

**From:** [Leea Rainey](#)  
**To:** [Jennings, Jonathan \(ECY\); WSDF@msn.com; coldstreamfarms@yahoo.com](#)  
**Subject:** CAFO concerns from Heeringa Dairy Sumas,WA  
**Date:** Friday, October 02, 2015 8:44:02 AM  
**Attachments:** [CAFO \(Autosaved\).docx](#)

---

Please read the following attachment

October 1, 2015

Jonathan Jennings

Washington State Department of Ecology

Olympia, WA 98504

Jonathan Jennings,

Our families have been involved in dairy farming for generations. My father started in 1968 on our current location in Sumas, Washington. The farm has been moving along with the times since then and is currently being transitioned to the next generation. This farm has made it through the good and the bad, and proudly 1 of the remaining 100 dairies in Whatcom County. In 1978 there were over 1,000 dairy farms, now only 100. This is a hard industry to survive, constant changes in milk price, high feed costs, strict regulations dealing with nutrient management and now even bigger challenges with the proposed CAFO permit regulations.

We are writing to you to voice our concerns about the new CAFO permit proposal. This is going to be extremely damaging and devastating to an industry already in decline, unnecessarily burdening dairy farmers and other businesses involved with the dairy industry.

This proposal threatens the existence of every remaining dairy in Whatcom County. It could cost farms hundreds of thousands to maybe millions of dollars to even try to meet these proposed requirements. Loss of feed from setbacks, loss of land base for proper nutrient management, hiring consultants, double lining lagoons and CAFO permitting will take a devastating toll on our farm and other dairies in the county. The effects could be huge on our industry.

Dairy Farms have a tremendous economical impact in this county and also our state. In a study by [wastatedairy.com](http://wastatedairy.com) found in 2013 that the dairy industry supported 18,066 jobs, directly on the farm and indirectly like grain companies, implement dealers, milk processing plants, lawyers, accountants, banks, schools through taxes, and nutrient management. That study also found that the Washington State Dairy industry contributed 300.2 billion dollars to the state's economy.

We are very concerned about the CAFO permit proposal. As a dairy farmer, I can tell you that we as an industry have strived to produce the highest quality product while taking care of our cows, land and water. These regulations from the CAFO permit are over the top and unnecessary. Not enough (if any at all) research has been done to back up the claims that storage ponds are leaking at the excessive rates that have been claimed. You should know as well as any dairy farmer of the already extensive nutrient management plans each farm must follow.

It is all too easy to place the blame on dairy farms for issues regarding surface and groundwater pollution. Other pollution sources such as municipal sewage discharges, failing septic systems, "hobby"

farms, over application of commercial fertilizers by berry or crop farms, even the local wildlife itself must also be considered. Until we raise the bar to the same level for everyone on the standards of water quality, this just seems to be a duck hunt and we are easy targets. Take into consideration the detrimental effects this huge decision could make on our industry. Be the person who can say "I worked with dairy farmers to help them uphold their already high standards of water quality" Not the person who can say "I helped shut down the dairy industry with my unattainable regulations of the CAFO NPDES permit".

Thank you for your time

Dan and Leea Heeringa

Heeringa Dairy

Sumas, WA 98295