

Center for Land Use Education

THE LAND USE TRACKER

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Planning on the Cutting Edge Requires Fine Honing – What-If in Waupaca County</i>	Cover
<i>Calendar of Events</i>	2
<i>New Technology For Manure Management</i>	7
<i>Regulatory Options Under the Livestock Facility Siting Law and Rule</i>	10

PLANNING ON THE CUTTING EDGE REQUIRES FINE HONING – WHAT-IF IN WAUPACA COUNTY

By Douglas Miskowiak

Plan commissioners in Waupaca County are in the final stages of completing comprehensive plans for the county and 33 of 34 local governmental units. Many have drafted their first Future Land Use (FLU) maps showcasing preferred future land use patterns to 2030. FLU maps should represent the shared vision of the citizenry, be based on good information, and be developed with solid methods.

Commissioners must garner public input, explore mapped land patterns, estimate future populations and densities, allocate future land uses, and then assess the consequences of decision-making. That's a tough job!

To help, planners and educators from Waupaca County, the private planning firm Foth and VanDyke, and the Center for Land Use Education teamed up to include "What-If" in the planning process. This article describes what the tool is, how it was applied, and provides a critical assessment of how the tool performed.

What is What-If?

What-If is a computer software program designed to help communities assess the pattern and consequences of their decisions on the land. What-If cannot make decisions by itself, but requires that local decision-makers (in Waupaca County, local plan commissioners) input their criteria into What-If. Relying on inputs made by plan commissioners, What-If drafts suitability and growth allocation maps. What-If does not predict the future, but instead can help local people understand what their community



might be like, for example, if they:

- grow by 1,000 people
- expect urban infill
- want to protect lakes and streams
- prefer to grow at 1 house per 5 acres
- choose to grow near existing development, etc.

What-If is helping local commissions craft realistic and representative FLU maps that will be included in their comprehensive plans.

Tool Selection

What-If was selected as the tool of choice for the County's process among two other tools, Community Viz and Place-It. What-If was ultimately chosen based on two major factors. First, planners hypothesized that What-If could better capture economies of scale. It was thought that a single model could be developed and applied individually in each community. Planners, however, were never able to capitalize on this theory within the existing budget and timeline. Instead, 34 models were created for each community and the county.

continued on page 3

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS**THE FUTURE OF FARMING AND RURAL LIFE IN WISCONSIN FORUMS**

June 16 – Oconomowoc Lake Club (land use, working lands, urban/rural interface)

July 21 – Northland College, Ashland (national forests, timber/wood production, recreation and tourism)

August 25 – UW-Fox Valley, Menasha (rural health care, rural education, state and local government)

October 13 – UW-Platteville (natural resource conservation, domestic renewable energy, land ownership, preservation and use)

October 24 – Northcentral Tech. College, Wausau (production agriculture, domestic renewable energy)

www.wisconsinacademy.org/

WORKSHOP ON MEDIATION AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION SKILLS

June 22-23, 2006 – Citizens Bank of Mukwonago, Waukesha, WI

www.wamediators.org/June__2006_workshop.pdf

2ND ANNUAL BARRIERS TO SMALL WIND CONFERENCE

June 20-21, 2006 – Jensen Center, Amherst, WI

Contact Josh Stolzenburg at (715) 592-6595 or josh@the-mrea.org

17TH ANNUAL RENEWABLE ENERGY AND SUSTAINABLE LIVING FAIR

June 23-25, 2006 – ReNew the Earth Institute, Custer, WI

www.the-mrea.org/

EPA COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT CONFERENCE AND TRAINING

June 27-30, 2006 – Milwaukee, WI

www.epa.gov/ciconference

UW-MADISON LICGF/SIAC GIS TRAINING COURSES

June 27-28, 2006 – Introduction to ArcView 3.x

July 18-19, 2006 – Introduction to Making ArcIMS Mapservices

August 14-15, 2006 – Introduction to ArcGIS I

August 16-19, 2006 – Introduction to ArcGIS II

August 21-22, 2006 – Introduction to ESRI Personal Geodatabase

August 23, 2006 – Introduction to ArcGIS Extensions

www.lic.wisc.edu/training or call (608) 263-0009

ECRPC MINI-WORKSHOP: "ENERGY ISSUES IN WISCONSIN"

July 28, 2006 (9am-noon) – Menominee Casino-Bingo-Hotel, Keshena, WI

www.eastcentralrpc.org/

For additional dates and information, visit the online calendar of events

www.uwsp.edu/cnr/landcenter/events.html

continued on page 12

continued from page 1

Second, the planning team sought to minimize the risks and costs associated with running the software live at the meetings. Running the software live meant that each professional facilitator (up to eight per regional meeting) would need to be fully trained and equipped with the software, laptops, and LCD projectors. The team was also cautious of software and hardware glitches and time to run scenarios live. As compared to the other two tools examined, What-If was better suited to running in a controlled environment. The team chose to develop worksheets that mimicked the software protocol. The worksheets were designed to be filled out by commissioners at the meetings and then brought back to the office to run the scenario. Under this strategy each facilitator required enough training to be familiar with What-If concepts, but only a few needed the capacity to run it.

Implementing What-If

What-If was implemented in three distinct stages: Education, Suitability Mapping, and Growth Allocation.

Education

Education was an extremely important stage in the Waupaca County process. Since the planning process was designed to be grassroots, education first needed to ensure local decision-makers that they, not the software, were in charge of decision-making. Commissioners were ensured that the resulting maps were a guide, not a definitive answer for the future allocation of local uses. Plan commissions were given the option to use, modify, or ignore the “What If” maps if they so chose.

Education was also needed to build the capacity of commissioners to use What-If effectively. Commissioners were not expected to run the software themselves, but were expected to understand how the software applied their inputs of land and demographic data. Building capacity began earlier in the process with commissioners verifying geographic and

demographic data for accuracy. Verifying data helped commissioners become better informed about the data and how it could be applied. Educational brochures were also developed to help commissioners understand how What-If applied data in laymen terms. A portion of two meetings was used for educating commissioners about What-If.

Suitability Mapping

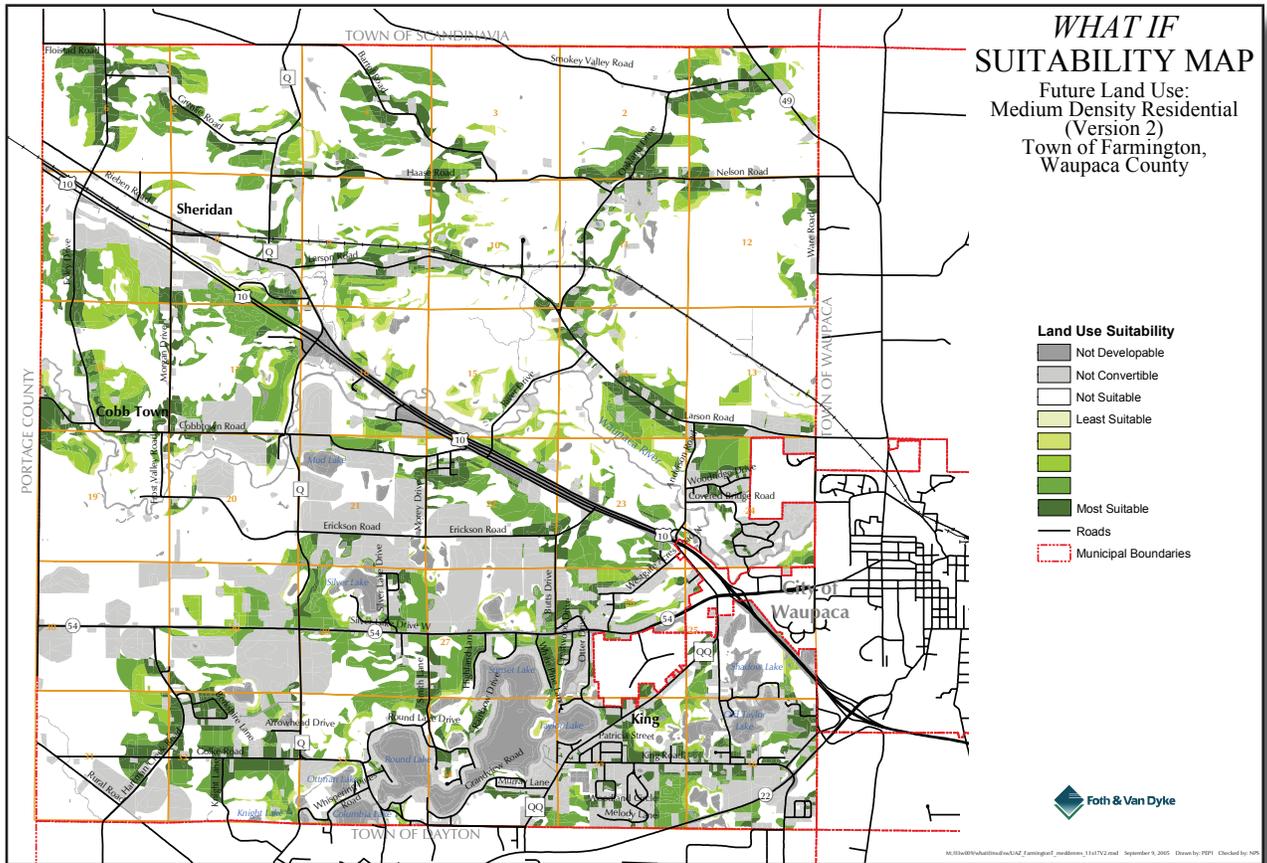
In May 2005 the What-If suitability mapping was launched in each of the 33 local towns, cities, and villages. Maps were developed to identify suitable lands for various future land uses including commercial, industrial, several densities of residential, agriculture, and forestry. Worksheets, developed by Foth and VanDyke, walked commissioners through the process in bite-sized chunks. The worksheets prompted each plan commission to complete four steps:

1. Identify which land uses you expect or want to see in the future.
2. Choose which existing land uses are available to develop into a future land use.
3. Rank land features, such as steep slopes, prime soils, etc. for their suitability to accommodate a future land use.
4. Rank the overall importance of a land feature to a future land use.

The resulting suitability maps (one for each future land use) displayed how suitable every inch of land was for accommodating that future land use (see Map 1 on the following page). Areas on the map displayed in light grey were identified in step 2 as areas “not convertible” to a future land use. Once identified as “not convertible,” these areas were no longer considered in the analysis. Levels of suitability were determined by how commissioners ranked and weighted individual land features in steps 3 and 4. Rankings and weightings assign a score to each area on the map, minus those in light grey. High scores, those shown in dark green, meant high suitability and a higher preference and probability it would

Since the planning process was designed to be grassroots, education first needed to ensure local decision-makers that they, not the software, were in charge of decision-making.

Map 1: A suitability map identifies preferred or suitable locations for houses, businesses, or areas for farming and forest management.



develop to that future land use. Lower scores, those shown in lighter shades of green, meant low suitability and a lower preference for development in that area. Areas in white are areas that received a score of zero and were considered “not suitable” for development to some future land use.

Growth Allocation

The growth allocation module in What-If uses demographic information, preferences for densities, and previously developed suitability maps to allocate future land uses across a jurisdiction. The scores on the suitability maps define the probability of growth allocation. High scoring areas are areas where future growth will likely be allocated, low scoring areas are less likely, and not suitable areas are not considered in the allocation process. Many communities developed growth allocation maps with What-If late in 2005 and early 2006. To mimic the What-If protocol and walk

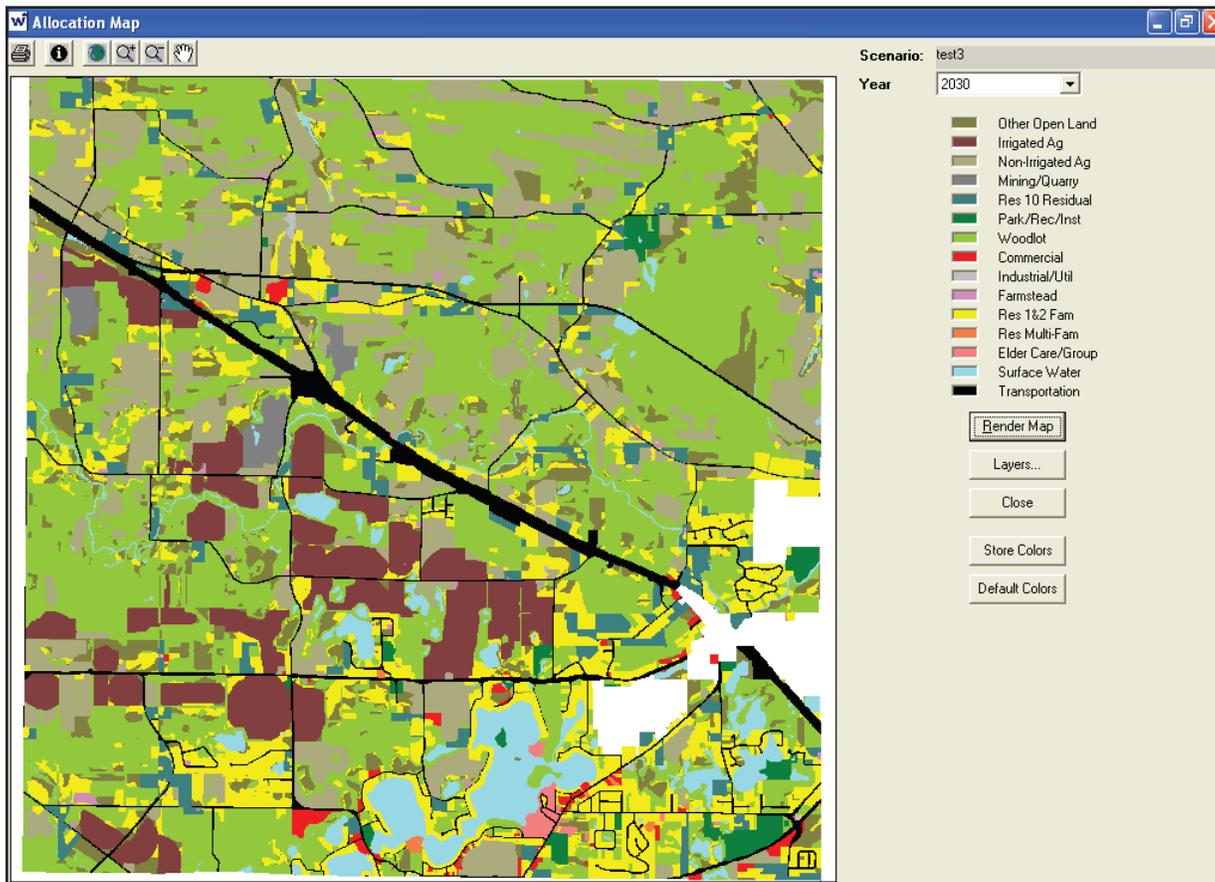
commissioners through the process, Foth and VanDyke again developed a worksheet. The worksheet prompted communities to select:

1. Housing and population projections
2. Plan commission approved suitability maps
3. Housing types
4. Housing density
5. Demand for redevelopment and infill
6. Demand for land preservation (meaning the addition of agriculture or forestry)

The resulting maps distributed future land uses across the jurisdictions, noting their locations and amounts (see Map 2 on the facing page). The maps provided some communities with a wake up call. With future housing and population projections coupled with proposals of low densities (i.e. 10 acres per housing unit or more), some communities were running out of land before 2030! This meant that they had to make tradeoffs (i.e. forfeit



Map 2: Growth allocation maps display the preferred or probable distribution of future land uses at the locations, amounts, and densities desired.



preservation goals or increase housing density).

Results

Communities are now on their way to using What-If to help create their preferred FLU maps. What-If has shown both benefits and shortcomings.

Decisions Based on Good Information

The strongest evidence of the benefits of What-If to the process is that decisions made by commissions were based on good information and sound methods. What-If relies on both spatial and demographic information. Spatial data were collected from various sources and checked by commissioners for spatial and attribute accuracy. Population, housing, and employment projects were also applied. Public preferences could also be applied with What-If (i.e. preferred housing densities). In addition, community goals and objectives always accompanied the use of What-If so that

commissioners remained cognizant to use What-If to achieve their communities' vision.

As compared to traditional mapping methods that utilize hardcopy maps and markers, What-If provided results that were more transparent, more objective, and more measurable. Results were more transparent because someone coming from outside the process could trace back, using the What-If reports, to see what information was used and how the commissions applied it to arrive at an approved map. The process was more objective in that criteria defined by the commissions were evenly applied across the entire jurisdiction. Criteria, defined by the plan commission, could not be applied in some areas and not others. Because What-If is run on a Geographical Information System platform, the process is more measurable. The locations and extents of future land uses could be measured and matched to demographic



data and community preferences. Commissioners knew how much land was allocated in each scenario.

Enhanced Public Participation

What-If was applied at over 15 public cluster meetings and over 99 public local meetings. Hundreds of plan commissioners and members of the public were present. Prior to applying What-If, commissioners were responsible to review goals and objectives that represented the visions of their communities. At the time What-If was launched, commissioners were ready to migrate into hands-on decision-making activities. They wanted to start making decisions that meant something on the map.

Discussions and decisions that affect the map are inherently political decisions. They are not based on just factual information alone, but also include political and social realities. What-If helped to facilitate these political discussions. Commissioners were responsible to choose spatial factors that would identify places on the landscape that met social goals. What-If offered a platform that enabled commissioners to systematically consider and rank land features for their suitability for a future land use.

Limited Suitability Analyses

The version of What-If applied at the time limited the process to just ten suitability factors, such as surface waters, wetlands, slopes, roads, soils, etc. This limitation meant that only ten data choices could be ranked for scoring the suitability of a future land use. The process in Waupaca County had identified over 30 suitability factors. The facilitation team was forced to combine factors if these data were to be used. For example, wetlands were combined with floodplains into a single data set. Combining data, however, meant that commissioners could not make individual choices based on wetlands or floodplains alone. This limitation perhaps led to suitability maps that were less than representative of community preferences.

Controlled Environment Limited Understanding

Running What-If in a controlled environment, instead of live, proved confusing to some commissioners. First, without seeing a map change as they made their decisions on the worksheets, commissioners had a difficult time understanding the implications. Afterwards, completed worksheets were taken to the office and input into What-If to create maps. The completed maps were brought back to the communities two months after filling out worksheets. Commissioners had a difficult time relating the resulting maps back to the decisions they made two months earlier. This difficulty, however, cannot be attributed to the software, but to how the software was applied by the process.

Conclusion

Ultimately, planners found that What-If was fully capable, if not always flexible, of addressing the spatial planning tasks of suitability and growth allocation mapping. Overall, planning with What-If can be credited with success. With it, commissioners were able to make decisions transparently, objectively, and more measurably. What-If also helped foster an inherently political discussion among commissioners – where and how to accommodate development yet achieve other community goals that compete for the same land. Manual methods could not achieve results like these.

Implementing What-If wasn't without its challenges. Some challenges are attributed to the software. What-If only supported a portion of data desired and didn't achieve the economies of scale that the hired consultant had hoped for. Other challenges are attributed to the users. What-If could be applied more effectively as users learned the ins and outs of the software. Planners were also able to assess their public participation protocol to understand that running the software in a controlled environment has its risks. ■

What-If offered a platform that enabled commissioners to systematically consider and rank land features for their suitability for a future land use.



NEW TECHNOLOGY FOR MANURE MANAGEMENT

By Linda Stoll

Introduction

Over the past two decades, agricultural economics have changed resulting in changes to farming practices and the trend toward larger herd sizes. At the same time, development has decreased the amount of land available for grazing and growing feed crops and has impacted the location and manner in which farmers can spread manure. These changes have led to greater confinement of animals as farmers try to improve animal nutrition and contain and collect manure.

As livestock production methods change, environmental management practices must change as well if we are to protect our valuable land and water resources. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has issued new regulations for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations or CAFOs as part of continuing enforcement of the Clean Water Act. By 2007, these regulations will require large agricultural operations to create and follow a plan to improve their water quality, odor emissions and greenhouse gases as part of the permit process. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) will enforce these regulations through a revision in NR 243, the existing state CAFO rules.

This article will focus on a new technology being developed by Skill Associates, Inc. that consists of a manure management process that essentially eliminates the need to spread manure and also generates green energy.

The Issues

Manure management is a critical issue on all farms for on-site management as well as during disposal. While nutrients like phosphorus and nitrogen are valuable components of manure, and essential for crop growth and animal production, improper management of manure can lead to eutrophication of rivers, lakes

and estuaries. Eutrophication is the accelerated “aging” of waters caused by excessive nutrient loading which causes excessive plant growth, fish kills and reduced aesthetic quality. Manure may also contain bacteria and chemicals that can affect the health of humans if they enter surface and ground water. Preventing manure runoff during rain storms is particularly critical for CAFOs given the amount of manure these large farms generate. Since one cow produces as much waste as eighteen people, a single CAFO has as much pollution potential from untreated waste as the cities of Sun Prairie, Wisconsin Rapids, Onalaska or Ashwaubenon. Increasing development pressure and the resulting loss of available land for spreading liquid and solid manure could make it difficult for large farms to comply with these rules.

New Regulations

The WDNR website lists specific changes to NR 243 that, if approved, would:

- Prohibit applying liquid manure on frozen or snow-covered ground unless it's injected or immediately incorporated into the soil and prohibit spreading solid manure on frozen or snow-covered ground during February and March unless it's immediately incorporated.
- Require six months of liquid manure storage.
- Require that manure spread on land be set back from private and public drinking water wells and from sinkholes and fractured bedrock. Additional restrictions would apply to manure and process wastewater spread on areas with shallow soils.
- Require farms to implement nutrient management plans based on applying the right amount of phosphorus.
- Require farms applying manure near lakes and streams to implement



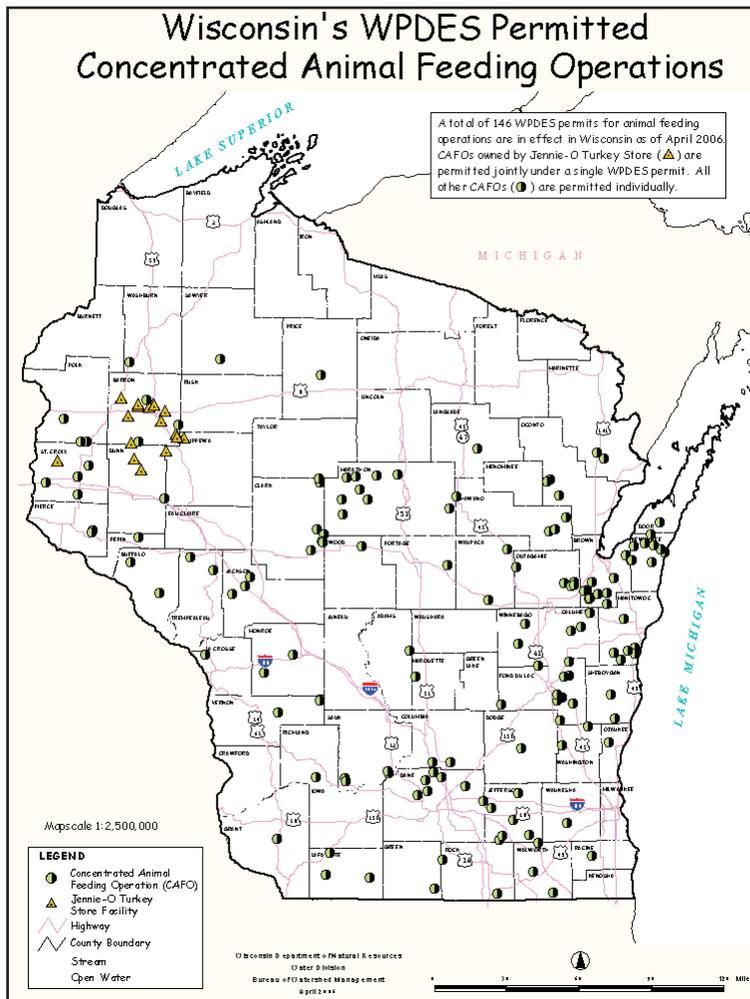
practices such as leaving crop residue on fields to protect against manure runoff.

- Require farms to develop an emergency response plan to address manure spills or discharges.

New Technology

Meeting these requirements will require a variety of options to address the volume of manure produced on large farms. The

actual nutrient content of the manure, local slope and soil conditions as well as surrounding water quality issues will also affect how farmers can address these issues. The “Elimanure® System” located on the Weise Brothers farm near Greenleaf, Wisconsin is a new system and the only model in the world that uses technology similar to that used in the paper industry to dry manure and then burn the product to produce electricity. This system is different than a digester which uses an anaerobic process to produce methane and dried solids as well as a liquid that still must be hauled and land spread. It uses hot air to dry the manure reducing its moisture content to 40% and in the process, effectively sterilizing the manure. The end-product can be used for bedding or sent by conveyor to a bio-mass burner that uses thermal gasification to create steam. Thermal gasification is the burning of materials in the presence of a limited amount of air or oxygen, producing a combustible gas. This gas is then burned to run a boiler that produces steam. The steam is piped to a turbine that generates electricity that can be used internally in the operation and can be sold to the local power company. The excess steam can



Types of Permitted Operations

Livestock Type	Permitted Operations (#)
Beef	3
Dairy	125
Poultry	11
Swine	7
Total	146

WHAT IS A CAFO?

EPA defines a CAFO as any facility that contains “1,000 animal units”. What may be confusing is the fact that one “animal unit” does not necessarily equate to one animal. A unit equivalent is determined by the weight of an individual type of animal and the amount of manure that it produces. If an operation has more than 700 dairy cows, 1,000 cattle, 2,500 swine or 125,000 chickens, it falls under the EPA’s new Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) regulations. Wisconsin further defines farms as medium (300 to 999 animal units) and small (fewer than 300 animal units) animal feeding operations which may also be defined or designated as CAFOs if they have discharges to navigable waters.



be used to heat water, heat the operation, and with the use of a heat exchanger, heat the air that is used to dry the manure. The water from the condensing stream is recaptured and sent back into the system. The entire process uses only 8 gallons of fresh water per day. Other than some added sawdust and electricity at startup, the system is fully self-supporting.

The Weise farm milks 1,500 cows and totals over 3,000 animals in all. They own 3,000 acres and in the past hauled 4,500 tank trucks of liquid manure annually. Each truck contained 7,200 gallons of manure which resulted in approximately 623,077 gallons of manure per week being hauled on local roads and spread on nearby fields. On site are three manure lagoons each holding six months of liquid manure. By installing the new technology, manure will be reduced to an ash by-product that will fill a small 9' x 5' x 5' wagon 50 times a year – about once every 8 days. The farm has a contract to sell all the ash to a seed producer who will use the ash to coat seeds thus eliminating all land spreading of manure from the farm.

The dry manure produced in the first part of the process will be used as sterile bedding eliminating a significant operational cost. The remainder will be used to produce electricity to run the operation. Any excess energy, enough estimated to run 600 homes annually, will be returned to the grid. Savings will also be gained by producing their own heat and the hot air needed to dry the manure. Another important by-product of the system is the elimination of odor from all parts of the farm operation.

This system comes with a large price tag – approximately \$4 million. Because the technology uses standard equipment from

other industries and produces an income as well as a savings in farm expenses, banks have indicated that they would be willing to offer construction loans for the process. Money is also available through federal programs. The Weise farm expects a return on investment in 2.6 years.

Implications For the Future

This process is still undergoing EPA testing but preliminary numbers indicate that the minimum size farm needed for profitability would be 1,000 cows with a milking herd of at least 500. The process has an upper threshold of about 3,000 cows, after which an additional burner and turbine may be needed to process all of the manure produced. Manure can be pumped up to a mile to reach the system. It is conceivable that several nearby farms could join together to support such a system making it cost-effective for smaller farms to take advantage of the technology. This system would work for all types of animal waste and has the potential to process municipal sludge as well. Partnerships between small rural communities and surrounding farmers could create win-win solutions for everyone. While some crops may still need fertilizer, the system can eliminate the need to spread manure in areas where, due to soil type, slope, ground water and surface water issues, it is inadvisable to do so.

Critical to the expansion of this technology will be the adoption of local ordinances and regulations that allow its use. Farms wanting to expand and use this technology will need to be allowed to reach size thresholds that maximize the technology. This system can play an important part in the suite of new technology that will be required to produce the food supply we need while protecting our land and water resources. ■

The statistics found in this article and other NR 243 information can be found on the WDNR website at www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/wm/nps/rules/nr243/nr243.htm Additional information about the Elimanure® System can be found at www.burnmanure.com



REGULATORY OPTIONS UNDER THE LIVESTOCK FACILITY SITING LAW AND RULE

By Coreen Fallat, Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

The Wisconsin Livestock Facility Siting Law and Rule have both been approved by the Legislature. The siting law took effect October 1, 2005 and the siting rule took effect on May 1, 2006. The Livestock Facility Siting Law and Rule change how local government can regulate the siting of new and expanded livestock operations.

Under the livestock facility siting law, local governments retain the right to plan and zone their communities, and determine whether or not to regulate livestock facilities. The livestock facility siting law does not require local governments to issue individual permits for livestock facilities. Local governments may choose to issue individual permits--or not--depending on community needs. However, the state will not issue livestock siting permits when local communities choose not to require permits.

A local government has three basic options if they wish to regulate livestock operations. They may:

- rely on ordinances unaffected by the siting law,
- control land use through zoning districts, or
- issue permits for individual facilities.

The first two options do not require a local government to issue an individual permit for the siting of livestock operations, while the third option does require the issuance of a permit.

Individual Permits Are Not Required

Some local governments may choose not to issue individual facility permits. In those cases, local governments may continue to regulate livestock facilities by relying on ordinances unaffected by the siting law and controlling land use through zoning districts. Some common

ordinances unaffected by the siting law include shoreland and floodplain zoning, construction site erosion control, weight limitations, and manure storage.

In communities with zoning, the livestock siting law does impose new restrictions on agricultural zones. For example, a local government may not prohibit livestock facilities by size in an agricultural zone unless another agricultural zone exists where livestock facilities of all sizes are allowed. Also, if larger livestock facilities are prohibited in an agricultural zone, this prohibition must be justified on public health and safety reasons. Livestock facilities can be prohibited in nonagricultural zones.

Individual Permits Are Required

Other local governments may decide to issue permits for individual livestock facilities. Local governments choosing to issue individual permits may do so as a **conditional use** under a zoning ordinance or as a **licensing** permit. Requiring permits through a zoning ordinance offers the most land use control; however, licensing may be a good option in towns that do not have zoning or in counties with a mix of zoned and unzoned towns. Towns must have village powers in order to adopt a licensing ordinance.

As of May 1, 2006 local governments choosing to issue permits for individual facilities, either through a conditional use or licensing permit, must follow the state standards and procedures found in the administrative code at ATCP 51 (the Livestock Facility Siting Rule). Local governments with existing ordinances that require permits for livestock operations should review those ordinances immediately and revise them to comply with ATCP 51 if they wish to continue to require permits. These revisions must be complete by November 1, 2006. Local



governments not currently requiring permits may adopt an ordinance to do so at any time. These newly adopted ordinances must also use the state standards and procedures found in ATCP 51.

The Wisconsin Counties Association, Wisconsin Towns Association and the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection have developed a model licensing ordinance and a model zoning ordinance. To view these ordinances, visit <http://www.wicounties.org/>.

Conflict Of Interest

Local governments that choose to administer siting permits must make decisions about permit administration, including determining who will review

the applications, who will be available to provide technical assistance to applicants, and who will enforce the permits. When determining the appropriate roles and responsibilities of staff and consultants, local governments should try to avoid actual or perceived conflicts of interest. For example, if land conservation staff helps applicants complete the worksheets, they probably should not be involved in reviewing the worksheets for completeness and accuracy as part of the permit issuance process. ■

For more information about livestock facility siting and upcoming events and presentations, please visit <http://livestocksiting.wi.gov> or contact Coreen Fallat at Coreen.fallat@datcp.state.wi.us or 608-224-4625

WISCONSIN LIVESTOCK SITING LAW INTERACTIVE MAP

The University of Wisconsin Soil Science Extension has been working with DATCP to develop a statewide interactive mapping website that will provide detailed and updated information on local permit requirements. To view the interactive map visit: www.soils.wisc.edu/extension/235/ ■



Submit Articles!

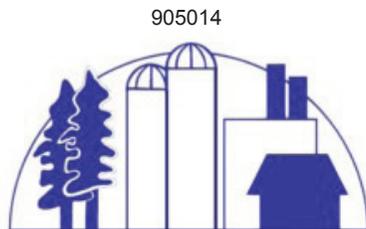
Please submit an article to our newsletter.

It should be:

- 1,000 words or less,
- Informative,
- Of statewide concern,
- And address a land use issue.

The managing editor will review your submission and get back to you if any changes are necessary.

Managing Editor
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WISCONSIN TOWNS ASSOCIATION EDUCATIONAL SEMINARS

These seminars will focus on the following land use issues: 1) land division and subdivision regulations; 2) impact fees, special assessments and special charges; and 3) town zoning and land use actions.

July 12, 2006 – Lakewoods Resort, Cable, WI

July 13, 2006 – The Waters, Minocqua, WI

July 14, 2006 – Holiday Inn, Suring, WI

July 17, 2006 – Holiday Inn Express, Black River Falls, WI

July 18, 2006 – Best Western Grand Seasons Hotel, Waupaca, WI

July 19, 2006 – Jansen's Banquet Hall, Fort Atkinson, WI

www.wisctowns.com

INTERNATIONAL PRO WALK/PRO BIKE CONFERENCE

September 5-8, 2006 – Monona Terrace Convention Center, Madison, WI

www.bikewalk.org

UPPER MIDWEST PLANNING CONFERENCE

October 4-6, 2006 - Pheasant Run Resort & Spa, St. Charles, IL

Conference website coming soon

IAP2 ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE: "DÉCISION MONTRÉAL"

November 10-15, 2006

Montreal, Quebec, Canada

www.iap2.org/displayconvention.cfm

