously will continue to disagree about the ethics of killing and eating animals, but there is a growing public consensus that CAFOs are the epitome of inhumane treatment of farm animals. It's a matter of ethics and morality.

The same ethical arguments can be made, and should be made, concerning the negative environmental, social, and rural economic impacts of factory farms. The right to farm was never meant to include a right to threaten your neighbors' health or well-being by polluting their air and water – regardless of the economic benefits of doing so. Rural communities are not just places where corporations should be allowed to use factory farms to extract the wealth while leaving their chemical and biological waste behind. It is morally unacceptable for corporate shareholders and few local individuals to become wealthy by destroying rural communities – economically, socially, and culturally. The fact that all of these things are still legal does not make any of them morally or ethically right.

With respect to factory farms being necessary to feed the world, a 2016 independent study by an International Panel of Experts in Sustainability described the evidence found in 350 studies documenting the failures of industrial agriculture and supporting fundamental change as “overwhelming.”<sup>4</sup> The report provides extensive documentation of a new sustainable food system emerging in the U.S. and around the world. They state: “Data shows that these systems can compete with industrial agriculture in terms of total outputs, performing particularly strongly under environmental stress, and delivering production increases in the places where additional food is desperately needed. Diversified agroecological systems can also pave the way for diverse diets and improved health.”

The challenge of the future for farmers in the U.S. is not to increase agricultural productivity but instead agricultural sustainability. Our current food system isn't meeting the needs of all in the present and it certainly is not leaving equal or better opportunities for the future. American farmers produce far more than enough to provide adequate food for everyone. We simply need to focus on producing food rather than feed and fuel, reducing food waste, and making sure everyone has enough food, regardless of his or her ability to earn enough money. The rest of the world doesn't need or want our agricultural commodities; the world is perfectly capable of feeding itself without factory farms or industrial agriculture. The only real questions remaining is whether the economic rights of corporations and factory farmers to make money will continue to take priority over the basic human rights of all people to a clean air, clean water, safe food, and the peaceful enjoyment of their homes.

The only thing that keeps me traveling the country and speaking out about the inevitable negative environmental, social, economic, and public health impacts factory farms is the people I meet whose

lives have been literally destroyed by being forced to live downwind or downstream from a factory farm. The stories of real people who have been deprived of their rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness always linger in the back of my mind.

This battles over factory farming are battles over conflicting ethical and moral values. The economic rights of factory farmers are being given priority over the basic human rights of their neighbors and society in general. Some are still searching for middle ground upon which to develop and implement a mutually acceptable set of regulations. However, the agricultural establishment is firmly committed to preventing effective regulation of factory farming. There is no middle ground. To compromise is to lose. It's time to choose sides.

We need to act boldly by advocating a nation-wide moratorium on CAFOs, to give people time to inform themselves on the nature of the threats and of their rights of self-defense. We need to propose a national "right to farm" law that will preempt all current state right to farm laws, and specifically exclude CAFOs and other industrial agricultural system

from the legal definition of "farm."

We need to propose a CAFO tax to create a "superfund" and then start closing down and cleaning up after CAFOs wherever they threaten the rights of their neighbors. We need to replace current government policies that support factory farms and industrial agriculture with a farm bill that supports independent family farms and sustainable animal agriculture. Farm policy, not free markets, created today's industrial agriculture and new farm policies can create a new sustainable agriculture. We need to let people know we don't need factory farms to feed the world. We need to put the agricultural establishment on the defensive with a comprehensive plan of action built upon a strong foundation of widely-held moral and ethical values.

"We the people," must find a means of using the power granted to us by our constitution to claim our constitutional rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. There is no middle ground. It's time to take a stand. As for me, for as long as I am able to stand, I will stand against factory farms – on the side of the people.

**NO MIDDLE GROUND** *continued on p. 7*

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# What the Trans Pacific Partnership Could Mean for Iowa

By Diane Rosenberg  
President and Executive Director

The Trans Pacific Partnership is an enormous, controversial free trade deal that would encompass 12 Pacific Rim countries, including the US, Canada, Australia, and many Southeast Asia countries. Eight hundred million people and approximately 40% of the global GDP would be affected by the TPP.

The agreement was negotiated in secret by 500 official US trade negotiators and advisors, including many representing corporate interests. Provisions of the trade agreement would take priority over domestic laws and regulations. For example, the TPP provides corporations with the right to sue governments before a panel of three corporate lawyers with the power to award unlimited sums for loss of future profits if a country's policies impede the corporate privileges provided by the TPP.

US citizens could expect to see a range of rippling impacts from passage of the TPP. Organizations opposing its passage say the trade agreement would outsource jobs, threaten internet freedom, flood the country with unsafe imported foods, allow corporations to challenge environmental standards, increase the cost of drugs, and undermine human rights, to name a few.

President Obama is actively campaigning to support its passage, but a bipartisan movement worried about an eroding middle class is fueling efforts to quash the deal, and support for the TPP agreement in its current form is unraveling. Over 1500 organizations representing a broad swath of the American public signed a letter penned by the Citizens Trade Campaign in January calling for its demise. At this point in time, neither presidential candidate say they favor the TPP.

Regardless, the pork industry, among other corporate interest groups, is actively lobbying for passage of the TPP reports the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) (9/29/26). The trade agreement is predicted to have a significant impact on industrial livestock production. It would

remove tariff and nontariff barriers to US products, allowing pork exports to flourish.

"TPP is the biggest commercial opportunity ever for the US pork industry," said John Weber, President of the NPPC dur-



Photo: Istock.com/DarcyMaulsby

ing a House Committee on Ways & Means Trade Subcommittee in June. "Congress must pass TPP, and it must do so soon," reports a 6/14/16 NPPC article.

In September the NPPC held its biannual legislative fly-in at the nation's capital. One hundred thirty producers from 20 states spent two days meeting with senators and representatives to lobby on the TPP as well as some other industry issues.

## If the TPP Were to Pass, What Would That Mean for Iowa?

In a June 2015 CNN article, Neil Dierks, CEO of NPPC predicted that the TPP would increase US pork exports by as much as 50% over 10 years.

Let's look at some numbers to see how this could impact our state.

In 2012 Iowa marketed more than 49 million hogs according to the National Pork Board (NPB) Checkoff Program.

In 2015, Iowa exported 24% of its total pork production reports the Iowa Pork Producers Association. Based on the 2012 NPB figures, approximately 12 million hogs were exported last year.

If pork exports were to increase by 50%, an additional 6 million hogs could be raised in Iowa each year by 2026 just for the TPP alone.

Since factory farms generally raise two-and-one-half cycles of hogs each year,

Iowa could expect to see an additional 2.4 million hogs in the state at any one time. (Currently, 21 million hogs are raised at any one time.)

If we average out 2.4 million hogs into 2500-head factory farms, an additional 960 CAFOs would have to be built to accommodate the increased export demand.

**Approximately 1.5 billion additional gallons of liquid manure annually would be left behind just from 6 million exported hogs.\***

**Efforts to halt this significant expansion could be challenged in an internal court presided over by corporate lawyers, and**

**enormous fines could be assessed for loss of future profits.**

An example of how corporations use this option to try to force governments to acquiesce is seen in the current TransCanada lawsuit against the Obama Administration over its rejection of the Keystone Pipeline. Claiming the US violated its obligations under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), TransCanada is suing for \$15 billion in compensatory damages that would be paid by US taxpayers if they win.

## Is this truly what we want for Iowa?

If the answer is no, then please contact your US Senators and Representatives and tell them you do not support the TPP, regardless of how you think they will respond. President Obama has continued to champion the trade agreement, and lobbying continues. Passage of the TPP would create an explosion of new factory farms. Find your elected representative at <http://bit.ly/1bYChH3>. Every voice counts.

Additional source: Public Citizen  
[www.citizen.org/TPP](http://www.citizen.org/TPP)

\*Calculated using the Iowa DNR's daily wean-to-finish manure production figures of 0.7 gallons/day.

**REPORT** *continued from p. 3*

exports to the top 20 wealthy destinations was 158 times the exports to the 19 most seriously undernourished countries.

Even more striking, between 2004 and 2013, U.S. exports and food aid combined contributed between only 2 to 4.4 percent of the food supply of those 19 undernourished countries.

Enterprising U.S. farmers are skillfully marketing their products to a growing population of middle-class people overseas, who can afford a more diverse diet, including more meat. But exploiting business opportunities shouldn't be confused with the moral imperative of feeding hun-

gry people. It shouldn't be used to excuse the damage all-out production is doing to American public health and the environment.

"Modern" farming systems that depend heavily on fertilizers and chemicals cause considerable damage to air, water and land resources, as well as public health.

Farm runoff generates toxic algal blooms and polluted drinking water that often contains numerous different pesticides. Pesticides from farm fields and antibiotic-resistant bacteria from confined animal enclosures drift across large expanses of land, threatening human health.

**NO MIDDLE GROUND** *continued from p. 3*

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Dr. John Ikerd, Professor Emeritus of Agricultural Economics at the University of Missouri, Columbia, has enjoyed a 30-year academic career at four Land Grant Universities. He has authored four books and received many honors for his work in agricultural economics.



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**LAUNCH** continued from p. 3



Over 150 people from across the state, including many from Jefferson County, attended the launch. Photo: Fred Rosenberg

news articles across the state, from TV stations including WHO-TV, major newspapers including the *Des Moines Register* and *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, radio, and local newspapers such as the *Fairfield Ledger* that ran its comprehensive press release. Two Associated Press articles brought nationwide attention to IARA when media outlets in roughly 25 states picked up the stories.

**Bill Stowe and Francis Thicke Speak At the High Energy Launch**

Wearing IARA t-shirts, dozens of supporters with signs stood behind the speakers during the press conference.

“Iowa hasn’t done nearly enough to address the problems of industrial agriculture that are clearly documented in over 50 years of respected, peer reviewed professional studies. IARA formed to find solutions to the devastating impacts caused by industrial livestock production on thousands of lowans throughout the state. We are here today to call for a factory farm moratorium. With over 9000 factory farms in Iowa, we say with conviction, enough is enough!” said Francis Thicke, a farmer and Jefferson County Farmers & Neighbors, Inc. board of directors member.

Others spoke on the impacts of factory farms on their lives.

“It broke my heart to watch a 90 year old suffer – gasping for air because of asthma. Her symptoms began within a year after

5,000 hogs moved in within ½ mile of my home. That ended my business of caring for disabled, elderly people in my home,” said Joyce Otto, BSN, RN, CWON and President of Poweshiek CARES. “It broke my heart when my daughter decided to go somewhere else for childcare because research validates the dangers of asthma in children exposed to the toxins from hog factories.”

“Our Mason City/Clear Lake/North Iowa area said ‘No!’ four months ago to a huge kill packing plant because of impacts on water, public health, quality of life, and the potential of hundreds of new factory farms in a historical and pristine area,” said Chris Petersen, a traditional independent hog farmer, member of The People Vs. Prestage and consultant with the Socially Responsible Agricultural Project. “Our group is bipartisan and a broad coalition of rural, urban, and all-walks-of-life folks. We all should be tired of our state being sacrificed for industrial ag...one neighborhood at a time. This top down model as a business involves corporate ownership and control. Where do the family farmers and citizens fit in?”

Iowa’s livestock produce nearly 22 billion gallons of liquid manure annually, according to an *Iowa Farmer Today* (11/25/16) article, that is spread on rural farmland without treatment. Over 800 documented manure spills since 1996 have polluted Iowa’s waterways according to figures Iowa CCI compiled from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Water data on the EPA/Iowa DNR 2014 list of impaired waterways show pollutants often associated with manure, such as bacteria and am-



Some of the several news outlets interviewing Bill Stowe after the press conference. Photo: Fred Rosenberg



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# Our Activities At a Glance

## JFAN Working Hard for You

by Diane Rosenberg  
President and Executive Director

### Two New CAFOs Proposed in Jefferson County

**Bacon Bottom** – In August, Larry Krabill proposed a 2499-head hog confinement for Lockridge Township, one-half mile from the Henry County border. The confinement would be located on 175th Street, approximately one mile east of the Skunk River near MacCoon Access, a popular recreation area for fishing, boating, hunting, and camping.

Sixty-eight neighbors in a two-mile radius were notified, but no one approached JFAN with concerns. Since the CAFO was close to Henry County and several residents there received warning letters, JFAN also alerted Henry County Farmers & Neighbors, Inc. as a courtesy about the factory farm and discussed working together to support any concerned neighbors that might reach out to JFAN.

**Porter Brothers Site 6** – Brothers Nathan, Ryan, and Mark Porter are building another hog confinement in Jefferson County, bringing the total number of confinements they have to seven. In August they submitted an application for Porter Brothers Site 6, a 2480-head confinement on 265th Street in Liberty Township. With this confinement, the Porter brothers will now have a total of 17,000 hogs in confinement. Six of the factory farms are in Jefferson County, and one in Stockport in Van Buren County.

JFAN sent its standard two-mile CAFO notification letter to 90 neighbors in Jefferson and Van Buren Counties. Several neighbors contacted JFAN for assistance. We have talked with these families, providing suggestions for responding to a potentially infringing CAFO as outlined in JFAN's booklet, *How to Protect Your Family and Home from Factory Farms*. To date, a community group has yet to organize. JFAN will continue to make itself available to these community members.

### Third Quarter DNR Statistics Attest to JFAN's Effectiveness

JFAN's deterrence effect is once again evident in light of new statistics just released by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR).


The DNR tracks new and expanding livestock confinements throughout Iowa and provides quarterly updates. The recently released 2016 third quarter figures show the DNR received applications for 411 new factory farms as of September 30.

In Field Office 6, which covers Jefferson and 15 other counties in Southeast Iowa, the DNR received applications for 76 new confinements. The saturated Northwest corner of the state submitted 143 applications, and from Northeast Iowa, 81 were submitted.

Of the 76 proposed confinements in Southeast Iowa, 19 came from neighboring Washington County and 12 came from Keokuk County, for a total of 31 new factory farms. Jefferson County, in contrast, had five including the two new CAFOs mentioned in the previous article.

These contrasting statistics illustrate the effectiveness of JFAN's efforts to protect Jefferson County's quality of life including the use of JFAN's Good Neighbor Guidelines by neighbors and CAFO owners. It's the generous grassroots support of Jefferson County residents and businesses that allows JFAN to continue our community education, monitoring, and informational guidance and support programs to help keep you safe from infringing factory farms. We thank you for your support of JFAN.

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### The Humane Society of the United States congratulates JFAN!

Thanks for protecting the health of Jefferson County citizens and supporting family farmers whose practices are respectful of the animals, environment and surrounding communities.



PHOTO BY NARIKIJISTOCK.COM

We are right there with you, JFAN.  
Thanks for all you do.



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sive approaches of alternatives to antimicrobials and new tools for diagnosis. National plans are to be submitted to the General Assembly in September 2018

Countries reaffirmed their commitment to develop national action plans to address AMR based on the World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance. This blueprint for tackling AMR was developed by the WHO in 2015 in coordination with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

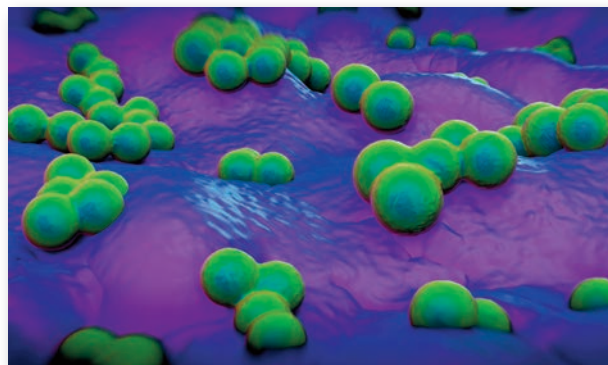
"I think the declaration will have very strong implications," said the World Health Organization's Dr. Keiji Fukuda. "What it will convey is that there's recognition that we have a big problem and there's a commitment to do something about it."

The approach will address the root causes of AMR across multiple sectors, focusing on misuse of medicines in human health, animal health, and agriculture. It's only the fourth time the UN General Assembly has taken up a health issue—previous interventions addressed HIV, Ebola, and non-communicable diseases. Each year, more than 2 million Americans get sick with antibiotic-resistant infections, with tens of thousands dying from common infections including urinary tract, HIV, tuberculosis, post-operative, and pneumonia.

H.E. Peter Thomson, President of the Assembly session, noted that AMR

threatens the achievement of the Sustainable Development goals, and that "no one country, sector or organization can address this issue alone."

Economists are jumping on the bandwagon also, concerned about the huge



3D Photo of MRSA, methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus Aureus*, an antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

Photo: RoyaltyStockPhoto/Shutterstock.com

costs AMR presents. *The Review on Antimicrobial Resistance*, published by the United Kingdom government in 2016, projected a global cost of \$100 trillion by 2050 if nothing is done; the World Bank suggested antibiotic-resistant infections could cause financial harm equivalent or greater than the 2008 market crisis. Then there's the food supply—if farmers are to cut back on the drugs that foster animal health and promote fattening, global food supplies could suffer.

"Antibiotic resistance has immense economic consequences and immense implications for food," said Fukuda.

"We are running out of time," said Dr. Margaret Chan, Director-General of

WHO. "The commitments made today must now be translated into swift, effective, lifesaving actions across the human, animal and environmental health sectors."

The growing amount of AMR is the result of overuse and misuse of antibiotics and other antimicrobials in humans, animals (including farmed fish), and crops, as well as the spread of residues of these medicines in soil, crops and water.

"AMR is a problem not just in our hospitals, but on our farms and in our food, too," said Dr. José Graziano da Silva, Director-General of FAO. "Agriculture must shoulder its share of responsibility, both by using antimicrobials more responsibly and by cutting down on the need to use them, through good farm hygiene."

"I think this is the first realistic chance, in our lifetime, to turn this around," Fukuda added.

Global cooperation is essential to the success of the efforts; affordability and access to existing and new antibiotics and treatments should take into account needs of all countries, the declaration stressed.

Ramanan Laxminarayan, director of the

UN continued on p. 13

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# News Briefs

## FROM IOWA, THE US AND BEYOND

### Prestage Loses – Then Wins – Pork Plant Bid in Iowa

Prestage Farms' bid for a \$240 million, 650,000 square foot hog plant in Mason City, Iowa was voted down by the city council—but the North Carolina-based pork processor has had much better luck in Wright County, reports the *Des Moines Register* (8/18/16).

The Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) voted 8 to 1 to approve \$11.5 million in state taxpayer incentives, supplemented by a possible \$8 million in Wright County tax breaks. Opponents decried the approval, citing air and water quality concerns. Prestage will have to create nearly 1,000 jobs, with at least 322 of those paying \$15.54 per hour—not enough to lure back workers who have left Iowa, said opponents. Others argued Prestage could build the plant without the incentives. Many criticized giving away tax dollars to a potential polluter in the face of insufficient funds to address water quality issues.

IEDA justified its large incentive amount as appropriate to a promising project. Councilman Mike Weland insisted the county needed a boost in both revenue and population.

Mason City, however, rejected a proposed development plan for the plant in May with a 3 to 3 tie vote, following a highly contentious public meeting. The agreement would have provided Prestage with \$15 million in property tax rebates and infrastructure improvements. Council member Bill Schickel's con-

science wouldn't let him vote in favor; member Alex Kuhn considered the tax incentives too high, in spite of a commitment from Prestage of \$1.4 million to local schools reported *KIMT News* (5/3/16). Given the amount of city funds involved, Mayor Eric Bookmeyer, a champion the development, couldn't cast a tiebreaking vote.

Although Mason City officials projected an economic impact of \$750 million, concerns over odors, wastewater harm, and lowered property values won out. As in Wright County, IEDA promised \$11.5 million in tax incentives plus \$3.3 million for job training.

A coalition of hundreds of urban and rural residents from all sectors of the community organized in opposition to Prestage; Socially Responsible Agricultural Project and Iowa Citizens for Community Improvements provided support to the community.

Governor Terry Branstad weighed in on Mason City's decision, saying he was "deeply disappointed" in the City Council's decision. Ron Prestage, President of Prestage Farms of South Carolina, LLC, also lashed out, calling the opponents "kooks" and racist. Responding to the charge of racist, Adam Mason, state organizing policy director for Iowa CCI, said, "It just couldn't be farther from the truth." Mason said the City Council "heard many arguments against the plant, in-

cluding concerns about the environmental impact, the city's financial ability to handle an influx of residents, and general complaints against factory farming," writes the *Des Moines Register* (5/8/16).

### CAFO Near Buffalo River Stirs Up Controversy

Since 2013, when C&H Hog Farms opened a 6,500-head farm near Mt. Judea, Arkansas, environmentalists and local citizens have been concerned about possible harmful impacts on the Buffalo National River's fragile ecosystem from the CAFO's discharges. A five-year moratorium



was enacted last year on building any medium or large hog farms in the watershed reports *The Times Record* (8/22/15).

The Buffalo River, 135 miles long, is one of the last free-flowing rivers in the U.S. C&H hog farm is located less than six miles from the river, and half a mile from Big Creek, that flows into the Buffalo.

The state's Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) has begun investigative drilling near the farm's manure ponds, after a finding by University of Arkansas'

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Big Creek Research and Extension Team of a large leak 120 feet below one manure lagoon.

The Buffalo River Watershed Alliance has filed a federal suit against ADEQ and C&H, and hopes to close down the farm. Manure waste from the lagoons will be spread on fields situated above karst geology—land with thin topsoil above very porous rock that can't properly filter the toxic bacteria. The mixing of surface and ground water in a karst environment could pollute nearby Big Creek, and thus Buffalo River.

C&H is applying for a Regulation 5 permit that would allow it to operate permanently; BRWA hopes to block the permit based on damage to the watershed.

*Additional sources: The Free Weekly (9/15/16), Ag Web (8/25/15), KATV (9/11/15)*

## Investors Urge Costco, Walmart to Sell Less Meat

Forty investors, representing \$1.25 trillion in assets, hope to influence consumers' protein consumption, prompting a shift from meats to plant-based protein sources for the environment, human health, and to curb climate change im-

pacts reports *Reuters* (9/26/16).

"The world's overreliance on factory farmed livestock to feed the growing global demand for protein is a recipe for a financial, social and environmental crisis," said Jeremy Coller, founder of the Farm Animal Investment Risk & Return Initiative (FAIRR) which created the investor group.

Their campaign contacted 16 food companies, including Kraft Heinz, Nestle, Walmart, Costco, Kroger, Sainsbury's and Whole Foods Market, to urge an 8.4 percent increase in plant-based protein sales in the next five years.

Pollution from livestock facilities, inadequate safety standards, and production capacity lagging global demand are symptoms of the problem they say. While Denmark considers a red meat tax, China wants to reduce meat consumption by 50 percent.


**UN** *continued from p. 11*

Center for Disease Dynamics, Economics & Policy in Washington, D.C. is optimistic, citing the significant alleviation of AIDS deaths when countries took responsibility—in dollar commitments and change in attitudes—for handling the HIV crisis reports NPR (9/21/16)

By 2004, global campaigns contributed to a 45 percent drop in AIDS-related deaths. Regarding AMR, he sees a weakness in the UN's plan in that there are no specific targets for reducing antibiotic use by certain levels in two years' time. But he's encouraged by the direction. "We don't have a choice. Tens of thousands of people are now dying around the world, particularly newborns. And this is surely getting worse year by year."

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# Iowa Sets New State Record for Blue-Green Algae Advisories

*Thirty-seven beach advisories issued for high levels of microcystin in 2016*

By Iowa Environmental Council

A record-breaking number of beach advisories were posted at Iowa State Park beaches this summer due to high levels of microcystin, a toxin produced by some forms of blue-green algae blooms that make the water unsafe for swimming. This is the second year in a row the record has been broken reports an Iowa Environmental Council press release.

During the week of August 29, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) issued six beach advisories warnings, bringing the total number of microcystin warnings posted this year to 37, surpassing last year's previous record of 34 warnings. That was the final week of the 2016 state park beach monitoring season, which runs Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend.

"Unfortunately, this problem continues to persist and an increasing number of Iowans are being greeted by signs warning them to stay out of the water at their favorite shoreline spots," said Ann Robinson, agricultural policy specialist at the Iowa Environmental Council.

Since 2006, DNR has issued 185 beach warnings for high levels of microcystin exceeding 20ug/L, the level deemed unsafe by the World Health Organization. Nearly two thirds (117) of these warnings have been posted in the past four years, with a significant increase in the last two years. Of the 39 State Park Beaches currently monitored by DNR, 16 had warnings posted this year for at least one week, and unsafe levels of Microcystin were reported



Photo: Jack Frog/Shutterstock.com

at Shelby County's Prairie Rose State Park beach for the first time.

Blue-green algae is fed by an abundance of nutrients, including phosphorus and nitrogen, and exacerbated by hot temperatures. Blooms can result from a variety of pollution sources, including agricultural and urban fertilizers, livestock waste, leaking septic systems, urban runoff and wastewater treatment facilities.

Contact with water at or above 20 micrograms per liter (ug/L) can result in breathing problems, upset stomach, skin reactions, and even liver damage. Inhaling water droplets containing toxic blue-green algae can cause runny eyes and nose, cough, sore throat, chest pain, asthma-like symptoms, or allergic reactions. Children and pets are especially vulnerable to exposure because they are more likely to ingest the water. Dogs have been known to experience serious harm

or even death in a matter of hours.

The problems posed by these toxins are growing in Iowa. Not only does blue-green algae threaten beachgoers' safety and recreational experience, it has started to be a problem for drinking water suppliers, such as the Des Moines Water Works, which announced it had detected microcystin in treated drinking water

early last month.

"Harmful algae blooms threaten our health, quality of life and economy. This is a wake-up call that more needs to be done to reduce the nutrient pollution coming from the farms, city lawns and urban and industrial wastewater plants that are feeding the algae," Robinson said. "If we don't take action on the scale needed, unprecedented numbers of beach warnings will become our new normal."

It's important to note that while DNR monitors State Park beaches for this toxin, the problem is not isolated to these lakes. Many other public and private beaches not monitored by DNR are also susceptible to blue-green algae blooms, so it's critical that Iowans know how to recognize the blooms and respond if exposed.

Toxic blue-green algae blooms have a foul odor and range in color from bright iridescent blue to green, red or brown. They



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create a visible surface scum that resembles spilled paint or pea soup. The blooms can spread across the water but tend to accumulate in shoreline areas.

If you think you or your pets may have been exposed to toxic blue-green algae, thoroughly wash exposed areas with clean water. If symptoms associated with high microcystin levels show up after suspected exposure, seek prompt medical or veterinary care.

State beaches are monitored and advisories posted from the beginning of summer through Labor Day. While swimming activities drop off after Labor Day, the danger of exposure to blue-green algae continues as long as the hot, sunny weather lasts, so the public must continue to be vigilant. Call the DNR Beach Monitoring Hotline at 515-725-3434 to report a potential blue-green algae bloom.

A chart showing State Park Beaches with documented microcystin levels exceeding 20 ug/L dating back to 2006 are available on the Iowa Environmental Council's website.

**LAUNCH** *continued from p. 9*

order to take a much-needed first step in protecting the citizens and our precious resources." Numerous supporters speaking with Branstad agricultural aide Julie Vande Hoef shared the difficulties of living near a factory farm and called for a halt in new and expanding CAFOs.

The governor's office responded later in

the day with a statement that said, "Governor Branstad is not interested in extreme proposals that would harm agriculture and our economy in Iowa, which is exactly what a moratorium would do. Governor Branstad remains focused on bringing good jobs and opportunities to Iowans whenever possible while supporting reasonable regulations in protecting the environment," reported the *Des Moines Register* (9/21/16).

An IARA spokesperson said they were not surprised by the Governor's response.

IARA concluded the launch with a meeting of supporters that provided numerous action steps including getting petition signatures, reaching out to legislators, and writing letters to the editor.

"This is just the beginning stages of a sustained effort," said Petersen.

Iowa Pork Producers Association president Al Wulfekuhle responded to the moratorium commenting that IARA members don't understand the value of nutrients in manure nor how farmers handle manure in an environmentally responsible way, reported WNAX-Radio 570.

"I would say that we understand exactly how manure is handled," commented an IARA member.

The Iowa Alliance for Responsible Agriculture seeks to educate Iowans about the destructive impacts of industrial livestock production, advocate for a statewide factory farm moratorium, and promote traditional and humane livestock production.

To date, IARA is comprised of the following organizations: Dallas County Farmers & Neighbors, Des Moines County Farmers & Neighbors for Optimal Health, Des Moines Water Works, Food and Water Watch, Henry County Farmers & Neighbors, Iowa Citizen Action Network, Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement, Iowa County Farmers & Neighbors, Iowa Farmers Union, Iowa Sierra Club, The Humane Society of the United States, Iowans Downwind, Jefferson County Community Rights Network, Jefferson County Farmers & Neighbors, Inc., Linn County Farmers & Neighbors, Organic Consumers Association, Partners for the Future: Dickinson County Land, Air and Water, The People Vs. Prestage, Poweshiek CARES, Relish Restaurant, Socially Responsible Agricultural Project, South Boone County Farmers & Neighbors, Walnut Neighbors, Women, Food and Agricultural Network.

Other anti-CAFO organizations supportive of the moratorium on new and expanding factory farms are welcome, and several have already reached out to become members.

Learn more about IARA at:  
[www.cleaniowanow.org](http://www.cleaniowanow.org)  
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An IARA press release formed the foundation of this article.

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# Massachusetts About To Pass A Historic Animal Protection Law

by Nico Pitney  
Senior Editor, The Huffington Post

Voters in Massachusetts will decide next month whether to pass a far-reaching law to protect farm animals from extreme confinement, and polling suggests they will approve it overwhelmingly.

The ballot measure targets practices that severely constrain animals for virtually their entire lives, including the use of veal crates for baby calves, gestation crates for mother pigs and battery cages for egg-laying hens.

Eleven states have passed laws banning one or more of those practices. The Massachusetts measure would prohibit all three, and then go further. It would also bar the sale of meat and eggs produced using those methods, even if the animals were farmed outside the state.

Two independent polls released in the last month show likely voters supporting the measure by wide margins — 41 points and 61 points, respectively. And while several agribusiness groups oppose the initiative, they've spent little to campaign against it.

Roughly 9 billion animals are killed for

food in the United States each year, and just one decades-old federal law governs their humane treatment.

That law applies exclusively to the moment when livestock are slaughtered; it says nothing about how farm animals



Photo: Dimitry Kalinovsky/Shutterstock.com

should be treated during the rest of their lives, from birth onward. It also completely exempts chickens and other animals that make up over 90 percent of the animals slaughtered.

For example, it is perfectly legal for female pigs, among the most cognitively complex and socially sophisticated animals, to be repeatedly impregnated and

shut in small crates for most of their lives, unable to exhibit natural social behavior or even to turn around.

The past decade has seen a wave of reforms to improve some conditions for these animals. America's largest veal and pork producers agreed to phase out extreme confinement, and in the last two years every major grocery and fast-food chain in the country has pledged to use only cage-free eggs.

But these corporate reforms are entirely voluntary. Measures like the one in Massachusetts are needed to cement those changes, said Paul Shapiro, head of the farm animal welfare campaign at the Humane Society of the United States, which has spearheaded the ballot drive.

California is the only state that currently bans the sale of food products over animal cruelty concerns, and its law applies only to eggs from caged hens. The Massachusetts measure, which extends to veal and pork, would be the broadest of its kind in the U.S. and probably the world, Shapiro said.

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