From:	john steensma
To:	Jennings, Jonathan (ECY)
Cc:	WSDF@msn.co; Karen Steensma
Subject:	CAFO draft permit
Date:	Thursday, October 01, 2015 10:21:11 PM
Attachments:	CAFO comments.pdf

Dear Jonathan,
Please find attached my comments on the CAFO draft permit.
John Steensma

My name is John Steensma. My wife and I milk 200 cows on 300 acres north of Lynden. We rotationally graze approximately 150 of these acres. We each come from a long line of dairy farmers and have college degrees in related fields. My grandfather started farming at this location in the 1940s so my family has stewarded this particular soil for 70 years.

The water, soil, and riparian zones on this farm are healthy and support hundreds of species including salmon, trout, freshwater clams, bald eagles, cougars, bobcats, deer, elk, and many more too numerous to list.

Here are my comments regarding the DOE CAFO permit proposal.

Fencing my grazing cattle further away from all "conduits to surface or groundwater" (ie ditches) would effectively remove 13 of my 150 grazed acres. This pointless rule would require more than 3 miles of new fences to build and maintain. Since I farm nearly organic, and manure is my fertilizer, those 13 acres would be worthless for any other use. Manure never enters my ditches or streams.

Furthermore, if DOE continues to call historic or prior converted wetlands "waters of the state" then they've pretty much removed my ability to pasture or farm anything at all. One look at a map of North Lynden ag lands will reveal a tight grid of ditches that drain tens of thousands of acres that were swampland before European immigration. This is some of the richest soil on the planet, ideal for dairy farming.

Regarding soil testing spring and fall to three feet on each field: I manage this farm in 15 separate fields. With cost estimates at $400 per field, this alone would add a $6000 annual expense to my business. I have had years that I don't net $6000.

Costs for engineering and re-constructing manure facilities would definitely make dairying here on my scale impossible. My manure facilities do not leak and fisheries biologists have been impressed with the excellent water quality in my streams.

I have farmed under both DOE regulators and WSDF regulators. The difference is astounding. WSDF is working to help us produce milk <u>and</u> clean water using logical, practical farm practices. DOE just wants us to go away entirely. This is a job-justification power struggle that will drive small family dairies out of the state and do nothing to improve water quality.

I have a daughter with a graduate degree in Animal Science currently working for a multinational dairy equipment company, and I have two more children currently studying Agriculture and Animal Science in college. So we could very likely see another generation carrying on a love for this land.

However, that is highly <u>unlikely</u> if this DOE CAFO permit proposal becomes reality. We would be forced to relocate to a dairy-friendly state, or just give up and sell out for development.

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