

CAFOs and Contamination: Case Study

APES Unit 10 – 1/8/15

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Part I – Farmville County’s CAFOs

1. What is CAFO and how is it different from traditional farming?

-CAFOs are facilities that raise large numbers of farm animals in a confined area for the majority of the animal’s life. CAFOs are different because they are owned by the government or companies, and because they do not care for animals as individuals, as a family farm most likely does.

2. What types of CAFOs are in Farmville? How many animals are housed in each CAFO?

-McGill Poultry (80,000 hens), Honeyhill Farms and Eastville Swinery (5,000-8,500 pigs each), and Pattengill Enterprises (75,000 pigs)

3. Based upon what you currently know about CAFOs, what can you infer are some of the issues for each side of the CAFO controversy? What are some of the viewpoints that proponents and opponents may state for and against CAFOs?

-Someone for CAFOs would have the issue of being accused of animal cruelty due to the confined spaces in which the animals reside. Someone against CAFOs would be conflicted due to CAFOs being more efficient in providing food and jobs.

Part II – Preparing for the Vote

1. What did you learn about CAFOs?

-Stands for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation, must have pollutants discharged into water through a manmade ditch, flushing system, or similar device, and pollutants must be discharged directly into waters that originate outside of and pass through the facility

2. What are or might be some of the negative concerns of CAFOs?

-Animal cruelty, pollution from waste, Lower quality food obtained due to living conditions

3. During your review of the reference material, which references are biased and which are unbiased? How can you tell?

-The EPA’s report on CAFOs is unbiased due to their extensive info. Their site is biased because they do not list benefits of CAFOs, and the third source is a dead link.

Part III – Town Hall Meeting

1. What concerns and medical conditions have you heard the residents express?

-Breathing problems, sickness, stomach ailments, heart attacks, headaches

2. What do they believe is the source of their illnesses?

-CAFOs and their emissions

3. Should you consider their experiences with the CAFO for your vote?

-Yes.

4. Using the facts you have learned from your independent research and the concerns you have heard from the residents, what is your current position concerning the proposed CAFO expansion?

-I go against the expansion of CAFOs due to their health risks and practices.

Part V – We Have to Do Something!

1. What are some of the types of microorganisms identified in Hattie's water samples?

-E. coli, coliform bacteria; may hint at cryptosporidium or giardia microorganisms that can contaminate water

2. What are the levels of E. coli in water that the EPA consider safe for recreational use? What are the levels for drinking water?

-133 E. coli colonies/100 ml for recreational use, none over 1,000 colonies for drinking water

3. What are some of the bacteria levels detected in Hattie's samples?

-1,000,000 colonies per 100 ml of water

4. What is the proposed plan the farmers are considering to help their cause against the CAFO expansion?

-Send samples of their water to Hattie to get tested, so Hattie can present evidence to the board meeting on CAFO expansion

5. If you were one of the farmers, would you participate in the board meeting and/or help collect samples?

-Yes, I would.