

# Guidance for Large and/or Intensive Livestock Enterprises

## A CFFO Policy Statement

### 1 General Principle

- 1.1 **The province and municipalities should share the implementation and enforcement of guidance for agriculture. Provincial regulations should set general policies, including minimums and maximums. Municipalities should be required to consult on the need to modify provincial standards and demonstrate that there are local needs that make the modification important.**

### 2 Rationale

- 2.1 Ontario's rural landscape varies hugely. Ontario is too diverse for a one-size fits all approach. The basic provincial rules need to be customized to suit the local landscape. Some municipalities have allowed scattered severances everywhere. Some have significantly restricted severances. A provincial standard designed for the one circumstance is not appropriate for the other.
- 2.2 Municipalities have to be able to develop their unique characteristics. In the past, if you saw one rural community you had seen them all. Ontario's rural economy lags because of that sameness. Rural vitality depends on communities consciously distinguishing themselves from the many others.

### 3 Recommendation

- 3.1 **Ontario should add to the Provincial Policy Statement under the Planning Act a statement that allows municipalities to set limits on the size and intensity of livestock farms. Municipalities should be able to set a maximum size in the range of 400 to 600 livestock units per site and a maximum density in the range of 1.0 to 2.0 livestock units per acre depending on the environmental and cultural needs of their communities.**

### 4 Rationale

- 4.1 Raising livestock and cropping good soils have a symbiotic relationship. Both are important to sustainable agriculture. Livestock rely and benefit from the gifts of good land. Good land benefits from livestock manures being returned to it.
- 4.2 Caps will keep livestock dispersed across the countryside and avoid the risk of producing more manure in some sub watersheds than can be safely applied to the land.
- 4.3 The creation needs more than one line of protection. The existence of caps will make good stewardship less dependent on nutrient management plans or water protection plans.
- 4.4 Caps are a way to avoid the kind of problems they have developed for nutrient management in Europe, especially countries such as Holland.

- 4.5 Too many livestock on a parcel of land or in any watershed creates a level of discomfort with nutrient management that is detrimental to the long-term support for agriculture throughout our countryside.
- 4.6 In many parts of Ontario the existing Minimum Distance Separation formulas already have an impact on the location and size of livestock facilities. Even where the MDS allows the construction of larger facilities on one site now, the next round of future technologies that relies of the economy of scale are not likely to be supported. In other words, livestock production that banks on future economies of scale is not sustainable in Ontario. Our best future is with technology that makes the moderate scale of many of our farms more productive. A cap on size will help farms and farm infrastructure focus initiative on developing the technology and management systems that make moderate-size enterprises profitable.
- 4.7 We have to develop a farming approach that fits well with scattered rural development. Our municipalities have allowed a lot of scattered rural development, now agriculture has to develop with this reality in mind.
- 4.8 Municipalities will have a clear mandate by which they can act to protect the health and quality of life of their ratepayers. Without a defined mandate there will be no end to the efforts of municipalities to try bylaws and regulations to meet their ratepayers needs.
- 4.9 If municipalities are not able to cap livestock enterprises they may try to create specific land use zones for large and intensive livestock operations. This would negate the CFFO vision of the countryside as a dynamic place where a full range of economic and cultural activities take place.

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Provincial Board  
Christian Farmers Federation