



# Animal Welfare Institute

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## HOW TO FIGHT A FACTORY FARMING OPERATION IN YOUR AREA

At the federal level industrial farming is regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act. Its role is to ensure that animal waste and pollution is kept within set limits. However, the EPA's ability to enforce these regulations is insufficient. In addition, there is no federal law that covers issues related to odor or other nuisance and health code violations that can have a severe impact on the quality of life for people living in the vicinity of one of these operations.

The most effective way for citizens to fight industrial farming is to do it locally – at the state, county and/or township level. The sooner a community is able to learn of plans to establish an industrial farming operation in the region, the greater the chance to prevent those plans from becoming reality.

- Find out as much as possible about the planned operation. For example, try to determine: (1) the size of the operation, (2) numbers of animals it will keep, (3) what kind of manure system is being proposed, (4) how dead animals and excess manure will be disposed of, (5) the company's track record in other locations and (6) how the operation's application will be processed by local and/or state authorities (contact the zoning administrator or the state Department of Agriculture).
- Map out the threat the industrial operation poses to your community's health, economy and overall quality of life. Keep it specific to your community. Find out if there are groups of people in your community that would be particularly at risk, for example nearby daycare centers, schools, hospitals or nursing homes. Also identify tourism sites that may be affected, existing parks, recreational areas, wildlife reservations, wetlands, the type of water supply that could possibly be affected and the potential impact on property values in the area.
- Create a working group that is committed to pursuing the issue. Appoint a spokesperson who can speak with media and develop good relationships with various media outlets in the area. Keep the media apprised of any new developments. The mission of this group is to collect and share information and to inspire people to act. This can be done by writing op-eds and letters to the editor, arranging community gatherings, operating a website and/or blogs, and circulating petitions.
- At your informative public meetings, invite speakers knowledgeable about the subject and those who have experienced living near an industrial farming operation in their community. Provide information on industrial animal production and show videos of the same.
- Contact local decision makers (all relevant village, township and county boards) to let them know why you do not want the proposed industrial farming operation in your community, and suggest resolutions against it. If possible, try to arrange in person meetings with your elected officials and ask other members of the community to do the same or, at a minimum, write letters stating their concerns.
- Reach out to other groups and local communities with experience in this area who may share constructive advice and offer valuable support.