

What We Don't Know About CAFOs *Will Hurt Us* ***UPDATE 2023***

As witnessed by the explosion of the White Oak Farms manure digester and as seen with leaks and failures at other CAFOs, methane extraction from liquid manure for fuel is not a clean solution to climate change.

Months after the White Oaks Farms manure digester failed in North Carolina, the Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) Division of Water Resources tested the water in the area. Results of the water testing showed ongoing contamination of ground and surface water. NCDEQ issued a new violation on the farm, in addition to the prior \$34,520 fine.

Environmental experts, regulatory agencies, and water protectors have looked at the inherent problems with manure-based fuel. Now, it is up to the public to pose the following questions. Officials can consider the answers and craft legislation to robustly support protecting the environment, the neighbors, and the public from CAFO pollution.

- Prior to the biogas digester failure at White Oak Farms, was enforcement by the State at that site weak?
- Over time, solids settle out of the liquid and collect at the bottom of lagoons, decreasing their capacity. These solids may not be sprayed on fields. So, should special processes be required to regularly remove the solids, thus reducing a problem that could lead to lagoon failures?
- Are agribusinesses shielded from strong enforcement of environmental laws in NC, and if so, does this limit the ability of private advocacy groups to act against bad players?
- Does collecting biogas from waste lagoons provide any significant net benefit to the environment?
- Is Biogas from CAFO waste gaining momentum in NC because large agribusinesses find it beneficial to their marketing and greenwashing?
- Will CAFO farmers realize financial benefits from biogas generation after taking into account their fixed and variable expenses?
- In NC, have legislators intentionally underfunded NCDEQ in order to support the State's marketing message that NC is pro-growth and anti-regulations and is working to remove restrictions on making money?
- Does the NC State Legislature have a gag order on much of the work NCDEQ performs? If so, does this gag order prevent local environmental groups from knowing what NCDEQ is (or is not) working on in regards to CAFOs and water quality?
- Is White Oak Farms capable of running their facility safely if they apply for and receive a new CAFO permit? Will NCDEQ require improvements before a permit is issued?