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Howard County Residents Fighting Reicks Factory Farm

Iowans vow to stop proposed factory farm on fragile karst terrain and trout stream watershed

Des Moines, IA – APRIL 5, 2017 – A group of citizens is banding together to stop a new hog factory by Reicks View Farms in Howard County. At 2,499 head of hogs, the confinement is one hog under the permit threshold, and thereby skirts more stringent state regulations and the Master Matrix. The factory farm is proposed in an environmentally sensitive area known for numerous sinkholes created by the honeycombed *karst* geology that makes up the terrain. It is about a mile from an estimated 40 neighbors, century farms, and an Amish community. The proposed CAFO is also in the watershed for a naturally producing trout stream.

[Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement](#) and the national nonprofit [Socially Responsible Agricultural Project](#) are helping residents organize to stop the development.

In June 2016, [the Des Moines Register reported](#) that Reicks View Farms had applied to build a 7,499 hog facility in Allamakee County. However, after intense local opposition, the developer reapplied for a confinement at 2,499 hogs – which stopped the county from reviewing it under Iowa law. State law required the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to approve the confinement, despite it being located on fragile and environmentally sensitive terrain. Highlighting that building at the proposed site was ill advised, Iowa DNR Director Chuck Gipp stated that "[if a livestock confinement facility could be built on the proposed site, there is no place in Iowa one could not be built.](#)"

Now, the group of concerned citizens in Howard County is organizing to yet again to stop Reicks View Farms from building just one hog under the permit threshold on karst terrain. Residents are aware of sinkholes not shown on the DNR's map, but after being repeatedly asked, DNR has not yet agreed to revisit the area.

"This land should not have any factory farms on it. Karst terrain is like a sponge," said Joann Wangen of Cresco, Iowa. "We want to protect our water. The smell of the confinement is going to be bad enough, but we'll have a crisis if we don't have our water."

Reicks View Farms is already associated with at least 31 factory farms in Iowa and has also expanded into Wisconsin. According to DNR's quarterly reports, there were 448 permitted and unpermitted factory farms approved in Iowa in 2016. In 2017, there have already been 126 factory farms approved in Iowa.