

# **WILLIAMS COUNTY ALLIANCE**

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May 2006

The Williams County Alliance (WCA) is working to keep a multi-million hen egg-laying facility out of the county, and we need your help.

Rumors began circulating this spring that Fremont Farms of Iowa is considering several sites in the county for construction of an industrial-scale chicken operation. Fremont Farms operates a 5.2 million laying hen facility just outside Malcom, Iowa. Steve George, Fremont Farms CEO, has admitted that the company is looking at several sites here in Williams County for a similar operation that would have at least a "few million" chickens.

Thousands of Williams County residents have signed petitions opposing Fremont Farms' plan. Unfortunately, local concerns about an industrial agricultural operation are not taken into account under current state law. Permitting of a major Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) is done through the Ohio Department of Agriculture, and issues such as odor, impacts on local infrastructure, and property values are not considered.

The Williams County Alliance is dedicated to stopping Fremont Farms from building a chicken CAFO anywhere in the county. In addition to our ongoing efforts to build public awareness of the issue and lobby our legislators to better protect our interests, we are laying the groundwork for a legal challenge.

We have established the WCA Legal Defense Fund to finance our efforts in the legal arena. We have retained local legal representation and the services of environmental attorney Rick Sahli of Gahanna, Ohio. Mr. Sahli worked in the Ohio Attorney General's Office in the 1980s, served as Deputy Director and Chief Legal Counsel for the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency from 1987-1991, and was Executive Director of the Ohio Environmental Council from 1991-1995. Since 1995, he has worked with citizens and local governments across the state to protect communities from environmentally destructive activities (including taking on Buckeye Egg near Columbus). Mr. Sahli also has experience here in Williams County. Several years ago, he helped the Citizens for the Protection of the Beaver Creek Watershed keep a proposed mega-dairy out of the county.

The WCA Legal Defense Fund will pay Mr. Sahli's fees as well as those of our local legal counsel. The Fund may also finance additional legal

personnel, speakers, and any expert witnesses that may be needed to prevent industrial CAFOs from locating in Williams County.

The current permitting system for CAFOs in Ohio is grossly inadequate. Mega-facilities are regulated as agriculture rather than industry, and local communities have no real say in the permitting process. Until the system is changed, our county will continue to face the very real threat of industrial CAFO operations setting up shop in our midst. WCA will work to effect long-term change in the way CAFOs are permitted and regulated. The threat posed by Fremont Farms is immediate; our commitment to protecting Williams County is long-term. We are in this for the long haul.

We ask you to join with us in working to support local farmers, protect local communities, and keep industrial agriculture such as this multi-million laying hen facility out of Williams County. Please make a donation to the WCA Legal Defense Fund today. ***Your generous contribution to this fund now - before any permits are applied for or awarded -- will help send a clear message to the decision-makers at Fremont Farms that we are serious about keeping Fremont Farms out of Williams County.*** Your donation may be sent to Williams County Alliance, P.O. Box 291 Bryan OH 43506. Checks should be earmarked for the WCA Legal Defense Fund.

If you are not yet a member of the Alliance, we also encourage you to join the more than two hundred county residents who are. Membership dues are just \$10 per individual or \$20 per family. The more members we have, the greater our strength will be.

Thank you. Together, let's work to preserve our rural character and quality of life for future generations in Williams County.