

From: [steve lake](#)
To: [Jennings, Jonathan \(ECY\)](#)
Subject: small dairy affected by the new draft CAFO Permit
Date: Tuesday, September 15, 2015 4:54:15 PM

We are a small dairy farm milking approximately 120 cows. Our registered Jersey cows have been one of the top producing Jersey herds in the state of WA for a few years now. We love our cows and we don't want to become a 'cow factory' but, have often said we just want to be able to pay our bills. We decided to diversify to cheese production 3 years ago and we are still not meeting our budget. We are getting hammered, it seems, at every turn in the small dairy business.

We have housed our cows for the past 3 years on a compost bedding pack for a few reasons: instead of parking our cows in stalls we let them be a cow and relax as if in nature on the warm pack, their feet and legs are more healthy, they rest more (they don't stand around as much) which produces more milk and a healthier cow, and, finally, the compost pack relaxes the costs of pumping our lagoon from 2 times a year to one time. We believe in what we do--for our family, for our cows and for the environment.

I have a B.S. in Environmental Science with a focus on Policy and Assessment from Huxley College of Environmental Studies. My husband has a B.S. in Industrial Technology from WWU. I was trained to look at all sides of the situation and find the most reasonable/sensible solution to the problem. We both understand the importance of balance and preservation of our waters and are doing our utmost to take care. Our lagoon's maintenance is very important to us--we have improved and met the standards demanded of us by the DofA dairy nutrient management program. This CAFO Permit would put us out of business--it would do us in.

This is a very hard and stressful life--a very 'esoteric' way of life. Only a dairyman knows! Please consider what this will do especially to the small dairy farms. We do not have the ability to absorb any extra costs. We are barely holding on as it is. FYI--we meet the guidelines for Obamacare (and are thrilled to have it after not having had insurance for 15 years since my breast cancer), our kids have been eligible for free and reduced meals since we took over the dairy from my folks in 1999, and my mother is not receiving her payment from us now because we simply can't afford it. She is living on her social security and a small investment. The milkprice is dropping and feedcosts are staying high.

We understand there needs to be regulations but, there must be a way to hit the problem areas with realistic and sensible solutions, not a hammer straight across the board!

Thanks for your time,
S&L