



## **DNR Decision to Limit Expansion of Kinnard Farms is Reasonable and Necessary Response to Ongoing Water Contamination Crisis in Kewaunee County**

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**MADISON, WI—** Today, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) announced that it has modified a wastewater discharge permit for Kinnard Farms—one of the state’s largest concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs)—in response to a [state Supreme Court ruling](#) last summer. [The permit](#) includes conditions that limit the farm’s ability to expand beyond its current size and that require its owners to monitor groundwater quality in areas where large amounts of manure are spread.

Kinnard Farms’ permit is the first CAFO permit to be modified by the DNR since the Supreme Court’s landmark decision. [The Court’s decision](#) affirmed that a limit on the number of animals and a requirement for groundwater monitoring are sensible and necessary permit conditions that will allow DNR to address the known water quality problems in Kewaunee County.

The final permit issued today is a much-improved version of a draft permit that drew widespread criticism at public hearings earlier this year. The final permit limits Kinnard Farms to 11,369 animal units (approximately 8,000 cows), which is roughly equivalent to the number of cows currently housed at the facility.

The [draft version](#) would have allowed up to 21,450 animal units (approximately 15,000 cows), a number that was based on the storage capacity of Kinnard’s manure pits rather than the sensitivity of the region to drinking water contamination, the pervasiveness of private well contamination in Lincoln Township or the [lack of additional farmland](#) in Kewaunee County on which to safely spread manure.

The final permit also strengthens groundwater monitoring requirements for spreading manure on fields near the facility. The new requirements are a response to groundwater contamination that was detected by monitoring wells already installed around the production facility.

The number of CAFOs in Wisconsin has dramatically increased in recent decades. As CAFOs multiply and grow larger, they continue to pump out massive amounts of manure for disposal. The trend has been especially devastating in places like Kewaunee County, where fractured bedrock and shallow soils make groundwater vulnerable to pollution.

"It's long past time that decision makers put the health and safety of our community first. We are grateful to members of this community and to people all over the state who spoke up during the public comment period and told the DNR that the draft permit wasn't good enough. Public participation really made a difference in this case," said **Kewaunee County resident Nancy Utesch**.

"While I support the DNR's permit revisions, credit should be given to the everyday people who chose to stand up and hold the DNR accountable to its responsibility to protect our drinking water," said **Jodi Parins, a neighbor of Kinnard Farms**. "In a place like Kewaunee County, it is both reasonable and necessary to set limits on expansion so that people who live here can have the clean water they deserve."

"We are pleased that the DNR listened to experts and chose to revise the draft permit to include commonsense clean water protections that respond to the serious and ongoing nature of groundwater contamination in Kewaunee County," said **MEA Senior Staff Attorney Andrea Gelatt**.

"Limiting the number of animals makes sense, given the overwhelming amount of manure that is already being applied to fields in the area," said **MEA Staff Attorney Adam Voskuil**. "More cows would lead to more pollution—there's just nowhere for additional manure to be safely spread."

*Midwest Environmental Advocates is a nonprofit law center that combines the power of law with the resolve of communities facing environmental injustice to secure and protect the rights of all people to healthy water, land, and air. Learn more at [www.midwestadvocates.org](http://www.midwestadvocates.org) or [www.facebook.com/midwestadvocates](https://www.facebook.com/midwestadvocates).*

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