



INSPIRING AMERICANS TO PROTECT WILDLIFE FOR OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE.

Fact Sheet

GLOBAL WARMING



CONFRONTING

Dirty Air Act: Red Herrings Down on the Farm

Since 1970, the Clean Air Act has protected America's public health and environment from harmful pollution while ensuring our economy is strengthened. As a result of the law, since 1990 pollution that causes acid rain, asthma, developmental problems, and premature deaths has dropped 41% while our economy has grown 64%.ⁱ Despite this sterling track record, big polluters are attacking the Act and urging their allies in Congress to give them free rein to dump carbon pollution into the air. Special interests like the American Farm Bureau Federation are among those spreading erroneous claims that limiting carbon pollution will result in undo intrusions and government oversight of farms. Such claims are baseless, protect polluters, and put the public health at risk.

Family Farms Will Not Be Regulated

Taking reasonable and deliberate steps to limit global warming pollution, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has focused on the biggest polluters and smokestacks. EPA's efforts to limit global warming pollution will not target family farms, restaurants, and other small businesses and facilities. When the distortions and rhetoric settles, it is clear that few, if any, of the country's over 2.2 million farms will be negatively impacted by use of the Clean Air Act to tackle climate change.ⁱⁱ

Only a Few Farms May Even Have to Report Their Carbon Emissions

Far from being regulated, almost every agricultural operation in the country is exempt from even having to report its annual greenhouse gas emissions. EPA's final rule requiring certain pollution sources to report their emissions includes only one emission source in the agriculture sector - manure management systems. And the reporting requirement only applies to livestock operations with emissions that exceed the threshold of emitting 25,000 Million Metric Tons (MMT) CO₂e per year. The number of farms this impacts is minimal. EPA estimates that across the entire nation a total of 43 farms would meet the threshold requiring them to report their emissions - 11 beef feedlots, 25 dairy farms, and 7 swine farms, or less than one percent of any of these farm types.ⁱⁱⁱ All other farms and agricultural operation are exempt from reporting their emissions.

Even Fewer Farms Would Ever Be Regulated

Contrary to false industry claims, EPA has actually worked to ensure that the Clean Air Act focuses on the biggest, non-agricultural sources of carbon pollution. Beyond the reporting requirements, agricultural operations will not be subject to any mandatory carbon pollution limits. Under EPA's "Tailoring Rule," through June 30, 2013, new stationary pollution sources would not face limits on their emissions unless they pollute more than 100,000 MMT CO₂e/ year.^{iv} To reach the 100K pollution threshold a farm would have to be extreme in size. For example, a single farm would have to house an average of over 136,000 pigs throughout the year - almost as many hogs and pigs as there are on all the farms in North Dakota.^v

Contact:
Joe Mendelson
Director of Global
Warming Policy
202-797-6898 (p)
202-797-6646 (f)
MendelsonJ@nwf.org



Likewise, a single farm would have to be home to an average of over 30 million turkeys per year - a number that exceeds the entire state turkey population of Minnesota (the state with the largest on-farm turkey population) by 12 million birds.^{vi} Even at a 50,000 MMT emissions threshold, a level EPA has indicated it likely will never go below, a farm would have to house over 15 million gobblers per year - an amount just under the entire turkey population of all farms in Minnesota.

Animal Group	Avg. Annual Animal Population/Farm CO2e Threshold			
	25k MMT	50K MMT	75K MMT	100K MMT
Beef	29,000	58,000	87,000	116,000
Dairy	3,200	6,400	9,600	12,800
Swine	34,100	68,200	102,300	136,400
Poultry				
Layers	723,600	1,447,200	2,170,800	2,894,400
Broilers	38,160,000	76,320,000	114,480,000	152,640,000
Turkeys	7,710,000	15,420,000	23,130,000	30,840,000

Derived from EPA Reporting Rule, Table JJ-1, 74 Fed. Reg. 56260, 56485 (Oct. 30, 2009).

Climate Change Is a Threat to American Farms

Global Warming is happening, is caused largely by human activities, and poses significant risks for — and in many cases is already affecting — a broad range of human and natural systems.^{vii} As the USDA recognizes, the Earth's temperature is rising as a result of carbon emissions and it will impact agriculture.^{viii} Climate change will increase the frequency of heat waves, droughts and severe rainfall. These severe weather events will make farming even more risky. New weeds and pathogens will be able to flourish under new climate conditions, challenging farmers with even more threats to their production. In addition, consistently hotter temperatures can damage the yield potential of many of America's main crops, including corn.

Changes in agricultural practices and land uses can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and assist in solving the climate crisis. Shifts to reduced-tillage or no-till practices, precision farming, changes in crop rotations to include more hay or small grains, and cover cropping may increase carbon uptake and storage by soils and vegetative matter. And the EPA is working with farmers to voluntarily reduce carbon emissions through programs like AgStar in which the agency has worked with USDA to award more \$37M in grants and loans to deploy manure digester systems.^{ix} Installation of anaerobic digesters can reduce both methane and nitrous oxide emissions from livestock operations. However, none of these activities will be required through use of the Clean Air Act.

Agriculture has a significant role to play in contributing to climate solutions and EPA has taken steps to ensure new Clean Air Act standards do not apply to the family farm. Congress should see through the false claims about the Clean Air Act and allow EPA to continue doing its job protecting the public health and welfare from the impacts of global warming pollution.



-
- ⁱ EPA, Acid Rain Benefits Exceed Expectations, (Apr, 14, 2009) available at <http://www.epa.gov/airmarkets/cap-trade/docs/benefits.pdf>
- ⁱⁱ USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service, 2007 Census of Agriculture (2007 Ag Census) at 7, Table I available at http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Full_Report/usv1.pdf
- ⁱⁱⁱ EPA, Technical Support Document for Manure Management Systems: Proposed Rule for Mandatory Reporting of Greenhouse Gases (Feb. 4, 2009) at 6.
- ^{iv} EPA, Prevention of Significant Deterioration and Title V Greenhouse Gas Tailoring Rule, 75 Fed. Reg. 31514 (June 3, 2010).
- ^v EPA, Tailoring Rule, 75 Fed. Reg. at 56485 (Table JJ-1) and USDA, 2007 Ag Census at 402-410 (Table 12)(Hogs and Pigs – Inventory and Sales: 2007 and 2002).
- ^{vi} EPA, Tailoring Rule, 75 Fed. Reg. at 56485 (Table JJ-1) and USDA, 2007 Ag Census at 411-419 (Table 13)(Poultry – Inventory and Sales: 2007 and 2002).
- ^{vii} NAS, America’s Climate Choices, available at <http://americasclimatechoices.org/>
- ^{viii} USDA, Economic Research Service, Briefing Room: Global Climate Change, available at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/GlobalClimate/>
- ^{ix} EPA, The AgStar Program, The Accomplishments, available at <http://www.epa.gov/agstar/accomplish.html>