



WILLIAMS COUNTY ALLIANCE

To Help Sustain Our Quality of Rural Life

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MEGA-WATCH

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Much rests on state hearing for egg farm

Wednesday, December, 15, 2010
By Holly Zachariah
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

One issue is whether local road denial can stop permit process

A hearing under way in a cramped conference room at the Ohio Department of Agriculture this week is about whether a company will be allowed to build an egg farm with 6 million hens in Union County.

But its outcome could have implications that reach far beyond one county's boundaries.

At issue is a proposal by Hi-Q Egg Products to build a chicken farm in York Township, northwest of Marysville. As planned, the operation would become the state's second-largest egg-production facility.

In August, Robert J. Boggs, director of the Ohio Department of Agriculture, said he intended to

deny Hi-Q's necessary permits, a move that would effectively kill the project.

Boggs said the Union County commissioners and township trustees did not, as the state requires, sign off on a transportation plan detailing travel routes for the farm's trucks.

Hi-Q's attorneys argued that the commissioners and trustees made unreasonable demands for nearly \$7 million worth of road improvements in the area of the proposed farm. Hi-Q attorney Kevin Braig said the company came up with reasonable alternatives, and he maintains that it is not the company's fault that the two government entities refused to sign the paperwork that the state requires. The hearing started yesterday and will continue today. An independent hearing officer will determine whether Hi-Q is right and make a nonbinding recommendation about the permits.

There then will be a period of time for additional back and forth between Hi-Q and the state before the agriculture director makes a final decision.

But that likely won't be Boggs. Republican Gov.-elect John Kasich has appointed James J. Zehringer, a state representative and former poultry and fish farmer from Fort Recovery, to take over the department in January.

Zehringer wrote in an e-mail yesterday that he is confident that Hi-Q's permit applications will be fairly reviewed.

"It is a case I will be watching closely," he wrote, "but it would be inappropriate for me to comment further on the actions of the current administration."

Ultimately, if Hi-Q loses at the Agricultural Department level, it can appeal to the Environmental Review Appeals Commission.

hzachariah@dispatch.com

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead

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Upcoming Events:

- **WCA Annual Meeting: Mon, Jan 24, 5 pm, Williams County Public Library Annex, first floor**
- **Eating Local Foods (ELF) Meeting: Tues, Jan 18, 6:30 pm, McDougale Room, NW State Community College**
- **ELF "Local Foods" Meal: John McCutcheon Concert; Friday, Feb 11, 5:30 pm, Defiance**

Sole Source Aquifer petition update Lou Pendleton

December, 2010

No one can say the U.S. EPA acts too quickly and without careful review. It has been three years since the City of Bryan submitted a petition to the U.S. EPA Region 5 office to designate the MICHINDOH Glacial Aquifer as a sole source aquifer under Section 1424 (e) of the Safe Drinking Water Act. It took the EPA two years to finish its review of the petition. In Octo-

ber 2009, the EPA announced its plan to approve the petition and opened a public comment period. That comment period was extended two more times and public hearings were held in Michigan and Ohio. In April 2010, prompted by a letter from the Michigan Farm Bureau, the EPA requested comments from the U.S. Geological Survey. The EPA asked the USGS to complete a scoping study to determine if there are gaps in

current MICHINDOH aquifer data that would inform the U.S. EPA as to the need for a more comprehensive field study of geologic conditions and water resources. According to Tom Poy, Chief of the Region 5 Ground Water and Drinking Water Branch, the EPA expects to receive the USGS study this month, finish its review of the petition and make a final determination – maybe the first part of 2011.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration for the first time released an estimate on the amount of antibiotics sold for use in domestic food animal production, a move that comes as the agency aims to curb the growth in antibiotic resistance.

The agency [estimates](#) that, in 2009, there were just shy of 29 million pounds sold for use in animal agriculture.

"That's a lot," as Maryn McKenna, infectious disease journalist and author of "Superbug," put it on her blog for Wired magazine last week. But, McKenna notes, it's not necessarily more or less than was expected, in part because the current estimates vary so wildly.

Though the debate over routinely feeding antibiotics to food animals has grown louder--and has been [featured more](#) in the mainstream media--the report was released with no fanfare and has been widely ignored by most news organizations.

McKenna broke the news on her blog, aptly titled '[Superbug](#).'

"The reason why antibiotic use on farms is a concern," says McKenna. "[I]s because such use stimulates the emergence of drug-resistant organisms that move off the farm in animals, in groundwater, in dust, on the wind and in the systems and on the clothes of those who work there, and makes new resistance factors available to be swapped among bacteria."

Out of these concerns--which have been raised by a variety of consumer, science, and public health groups--leadership at FDA has indicated that the agency will take a serious look at ways to curb resistance by looking at the overuse of antibiotics--in both animal agriculture and human medicine.

"Because more use of antimicrobials is, in general, associated with greater levels of resistance, these data will supplement the FDA's ongoing activities in antimicrobial resistance prevention," the FDA reported. "It also reinforces a recent agency draft guidance on the judicious use of certain antimicrobials in food-producing animals."

The agency released a [draft guidance](#) on judicious use in animal agriculture in June "intended to help reduce the development of resistance to medically important antimicrobial drugs" that are still used widely in food animal production to ward off disease and promote growth.

The document states that the overall weight of evidence supports "the conclusion that using medically important antimicrobial drugs for production or growth enhancing purposes (i.e., non-therapeutic or subtherapeutic uses) in food-producing animals is not in the interest of protecting and promoting the public health."

The animal health industry has long maintained that antibiotics are a critical tool for animal health and that any move to limit use should be based on science.

"For more than 40 years, antibiotics approved by the Food and Drug Administration have been used to treat sick animals, prevent illness and maintain the health of animals," the Animal Health Institute, a veterinary industry group, states on its website. "Livestock and poultry producers rely on these products so they can provide U.S. consumers with the safest food possible."

<http://www.foodsafetynews.com/2010/12/fda-releases-first-estimate-on-antibiotic-in-ag/>

Multi-drug resistance is more than three times greater near CAFOs than in agricultural streams not impacted by CAFOs. The study tested sites near Hudson, MI, CAFOs, as well as unimpacted streams in the Bean/Tiffin watershed and River Raisin Watershed, and sites in the Huron River Watershed near wastewater treatment facilities.

Antibiotic Resistance, Gene Transfer, and Water Quality Patterns Observed in Waterways near CAFO Farms and Wastewater Treatment Facilities

**Bridgett M. West¹, Peggy Liggitt¹, Daniel L. Clemans¹ and Steven N. Francoeur¹
Center for Aquatic Microbial Biology, Biology Department, Eastern Michigan University**

...The proportion of multi-drug resistance observed at the AI sites near CAFO farms (41.6%) was almost three times greater than at the AUI sites (16.5%). Certain multiple-resistance combinations were more common at some AI sites than others, perhaps reflecting site-specific antibiotic use patterns. In any case, the high proportion of multi-drug resistance at AI sites suggests that the fecal bacterial populations in these locations were subjected to conditions that fostered the acquisition of multiple-resistance determinants. In addition to likely increases in antibiotic-resistant bacteria from animals fed antibiotic-laden feed (Davies [1997](#); Lu et al. [2004](#); Wegener et al. [1999](#)), soil-dwelling bacteria are thought to be a significant reservoir of resistance determinants (D'Costa et al. [2006](#)), and studies on crop soils fertilized with animal manure show that horizontal transfer between fecal and soil bacteria is facilitated by the high nutrient availability of manure (Cooke [1976](#); Schmitt et al. [2006](#))...

<http://www.springerlink.com/content/764024070740061r/fulltext.html>

Factors to Consider in the Lick Creek Project George Opdycke

ROADS AND BRIDGES RESTRICT LICK CREEK'S FLOW

Road and bridge combinations commonly found crossing Lick Creek restrict its flow similar to a funnel lying on its side. For example, on the Tiffin River, years of documentation show the Turnpike Bridge causes a 25 percent flow decrease and the State Route 191 bridge causes a 43 percent decrease. Consecutive roads and bridges on a stream form a series of flow reducing funnels through which the flood must pass and this decreases the creek flow still more. This series of funnels form a geometric series whose mathematical properties are well known. By the third bridge, the flow has been reduced 20 to 35 percent and by the sixth bridge, the flow has been reduced 30

to 51 percent. Obviously, the bridges and roads significantly reduce stream flow. Their effect must be included in the Lick Creek ditch project analysis.

COSTS FAR EXCEED BENEFITS OF LICK CREEK PROJECT

Two benefits of ditch improvement provide a means for recovering the costs of implementation and maintenance. These are increased agricultural production resulting from reduced flooded land and flood damage relief for urban/village areas. The Lick Creek Project calls for removing logjams, leaning trees, and mud bars between State Route 6 and the Tiffin River at a cost of \$747,000. Annual maintenance, while unstated, will likely be about 10 percent of

project cost. All project and maintenance costs are to be assessed to watershed land-owners; however, no estimates of land benefits, e.g., increased crop production and/or flood land reduction have been published! Ohio ditch law requires that benefits exceed costs. Benefits will be said to arise from increased crop production along strips of land on each side of the creek and from reduced flooding in Ney. Reliable estimates of increased crop production, project maintenance, inflation, and financing show that the costs far exceed the benefits. **In fact, even after tripling the estimates of benefits, the costs still exceed the benefits.** For a more detailed cost-benefit analysis, contact George Opdycke.

ELF Network to Offer "Local Foods" Meal before Folk Music Concert



Eating Local Foods (ELF) will be presenting a soup supper before the John McCutcheon concert on Friday, Feb

11, at the Zion's Lutheran Church, East 2nd Street, in Defiance, OH. Locally produced food will be transformed by *The Innkeepers*, volunteers of the Zion's Lutheran Church.

The meal (free will donation) will be offered from 5:30-7:00pm. The concert will begin at 7:30 pm, followed by a wine-cheese-dessert "meet the artist" reception (premiere ticket price) after the performance.

John McCutcheon has been called "folk music's renaissance man—master instrumentalist, powerful singer—songwriter, storyteller, activist and author".

Tickets for the concert may be obtained by contacting Jo McCormick at 419-267-1227 or jmccormick@northweststate.edu.

Eating Local Foods (ELF) is a network of people in the greater Northwest Ohio area promoting a sustainable, local food system, through education, that improves quality of life and protects the environment. The network was initiated by Northwest State Community College as part of its Education

for Sustainability Program.

More information on ELF may be found at <http://www.eatinglocalfoods.org/Home>

At the Feb 11 event, local producers are invited to set up tables beginning at 4 pm to meet with folks throughout dinner and concert intermission. A limited number of free concert tickets are available for those producers who respond first. Contact Monique Tressler at 419-272-1073 or mo_tressler@msn.com for more information.

2011 Williams County Area Farm Directory

The arrival of seed catalogs brings images of summer gardens and fresh veggies...and the 2011 farm directory. Producer listings and sponsors are needed as work begins on the sixth edition. For more information, go to:

www.williamscountyalliance.com/Resources.htm or contact us at wmscoa@yahoo.com.

Founding Member of WCA Serving as Regional Rep for US Senator

Ann Longworth-Orr, one of the founding members of the Alliance, now serves as the NW Ohio Regional Representative for U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown.

Ann and her husband Daniel, and children Lewis and Molly, live in Green Springs, Ohio.

Alliance Meetings

WCA meetings are held on the fourth Monday of the month, in Bryan, on the first floor of the Williams County Public Library Annex.

Meeting announcements are listed in the Bryan Times Community Calendar and on the Alliance website.

www.williamscountyalliance.com

Environmental Justice in Ohio

The Alliance has been an ally of Ohioans for Health, Environment and Justice (OHEJ) since 2007. Although OHEJ began as a project of a national group, the Center for Health, Environment and Justice, founded by Love Canal activist Lois Gibbs, OHEJ is in the process of becoming an independent, 501(C)3 organization.

Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies.

OHEJ is a statewide, grassroots alliance of diverse allies working to empower the people of Ohio through education and citizen action to create environmental, economic and social justice for their communities. A member of the WCA, Sherry Fleming, serves on the OHEJ board of directors with others from across Ohio.

Local Groups Participate in National Project

In 2010, the Williams County Alliance, in partnership with the Bryan Co-op and Ohioans for Health, Environment and Justice, was awarded a grant to assist in hosting a Community Conversation, a component of the National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposure.

The National Conversation, supported by the Center for Disease Control and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, is a two year project to create a national action agenda for strengthening the United States' approach to protecting the public from harmful chemical exposure.

The ideas from the June, 2010, Bryan Community Conversation became part of a national report being used to create clear, achievable recommendations.

As the project has progressed, the public can join with nationally known experts through web dialogues, in discussing the National Conversation's draft

action agenda, learn from one another and form conclusions to share as part of the public comment process.

RESOLVE, a non-profit independent consensus-building organization is facilitating the National Conversation.

"The true burden of environmentally induced cancers has been grossly underestimated," says the President's Cancer Panel in a strongly worded report that urges action to reduce people's widespread exposure to carcinogens. The panel today advised President Obama "to use the power of your office to remove the carcinogens and other toxins from our food, water and air that needlessly increase health care costs, cripple our nation's productivity and devastate American lives." Environmental Health News; May 2010

If you are interested in learning more about the National Conversation or participating in the Conversation, go to:

www.atsdr.cdc.gov/nationalconversation/

Join us in helping to preserve the quality of life in Williams County through education and citizen action.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

_____ FAMILY (\$20.00) _____ INDIVIDUAL (\$10.00) _____ ADDITIONAL DONATION (\$ _____)

_____ E-MAIL NEWSLETTERS TO SAVE ON POSTAGE AND PRINTING COSTS

COMMENTS: _____

MAIL TO: WILLIAMS COUNTY ALLIANCE, PO BOX 291, BRYAN, OH 43506 THANK YOU!