



# COACT testimony helps win historic MPCA ruling on state's largest factory dairy operation

## Decision further defines growing citizen opposition to expanding factory feedlots

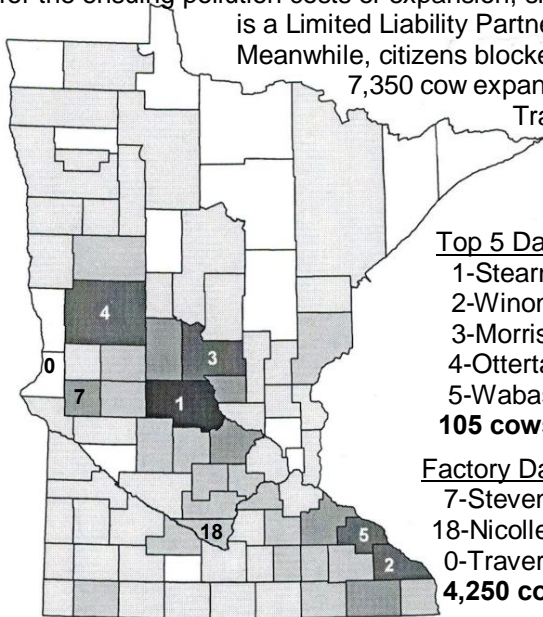
For the first time in its 47 year history, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Citizens Board, on August 26, curtailed factory agriculture production by ordering a rigorous Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) prior to permitting expansion of the state's largest dairy corporation, Riverview LLP, in Stevens County, western Minnesota.

Testimony from citizens and COACT convinced the MPCA Citizens Board to require the demanding EIS in order to see how Riverview's proposed 9200-cow expansion, largest so far, could potentially damage the area's environment and economy. The ruling stops Riverview's expansion until they can otherwise show it will not harm the public good.

Riverview already owns six operations averaging 4,000 cows each, with the largest at over 6,000, for a total of 27,000 cows concentrated in one area. Adding 9,200 more would produce manure waste beyond the tolerance of the county's water supply and acreage. Air and water pollution would risk public health, according to COACT's testimony.

Furthermore, COACT asked if the public will be responsible for the ensuing pollution costs of expansion, since Riverview is a Limited Liability Partnership.

Meanwhile, citizens blocked Riverview's 7,350 cow expansion in nearby Traverse county.



### Top 5 Dairy Counties

- 1-Stearns
  - 2-Winona
  - 3-Morrison
  - 4-Ottertail
  - 5-Wabasha
- 105 cows / farm**

### Factory Dairy Counties

- 7-Stevens
  - 18-Nicollet
  - 0-Traverse (so far)
- 4,250 cows / farm**

## Public good caught between corporate expansion and traditional family farming

Because the environment and rural economy has historically been maintained by family farms, the threat of corporate expansion had already been addressed on April 10 by dairy co-ops and farm groups to Minnesota Agriculture Commissioner Dave Frederickson at a COACT-organized meeting in central Minnesota. (Also see bottom of next page.)

According to the farmers and legal analysis by the Farm Legal Action Group, he and the previous Commissioner had inappropriately exempted from the Minnesota Corporate Farm Law a southern Minnesota multi-thousand-cow expansion which was vertically integrated with the processor.

Because the Law is meant to protect family farms as the most socially and economically desirable mode of agricultural production, the farmers recommend that economic impact be formalized in the Commissioner's exemption process, which the MPCA's EIS requires in its permitting process as seen by the Riverview ruling.

He agreed at the meeting that 30% concentration of milk production by a corporate producer and vertical integration between producer and processor send up red flags to require closer scrutiny in the exemption process. (See other side.)



Commissioner (top left) hears concerns and recommendations from 20 members of farm groups at the April 10 meeting in Central MN.

## "We don't want to be like western Minnesota"

The concentration of milk production in Stevens County to only six Riverview multi-thousand-cow operations eliminated local co-ops which the farmers don't want to see happen to central Minnesota. The geographic breakdown between factory dairy counties and the top five family dairy farm counties (below) locates the concentration of production.

### Demarcation between the state's Top 5 Family Dairy Counties and Factory Dairy Counties of Stevens & Nicollet

#### Ranking in Cow Numbers in Top 5 Family Dairy Counties

1- Stearns	69,000 @ 720 farms=	96 cows / farm
2- Winona	29,000 @ 194 farms=	149 cows / farm
3- Morrison	25,000 @ 289 farms=	87 cows / farm
4- Otter Tail	21,500 @ 234 farms=	92 cows / farm
5- Wabasha	20,500 @ 136 farms=	151 cows / farm
<b>Total cows:</b>	<b>165,000 @ 1,573 farms=</b>	<b>105 cows / farm</b>

Percent: 35% of the state's 465,000 total cows

#### Ranking in Cow Numbers in the Factory Dairy Counties

7- Stevens (Riverview)	27,000 @ 6 farms=	4,500 cows / farm
18- Nicollet (Davis)	7,000 @ 2 farms=	3,500 cows / farm
<b>Total cows:</b>	<b>34,000 @ 8 farms=</b>	<b>4,250 cows / farm</b>

Percent: 21% of the top 5 family dairy counties  
7% of the state's 465,000 total cows

Riverview LLP, Morris, MN (Stevens County)  
 USDA subsidies (1995-2012) **\$8,484,004** to partners / family  
 Davis Family Dairies, Le Sueur, MN (Nicollet County)  
 USDA subsidies (1995-2012) **\$487,755**