



New CAFO controversy in Pike County, Illinois

Jun 26, 2013 10:28 p.m.

A Pike County hog farmer wants to expand his operation, but his neighbors aren't happy about it.

Jerry Moss says raising hogs is just a way of life for him. He already has this facility located just outside of Fishhook, and says expanding would be great for his business - but also for a more personal reason.

"Future generations - having livestock assets for children and grandchildren and so forth."

He plans for the new expansion to go on this farmland near New Salem, and he says this site was chosen with the community in mind.

"Nice isolation from homes and so forth in the area. We spent a lot of time money and consultants trying to find an optimal location with as little impact to the environment and as far as other neighbors as we could," he said.

But before the construction plans can go forward, Pike County residents got a chance to have their say. Dozens of neighbors filed into the Pike County courthouse and signed up to ask questions and to voice their own opinions. Among them was Dan Allen.

"What I would like the people to know is that we have a lot of hogs in this county and I think the county board and the county board of appeals should be concerned about the quality of life for the people of Pike County and not the quality of life for the hogs!" he said.

Allen - who lives near another hog facility - shared the concerns of many other neighbors - including increased traffic, worries about using the manure as fertilizer, and maybe most importantly - the smell - something Allen says he already deals with.

"The smell is either extremely strong, where you can't go outside very well, or you don't smell it at all. You're really at the mercy of the wind."

Moss says he understands that listening to complaints is all part of the process - but he says he and his team have done their research, and everything checks out legally.

"We obviously meet and exceed those eight siting criteria, meet the law, and that's where we come from."

The Pike County Board now has 30 business days to make a recommendation to the Department of Agriculture.

Then the Department has 15 days to make its decision.

We'll keep you updated.

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