



# FACING THE FACTS ABOUT HOGS

AN IN-DEPTH REPORT ON NORTH CAROLINA'S HOG INDUSTRY

Bulk Mail  
Non-Profit Rate  
Permit No 12  
Newport, NC

## PEOPLE VS PIGS

**Currently 92 percent of the state's 10 million hogs are raised on operations of at least 2,000 head.**

You've heard the ads. Hog farmers are the backbone of North Carolina agriculture. They're family farmers who are producing food to feed us. Yet, they are beset by government bureaucrats and burdensome regulations. While cities legally dump millions of gallons of sewage into our rivers and streams, hog farmers, using the most modern technology, are not allowed to dump a drop. Zero. *Farmers for Fairness*, a group made up of some of the largest corporate hog

producers in the country, has spent millions of dollars on this ad campaign. It's intended to win back a public that has become increasingly wary of the booming hog industry after a series of waste spills and fish kills polluted rivers and drinking water. The campaign tries to fool us into being sympathetic.

Let's start with this notion of "family farmers." The term conjures up images of Farmer Jones and his mule-driven plow. We're supposed to think of grandpa and his three hogs in the pen by the barn. Chickens scratching around the yard. Two apple pies cooling on the windowsill. In reality, there's no place for grandpa anymore.

Like most modern businesses, hog operations have thrived by specializing and by getting bigger. Virtually all of the growth in North Carolina's hog industry in the last several years has occurred in operations having at least 1,000 pigs. Currently 92 percent of the state's 10 million hogs are raised on operations of at least 2,000 head.

*Continued on pg 2*

As these large factory farms have come to dominate the industry, grandpa has been driven out of business. Since 1981, most of the 25,000 North Carolina farmers who quit keeping pigs had fewer than a dozen head when they were in operation.

Like the country grocer and the small-town pharmacist, the true family hog farmer has been swallowed up by large,

is more beneficial than the number of pigs being raised," Thompson concluded.

A big factory operation "has it all" over a smaller farm in a couple of things, though – pig feces and urine. 10 million hogs excrete nine million tons of fresh waste each year. That waste contains 52,500 tons of nitrogen, 40,000 tons of phosphorus, 37,000 tons of potassium and significant amounts of other nutrients

*Officials with the Division of Water Quality have even told citizens who questioned whether or not lagoons leak that "yes, they do seep and using Darcy's Law, the 'theoretical rate' is probably in the range of from several hundred to several thousand gallons per acre per day."*

powerful corporations. They're headed by folks in business suits and represented by high-priced legislative lobbyists who spend lots of money to get what they want in Raleigh. They also belong to *Farmers for Fairness*.

"If the growth of large-scale operations continues," predicts the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, "only 50 producers will be needed to produce the nation's hogs."

Now, some free-market types might say that's too bad, if you can't compete get out of the way.

Nancy Thompson, a consultant with the Center for Rural Affairs in Walthill, Nebraska, compared the economic effects of 23 farms with 150 sows to one 3,400-sow operation. Her analysis showed that collectively the smaller farms created 23 percent more income for workers, 23 percent more total local revenue, 20 percent more net revenue for the state and seven percent more property taxes.

"More farmers raising pigs

and heavy metals such as copper and zinc. As a practical illustration, you can spread 11.5 million tons of waste one inch thick over 100,000 acres. That's enough untreated manure to provide all the fertilizer for North Carolina's six largest agricultural counties: Johnston, Sampson, Pitt, Wilson, Nash, and Robeson.

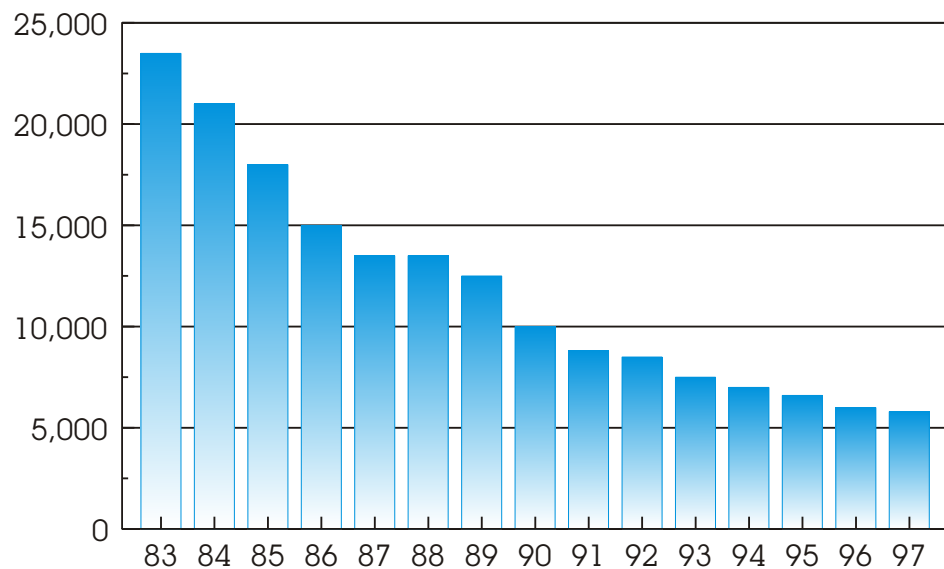
What do the hog operators do with all this pig crap? They flush it with water into a football field sized hole out back and let it rot. When the hole is close to filling, they pump the liquid onto fields. That's the "modern technology" *Farmers for Fairness* is talking about in their ads. A hole in the ground, some pumps and some pipe.

Unlike grandpa, the modern hog operator has thousands of hogs pooping and peeing each day with tons of waste to dispose of each year. How can they safely handle the tons and tons of excrement from millions of hogs?

*Continued on pg 3*

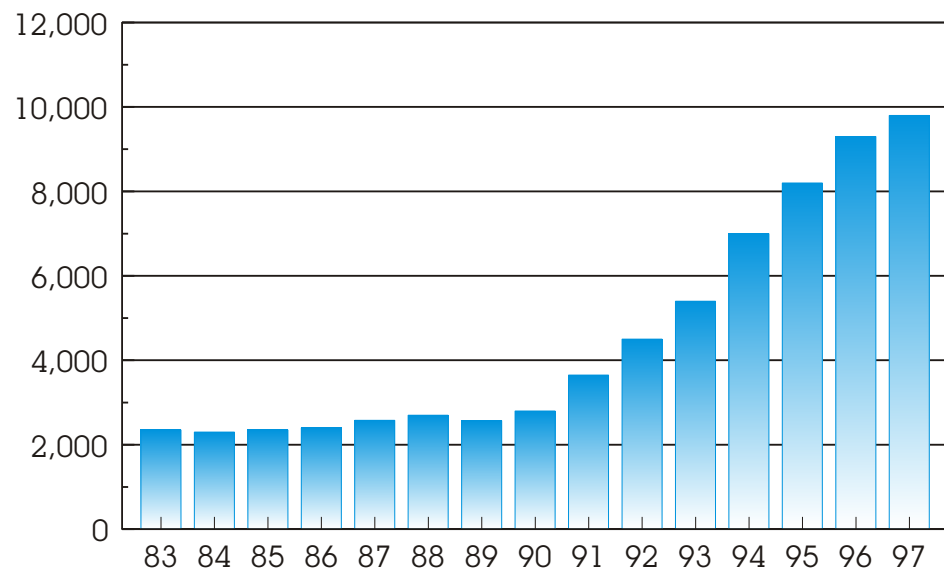
## Hog Farms in North Carolina, 1983-1997

Information Source: NC Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services



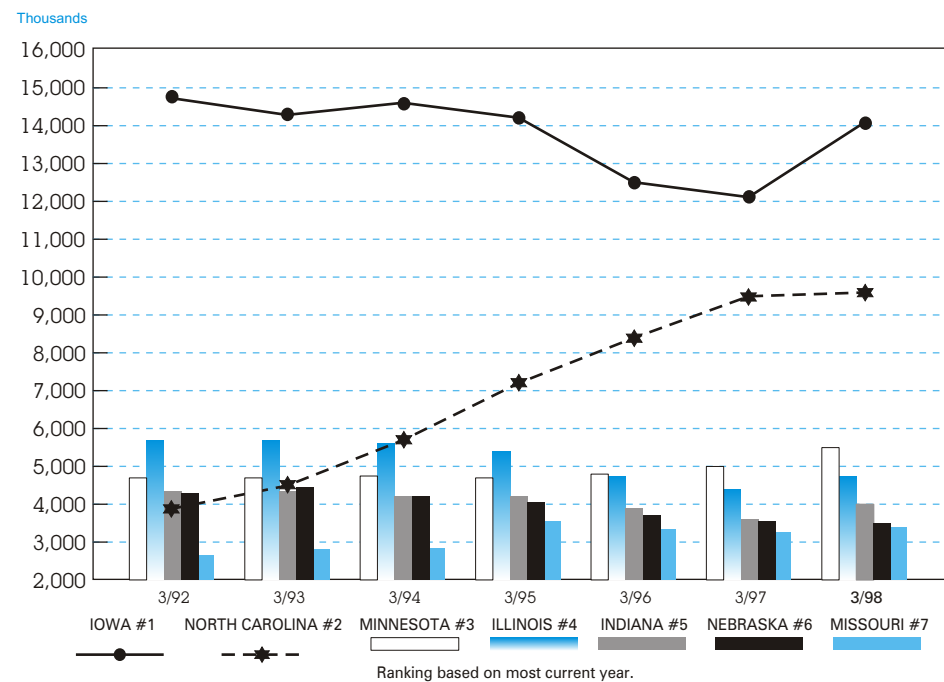
## Hogs and Pigs in North Carolina, 1983-1997

Information Source: NC Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services



## Hog Inventory Leading States March 1992-March 1998

Information Source: NC Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services





## Can You Trust Farmers for Fairness?

*Farmers for Fairness* has spent millions on clever ads to make the hog industry look good and its opponents look bad. But can you trust them to tell the truth?

**Lawbreaker:** The state Board of Elections says *Farmers for Fairness* (FFF) is guilty of breaking state laws. The board ruled that FFF illegally interfered in the campaigns of Rep. Cindy Watson, Rep. Bobby Ray Hall, and others. The board also ruled the FFF illegally used corporate money to spread its views about candidates.

**Under Investigation:** The FBI is investigating whether FFF leaders gave Republican officials campaign money as part of a deal to gain favorable legislation. In sworn testimony, FFF chairman Nick Weaver admits the group would have paid up to \$500,000 "to get off the hook" and escape further regulation, but he claims FFF donors gave less than \$40,000 and only got grief from Republican legislators in return.

**Millionaire's Club:** FFF began in 1996 with fewer than 10 members including Sen. Lauch Faircloth (who has since resigned) and the state's biggest hog operators: Murphy Family Farms, Carroll's Foods, Prestage Farms, Hog Slat Inc., Brown's of Carolina, and Goldsboro Milling. These companies are using FFF to get tax deductions worth millions for so-called "public education" activities. The IRS is being asked to investigate whether or not this practice is legal.

**Insider Deals:** The companies behind FFF get paid over \$1 billion each year for sending hogs to slaughter plants that their top executives set policy for as board members. For example, Carroll's Foods president Sonny Faison is a director of Smithfield Foods, which paid Carroll's \$362,548,000 in 1997 for live hogs. Smithfield's factories have been found guilty of hundreds of pollution violations and fined millions of dollars; one of its officials is now in jail for falsifying wastewater discharge records.

**Attack Ads:** FFF admits much of the money they are spending is designed "to attack the character" of politicians they oppose, like Cindy Watson. Various consultants hired by FFF have quit because of the hardball tactics FFF has used or the attitude, as one consultant put it, that FFF "did not care if people liked them or disliked them as long as they were making money."

**For a copy of the revealing transcript of the NC Board of Elections investigation of FFF, send \$12.50 to the Board of Elections, 133 Fayetteville St. Mall, Raleigh, NC 27601. For a free copy of a report on how hog interests are spreading money among politicians including 80% of our state legislators call 1-888-OUR-VOTE.**

Legally, *Farmers for Fairness* is right about one thing: Hog producers aren't allowed to discharge any of that waste into the state's rivers and streams. In the technical language of the state's permitting system, they use "non-discharging systems," which is the same category your septic tank falls under. All this means is, unlike a factory or city sewer plant, hog producers aren't legally allowed to dump the stuff directly into a stream. It doesn't mean, though, that hog manure isn't getting there illegally.

You will read later on about all the ways hog operators actually discharge their waste into our environment. Waste spills out of the holes, fouling water and killing fish. Despite contentions that hog operations don't discharge, state inspectors so far this year found 25 instances of farmers dumping their waste directly into rivers and streams.

The holes leak or the operators spray too much of the liquid waste onto their fields. Rain then carries the waste to the nearest creek or it soaks into the ground and pollutes drinking wells. Hog operations in North Carolina have been closed down because they have ruined their neighbors' drinking water.

### LARGE VS SMALL

*Economics of 23 hog farms with 150 sows as compared to one operation with 3,400 sows.*

<u>INCOME PER WORKER</u>	<u>TOTAL LOCAL REVENUE</u>	<u>NET STATE REVENUE</u>	<u>PROPERTY TAXES</u>
23% MORE FROM SMALL FARMS	23% MORE FROM SMALL FARMS	20% MORE FROM SMALL FARMS	7% MORE FROM SMALL FARMS



Officials with the Division of Water Quality have even told citizens who questioned whether or not lagoons leak that "yes, they do seep and using Darcy's Law, the *theoretical* rate is probably in the range of from several hundred to several thousand gallons per acre per day."

They also pollute the air. State environmental regulators estimate that collectively hog operations pump 186 tons of ammonia into the atmosphere each day. The ammonia rises up from those holes in the ground and falls back down with each rain, which now contains traces of pure hog urine. Airborne ammonia has risen by 25 percent since 1991 in Morehead City, 90 miles from the heart of hog country.

Even legislators in Raleigh have gotten the message that this "modern technology" to dispose of hog waste is a failed technology. Last year, they directed the state's agriculture department to come up with a better and cleaner way to get rid of the hog feces and urine.

When that happens, maybe the property values of those who live near factory hog operations will stop falling. Maybe, then, the hogs' neighbors will be able to go outside again and not be overcome by the powerful stench of rotting manure. Maybe, then, they will be able to once again drink from their wells and not worry about getting sick. Maybe, then, the fish will stop dying. Only then can *Farmers for Fairness* claim that they are good neighbors and responsible stewards of the environment. 🐷

# HOME SWEET HOME?

**Mr. Roger Pickett, formerly of Duplin County, now resides in Iredell County:** "When 24 hog houses within three-quarters of a mile began stinking our air to the point it would make your eyes burn, we knew we had to move. After trying unsuccessfully to sell for thirty months, we finally got an offer which we took. We sold at \$16,000 below what the property should have sold for, a loss of twelve percent."

Roger Pickett

A hog operation opened up next door. Though the producer promised to be a good neighbor, the smell is overwhelming on most days and you've taken to drinking bottled water because you're afraid that your well is polluted. You won't let the kids splash around in the creek down the road anymore because you're scared it has pig feces and urine in it.

You think about selling your house, but you wonder who will buy it. Who would knowingly put their families in the position you are trying to escape?

Doctors Kelley Donham and Kendall Thu of Iowa State University have the answer. They have studied the effects that large-scale hog operations have on property values and they concluded that "the negative externalities commonly associated with such facilities would tend to decrease values."

In other words, your house is worth less than it was before the hog operation moved in. How much depends on how close you are to the operation. In 1995 Raymond Palmquist, the head of NC State University's economics department, proved that the sale price of a home a half mile from a large hog operation decreases about seven percent. The market value of a house a mile from a farm falls more than five percent, and one as far as two miles from a large hog operation sells for almost four percent less than it would otherwise. 🐷

*Your house is worth less than it was before the hog operation moved in.*

## HERE'S TO YOUR HEALTH

Here's something the folks at *Farmers for Fairness* don't mention in their ads: Hog operations not only smell bad and can pollute streams and drinking wells, but the evidence is building that they can also make people sick.

Medical researchers have mostly focused their attention on workers in hog houses or in slaughterhouses, but studies have shown that people who live near intensive hog operations experience the same, though less severe, health effects as the workers.

Researchers compared people living within a two-mile radius of a 4,000 hog operation to similar rural people who

didn't live near a large hog facility. The hog operation's neighbors reported much higher rates of four types of respiratory problems that have been well-documented among workers in hog houses. The study, which was published in 1997 in the *Journal of Agricultural Safety and Health*, also found increased rates of headaches, respiratory problems, eye irritation, nausea, weakness and chest tightness.

Hog operations also make their neighbors foul tempered. Dr. Susan Schiffman of Duke University conducted a study on odor.

*Continued on pg 5*

*The folks in DeWitt County, Illinois, who live near a 7,400-head sow farm wish their property value had decreased a mere 5 or 7 percent. County tax officials lowered property values a whopping 30 percent for those who lived within a half mile of the operation and 10 percent for those two miles away.*

## People living next to hog operations are having increased respiratory problems and spells of depression, tension and fatigue.

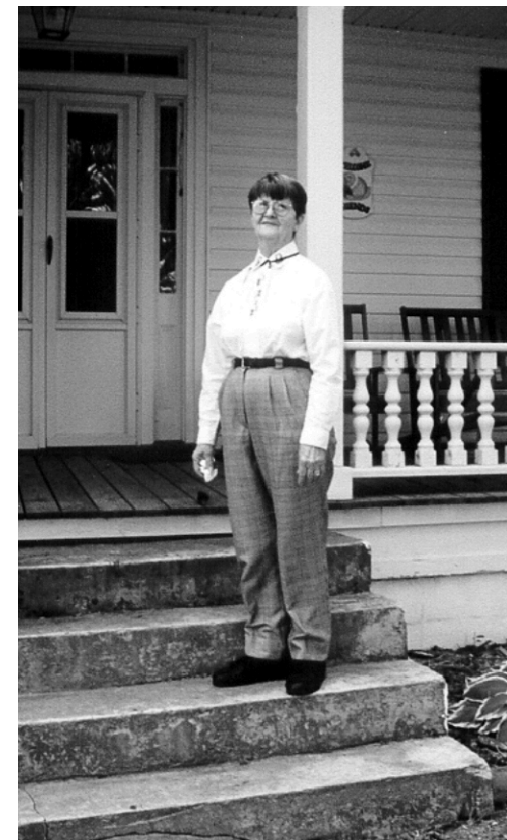
The study revealed a significant difference in the mood of a hog operation's neighbors compared with those who didn't live near a large hog facility. Effects included increased rates of depression, tension, anger, lack of vigor, fatigue, and confusion. Men in a study, which was published in 1995 in the *Brain Research Bulletin*, showed higher rates of anger, while women tended to be more depressed.

Several studies have reported an increased risk of leukemia and brain tumors in children of parents who work on hog operations or who have been exposed to pesticides. A Norwegian study of 323,292 children as

old as 14 found a higher incidence of brain tumors associated with the hog industry.

Then, there is the chilling prospect of another outbreak of a killer flu. The influenza of 1918, called the Swine Flu, killed 20- to 40-million people worldwide and is considered the worst infectious pandemic in history. One researcher studying the virus that killed seeming healthy people said in an issue of *Science* magazine last year: "We want to know what killed these people. The potential is there for this kind of virus to return. What this says is that we had better watch what's happening in the pig population in the world."

A descendent of the virus that caused the Spanish Flu is currently found in pigs. Author W.I.B. Beveridge in his book *Influenza: The Last Great Plague - An Unfinished Story of Discovery* writes: "The virus now found in pigs is not the same as the 1918 virus. It is a distant descendant. During its 58 year sojourn in pigs it has changed in many respects including its affinity and virulence for man. There is no way of knowing whether or not it is capable of regaining the characteristics it had in 1918; one can only say that so far it has not, although it has had plenty of opportunity." 🐷



**Mrs. Alice Faulk, of Duplin County:** "We moved in our home in 1951, long before hog houses were even thought of. I have had respiratory allergies which have been controlled very well for approximately 15 years. Now my neighbors' hog houses aggravate my problem. For me to have any quality of life my respiratory therapist says that I should move. Why should I leave my home of over 47 years so that someone else can make a few dollars. How many of you would leave your home?"

# IS IT OKAY TO DRINK THE WATER?

A hog operation was ordered closed in Robeson County this year after state officials found that it had contaminated the wells of eight homes with nitrates.

Hog waste sprayed onto a Duplin County field for a decade seeped into the groundwater and polluted a neighbor's drinking well.

Those aren't isolated cases. If you live near an industrial hog operation, you are three times more likely to have a polluted well than someone who doesn't. Random tests of 1,500 wells near industrial hog operations found high levels of nitrates in 10 percent of the samples. Tests of wells away from farms found nitrates in only three percent of the samples.

"Unfortunately, that is probably just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to nitrate contamination," Dr. Kenneth Rudo, a state toxicologist, said of the test results. "There are more than 4,000 big hog and poultry farms in the state. Relatively few of the wells around those operations have been tested."

Connie and Kenneth Jones of Duplin County were surprised when the test results of their well came back last summer. It showed nitrate levels five times higher than the state standard. The Jones' live next to a 1,200-hog operation owned by Thomas Padgett.

"Being a country girl born and bred, I know farmers have to diversify to survive," said Connie Jones, who has lived in her Duplin County house for 32 years. "I just can't understand why they can't do it so it's safe for us."

Nitrates are a by-product of human and animal waste and commercial fertilizer. At concentrations above 10 parts per million, it can cause methemoglobinemia, or "blue-baby" syndrome. The disease interferes with the blood's ability to absorb oxygen.

Three Indiana women miscarried a total of six times in two years after they drank well water believed to be polluted by a nearby hog operation.

*Continued on pg 6*

*"I didn't run my operation any differently from anyone else, I just got caught on a few things." — Hog operator R.E. Parnell about his operation after it was shut down from polluting his neighbor's well.*

The Jones family began drinking bottled water after the test results came back and have since been connected to the county water system. State officials pinpointed the Padgett hog operation as the source of the contamination. Nitrate levels peaked in the groundwater on the Jones' property adjacent to Padgett's spray field and tapered off on the other side of the property. "The results were pretty clear-cut," said Charles Stehman of the NC Division of Water Quality.

That's what a Superior Court judge in Robeson County thought in May when he ordered R.E. Parnell to shut down his hog operation after it had polluted the wells of eight neighbors with nitrates. Parnell also was fined \$10,000 and ordered to clean up his 30-year-old facility.

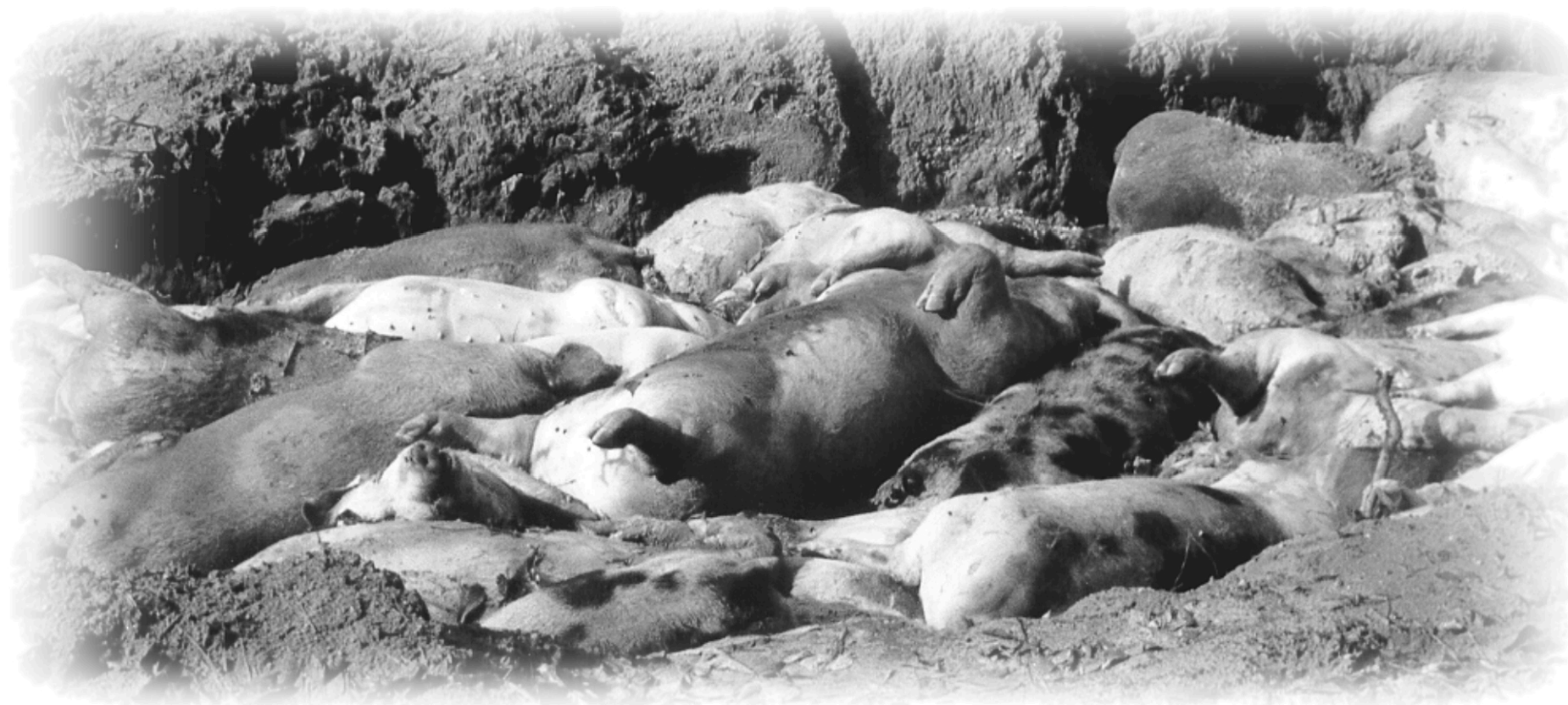
Tests done in 1995 found the contamination, and other tests confirmed that animal waste from the operation was responsible for the pollution. Parnell agreed in 1996 to connect the eight houses to the county water system and pay their water bills for two years. He also reimbursed four families \$750 for bottled water.

"I didn't run my operation any differently from anyone else," Parnell said. "I just got caught on a few things. I'm sure there are others just like me who haven't been checked."

Now, there's a chilling thought. 



*"Clearly there's a problem with existing lagoon and spray field technology in these wet conditions," said Bill Holman, the state's assistant secretary of environment and natural resources. "A lot of untreated animal waste is running off into surface water, even at farms that are doing the best job they can."*



### **Free Well-Testing Offered**

*Because of the threat large livestock operations pose to groundwater, the state has a free well-testing program. If you live next to or within 1/5 of a mile of a hog operation and want your well tested, call the County Health Department or Dr. Kenneth Rudo, the state toxicologist, at (919) 715 6430.*

**Mr. Wilton Ellis, of Columbus County, owns a plant nursery:** *“I had one customer tell me that if they bought anything else from me, I would have to deliver it, cause they weren’t coming in this mess. What about us, we are here in it all the time?”*

**OOH,  
OOH,  
THAT  
SMELL!**

*Odor is the one thing about hog operations that Farmers for Fairness can’t deny.*

Put a few thousand pigs under one roof, and you’re sure to smell them. Maybe even a couple of miles away.

Odor is the one thing about hog operations that *Farmers for Fairness* can’t deny. They can try and ignore the truth about spills and polluted wells. They can even try to paint people like Wendell Murphy as poor, hard-working “family farmers.” But our noses don’t lie.

“It smells bad three-fourths of the time,” said Penny Brown, who lives within a half mile of seven hog houses in Pender County. “I took down my clothesline years ago because the clothes smelled like hog crap when I took them inside.”

What she and other hog neighbors smell is a complex mixture of gases, vapors, and dust that often is the by-product of decomposing hog manure. It produces the familiar stinging smell of ammonia and the “rotten egg” odor of hydrogen sulfide.

Decomposition also releases volatile fatty acids, whose odors people often find more offensive than either ammonia or hydrogen sulfide. In fact, some 150 volatile compounds have been found in hog manure and urine, including organic acids, alcohols, aldehydes, fixed gases, carbonyls, esters, amines, sulphides, mercaptans, and nitrogen heterocycles.

Many of these compounds are carried by airborne dust and other particles, some of which may also contain pathogens or physical irritants. These mixtures vary with location, size and type of hog operation, production practices, season, temperature, humidity, time of day, and wind speed and direction. With so many compounds and environmental variables, it is often difficult to determine which compound – or combination of compounds – smells so bad.

Typically, odors from hog operations come from one or more of these places: hog houses, cesspools, spray fields and dead animal boxes. 🐷



Photo by NEWS & OBSERVER PUBLISHING CO.

**Don Webb, President of the Alliance for a Responsible Swine Industry:** *“Neighbors of large hog operations live under the constant threat of feces and urine, virtually prisoners in their own homes.”*

# NUTRIENT WASTE: IS THIS MODERN TECHNOLOGY?

Most industrial hog farms in North Carolina store the animal manure and urine in open cesspools that the industry likes to call "lagoons," conjuring up a false Gilligan's Island vision of clear water and palm trees. In reality, these are stinking football-field sized holes in the ground. The solids form a sludge on the bottom and the liquid rises to the top. To keep the liquid from overflowing the cesspool, hog producers periodically pump it out and spray it as fertilizer on hay and other crops.

This is the modern, recycling, "non-discharge" technology that *Farmers for Fairness* likes to brag about in their ads.

There's really nothing very modern about it. In fact some say it makes North Carolina look like it is operating as a third world country. Much of the hog waste isn't being

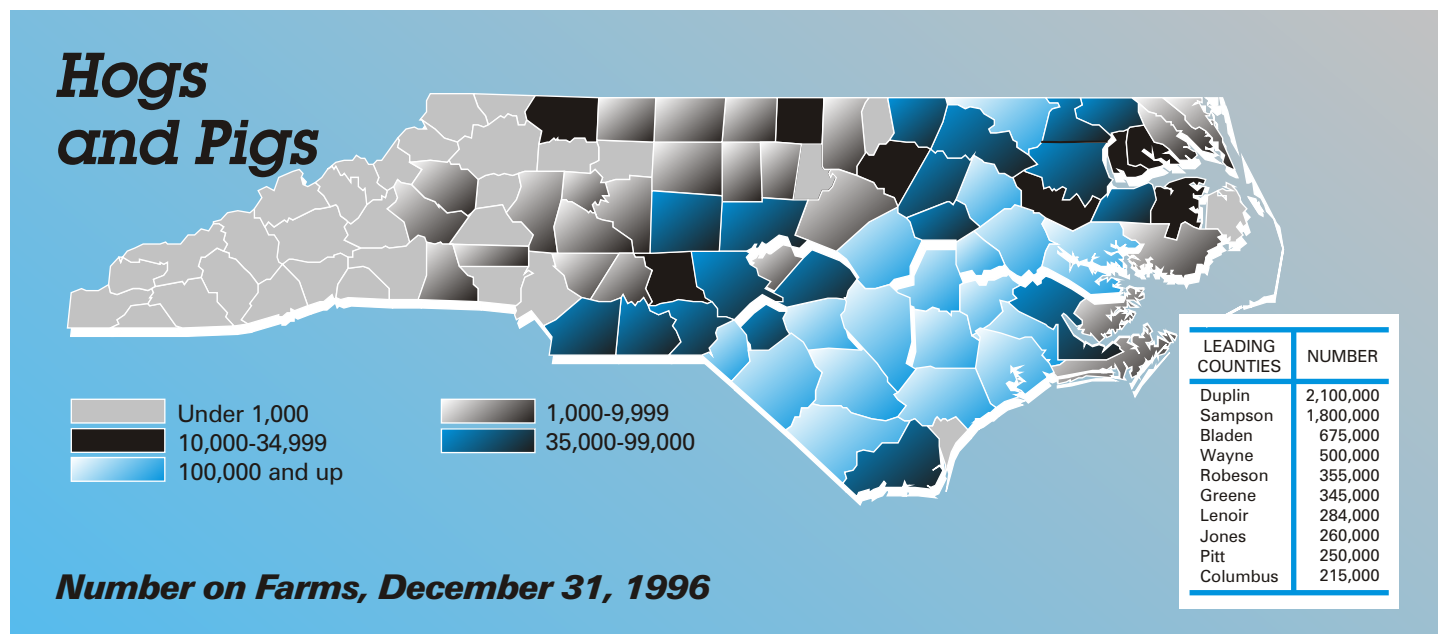
*Animal waste contains more concentrated levels of nutrients than human waste. Hog waste has 20 times the ammonia than human waste, enough to kill fish on contact.*

recycled and, in fact, ends up being discharged as runoff from those spray fields. In Duplin and Sampson Counties, there is between 75 and 100 percent more nitrogen being applied to fields than is being used by the crops. In these same counties, for instance, almost five times as much phosphorus is being sprayed on the fields than the plants need. Spray fields have reached their saturation point for nitrogen in Duplin County.

Where do all those nutrients go? Of course, in the nearest creek or stream where it can trigger algal blooms and fish kills or into the groundwater to pollute drinking wells. It's hardly a surprise, then, that Duplin County has more streams polluted by agriculture – 73 miles worth – than any other county in the Cape Fear River basin. 🐷



*Duplin County has more streams polluted by agriculture – 73 miles worth – than any other county in the Cape Fear River basin.*





The environmental threat mega hog operations pose became clear just days before the Fourth of July in 1995 when a hog waste pit in Onslow County broke open and dumped more than 22 million gallons of waste into the New River. Millions of fish died.

But if current estimates are correct, that spill might be a blip compared to the combined pollution that drifts upward daily from the state's 2,400 large hog operations, only to

*Combined, the state's hog operations discharge at least 186 tons of ammonia into the air every day – about six times the 22 million gallons of waste that was dumped into the New River by Ocean View Farms in 1995.*

return to the ground by rain and wind. According to the NC Division of Air Quality, hog operations collectively discharge at least 186 tons of ammonia into the air every day – about six times the nitrogen-rich waste that was dumped into the New River three years ago.

*The NC Division of Air Quality has drawn up estimates showing that hog operations are the largest source of airborne ammonia in North Carolina generating more than cattle, chickens and turkeys combined.*

This is alarming because what goes up must eventually come down, and much of that ammonia returns to earth as rain. Ammonia is the most potent form of nitrogen that triggers algae blooms and fish kills in coastal waters. The prevailing winds in Eastern North Carolina tend to blow emissions from the hog belt toward the Neuse and the Pamlico Sound.

**Ms. Colleen Carroll of Pender County:** *"During the burial of a family member at our family cemetery, the odor was so strong that no one tarried long. As soon as we could, we just left."*

"These are huge amounts of ammonia we are talking about," said Joe Rudek, a scientist with the Environmental Defense Fund in Raleigh.

*Farmers for Fairness*, in their ads, makes much of the fact that the farms operate under "non-discharge permits," which prohibit them from dumping waste into streams and

**Ms. Beulah Herring, 96 years old of Duplin County:** *"When it gets to spraying, I have to go inside ... Nobody should have to live like this ... It's a shame. We were all such good friends before this mess." – Wilmington Morning Star*

groundwater. Rudek knows differently. "Yet they are discharging to the environment all the time," he said.

Viney Aneja, a research professor in the Department of Marine, Earth and Atmospheric Sciences at NC State University, has no doubts as to where the ammonia is coming from. Every day for the past 20 years, a small research device in Sampson County has monitored rainfall

*Continued on pg 10*

**NO  
MORE  
SINGIN'  
IN  
THE  
RAIN**

in the heart of the hog belt. By 1996, the amount of ammonia falling in rain had more than doubled. The increase, Aneja said, coincides with the surge of industrial hog operations across Eastern North Carolina. Each produces tons of ammonia each year from their barns and waste pits.

"There is no other possible source," Aneja told the *News & Observer* of Raleigh. "Starting in about 1985, you

see an increase in ammonia at that station. That correlates with the growth of the hog industry."

The NC Division of Air Quality has drawn up estimates showing that hog operations are the largest source of airborne ammonia in North Carolina – generating more than cattle, chickens and turkeys combined. Those estimates are now being confirmed by direct measurements of hog

waste pits as part of a \$450,000 research program financed last year by the General Assembly.

A typical 5-acre hog waste pit pumps 15 to 30 tons of ammonia into the air every month, according to recent studies. Although conditions vary based on season and location, Aneja says that about half of the ammonia rises as a gas and generally falls to forests, fields or open water within 50 miles, either

in rain or fog. The rest is transformed into dry particles, which travel much farther – up to 250 miles – he said.

By 1995, Hans Pearl, an ecologist at the University of North Carolina, reported that airborne ammonia had risen 25 percent each year since 1991 in Morehead City, 90 miles downwind of the hog belt. Pearl also reported traces of urea – pure urine – in rain. 🐷

# DIRTY BUSINESS


State inspectors visited more than 2,800 hog operations by the end of 1997 and found 1,284 hog deficiencies and 852 violations. These deficiencies and violations were found on 1,472 of the state's hog operations. If you think that's bad, look at some of what they're finding so far this year:

## VIOLATIONS & DEFICIENCIES

**Found during the first half of 1998**

Discharge of hog waste	60
Discharge into surface water	25
Inadequate freeboard	525
Freeboard less than one-foot	58
Lack of certified operator	12
Over-application of waste	161
Failure to meet setback	3
Inadequate land	33
Crops different than plan	197
<b>TOTAL VIOLATIONS &amp; DEFICIENCIES</b>	<b>1074</b>

Source: NC Division of Water Quality



Since 1995, legislators have approved several laws regulating industrial livestock operations – sending environmental inspectors to every hog farm, stiffening penalties for pollution, forcing new hog houses and waste lagoons to stay nearly a quarter-mile from homes and almost a half-mile from churches, parks and recreation centers and declaring a two-year moratorium on new and expanded operations (which is scheduled to expire on March 1, 1999).

Even with these rules, inspectors have yet to inspect all of the

state's operations. Operators can still spray waste onto fields within 75-feet of people's houses and streams. A company employee – rather than a state inspector – is permitted to certify that all laws on siting and waste management are being met. The farm's potential damage to creeks and rivers is not expressly considered in its permit application. Neither is the impact on nearby communities.

This year, inspectors found 525 instances in which waste in the cesspool used to store hog feces and urine was less than the required 19-inches from the top of the pool. On 60 inspections, state regulators found that the operators were discharging hog wastes into the environment. In almost half of those instances the wastes were being dumped into rivers or streams. 58 inspections showed that the waste was less than a foot from the top. Failing to maintain adequate "freeboard" increases the likelihood that the waste will overflow the cesspool after a heavy rain. *An accident waiting to happen.*

In late February a hog operation in Pender County was shut down when seven leaks were discovered on three walls of the cesspool. Dave Holsinger of the Division of Water Quality said, "The seepage denotes structural instability."

On more than 160 inspections, regulators found evidence that the operators had been spraying too much of the waste on their fields, thus increasing the chance of polluted groundwater or surface runoff. 197 inspections showed that the spray field crop conflicted with what was listed in the operation's management plan.

On the Raymond Smith farm in Onslow County, inspectors found evidence that the operation had been pumping raw feces and urine into a swamp on the New River. They found up to a foot of the sludge in wetlands and a pipe that directly carried the waste. There was no evidence that Smith had ever sprayed waste from the cesspool on fields, as required by state regulations. 🐷

**The Rev. Bruce Martin, Village Baptist Church, speaking about the end of river baptisms:** "Some folks may yearn for the old tradition, and they may think it's a sign of a lessened commitment. They say it was good enough for John the Baptist. As for me, I don't see it as surrendering commitment for convenience. Besides, John the Baptist didn't have to worry about hog waste in the water." – Fayetteville Observer

# HERE'S WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

*More hog operations were considered to be a greater threat than higher state and local taxes.*

Nearly nine out of 10 Eastern North Carolinians think owners of industrial hog operations should be required to monitor groundwater near their facilities. Eight of 10 think operators should control odor, while almost three-quarters of the residents believe the public should be notified before the state grants a permit for a new operation.

Bob Edwards, a sociologist at East Carolina University in Greenville, NC last year found strong

and widespread support for stricter hog regulations in a survey of residents in 41 eastern counties. Not only did the overwhelming majority of those surveyed favor groundwater monitoring, odor control and prior notification, but seven out of 10 thought setbacks should be increased for hog houses and waste cesspools. Almost 60 percent of those surveyed



didn't think stricter regulations would put North Carolinians at a disadvantage. Tougher restrictions, they thought, would lead to less water pollution, a cleaner environment, less odor and more protection for communities. Even including the 22 percent of respondents who thought stricter hog regulations would hurt North Carolina, almost two-thirds of everyone interviewed thought the benefits outweighed

the disadvantages. A similar survey in 1996 found that 86 percent of those interviewed thought that stricter hog regulations would have a positive effect on their quality of life. Stricter hog regulations were considered a more serious need than better schools. More hog operations were considered to be a greater threat than higher state and local taxes. 🐷



## It's A Dirty Business

and the People Want Stricter Swine Regulations

**Results from Recent Surveys of Eastern North Carolina**

Results measured by percent of respondents who agree or strongly agree

Monitor groundwater near large operations	<b>89.0%</b>
Require hog operations to control odor	<b>84.9%</b>
Public should receive prior notification of operations	<b>83.7%</b>
Operation setbacks should be increased	<b>71.7%</b>

*You can report spills or other environmental problems you see. Call the NC Division of Water Quality at 1-800-858-0368.*

# WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE WANT

Call Us  
Toll-Free  
888-818-HOGS

## The Alliance for a Responsible Swine Industry

Open cesspools and spray fields may be a cheap sewage system for hog operations – but it's ruining the quality of life for people and the environment we all depend on.

This is the **Number One Problem** we face. **And it has a solution!** Hog operators in other parts of the nation and world are doing a better job, using alternative waste-treatment, storage, and recycling technology. We deserve the best in North Carolina, too.

### *At a minimum, we want our state government to:*

- Phase out the open cesspools and spray fields for disposing waste.
- Extend the current moratorium on new or expanded operations until a phase-out plan is underway and being implemented, alternative technologies to protect the environment are available and adequate siting requirements are in place to protect neighbors and communities.
- Require groundwater monitoring on all operations.
- Allow counties to place zoning restrictions on smaller operations.
- Increase setback requirements for hog houses and cesspools to reduce odor.
- Require strict enforcement and severe penalties for deficiencies and violations.

Please work with us to ensure that these steps are taken. We are the *Alliance for a Responsible Swine Industry*. The Alliance is a statewide grassroots organization with members whose homes, communities and lives have been invaded by industrial hog operations. We understand what it is like to have your life changed by the industry. We've experienced it ourselves.

If you have a problem with a hog operation and would like to discuss it or if you would like more information about the industry and how you can work with us toward solutions **call us toll free at: 1-888-818-HOGS or mail in the form below.**

We must work together to succeed. Join us in our challenge to make North Carolina's hog industry one that is responsible and accountable.

*Passage of new bills doesn't mean the hog industry has cleaned up its act. Unless extended, the moratorium on hog operations is scheduled to expire on March 1, 1999.*

This publication was prepared by the *Alliance for a Responsible Swine Industry* and the *North Carolina Coastal Federation*, both non-profit 501(c) 3 organizations. The Alliance works with citizens for better regulation of the mega hog industry. The Federation works with citizens for a healthy coastal environment. Support for this project was made possible by the Turner Foundation. Information for the publication was gained from the following: Center for Rural Affairs, Democracy South, Duke University, East Carolina University, *Fayetteville Observer*, NC Department of Agriculture, NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources, NC Department of Health and Human Services, NC Division of Air Quality, NC Division of Water Quality, NC Environmental Defense Fund, Neuse River Foundation, *News and Observer Publishing Co.*, University of Chapel Hill School of Public Health, University of Iowa, *Wilmington Morning Star*, individuals impacted by the hog industry, and organizations that we have worked with.

Yes, I want to stay informed  
about North Carolina's Hog Industry.  
Please send free information.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

Send to ARSI, P.O. Box 1665,  
Burgaw, NC 28425

**Ms. Karen Priest, of Bladen County:** "What memories will my children take with them when they leave home? Will they only remember home being the place that smelled like hog waste, will they remember having to run inside when the smell got so bad, will they remember the birthday party when their friend asked if she could call her mother to come get her because she couldn't stand the smell? Will these be my children's memories of home?"

 Printed On Recycled Paper