



## Community Members React to DNR Decision to Limit Expansion of Door County Livestock Facility

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**Contact:** Peg Sheaffer, Communications Director  
(608) 247-9684, [psheaffer@midwestadvocates.org](mailto:psheaffer@midwestadvocates.org)

**Madison-** The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has finalized a wastewater discharge permit that limits the expansion of Door County's only confined animal feeding operation (CAFO) and requires its owners to monitor local groundwater. The [final permit](#), issued on June 30, represents a significant improvement over a draft version that drew widespread criticism at a public hearing for endangering public health and local water resources.

S & S Jerseyland Dairy, a Sturgeon Bay CAFO owned by Randy Schmidt, had been seeking a permit to more than double in size. The draft permit issued by the DNR would have allowed the facility to expand its herd size to approximately 10,000 dairy cows.

In February, Midwest Environmental Advocates (MEA) submitted a [comment letter](#) to the DNR asking the agency to strengthen the draft permit by requiring groundwater monitoring and limiting future expansion.

In response to public comments, the final permit issued by the DNR earlier this month limits future expansion to half the number of animals proposed by S & S. In addition, it requires the farm to submit a groundwater monitoring plan and install groundwater monitoring wells at its production area. The final permit does not include a requirement to monitor groundwater in areas where manure is spread, something MEA and many local residents had advocated for.

The production area and the fields where the manure will be spread are located in an area that is highly susceptible to groundwater contamination due to shallow depth to bedrock.

Past compliance issues at S & S Jerseyland Dairy added to concerns about the farm's ability to expand further without doing additional harm to surface water and drinking water. In 2017, the DNR [took enforcement action](#) against S & S in response to a significant manure spill that entered a local waterway. According to DNR records, the farm was also responsible for manure spills in [2007](#), [2011](#), [2016](#), and [2021](#).

The final permit isn't perfect, but it's better than the draft version, and a step in the right direction to improve regulations to protect Door County's drinking water," said **Forestville resident Christine Reid**.

“MEA applauds the community's engagement in response to the draft permit,” said **MEA Staff Attorney Adam Voskuil**. “The sensitivity of the region, the projected growth of the operation, and past compliance issues raised red flags, and the community successfully advocated for changes that improved the permit.”

The final permit is the fourth CAFO permit to incorporate conditions and authority outlined in a [landmark Supreme Court decision](#) in 2021. That decision affirmed the DNR’s authority to use commonsense permit conditions such as groundwater monitoring and limits on herd size to address nitrate contamination and other threats to water quality.

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