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Sierra Club Calls on Governor Reynolds
to Expand Emergency Oversight of CAFOs

The Iowa Chapter of the Sierra Club is concerned about the ability of the meat processing plants to effectively handle the number of pigs that are being produced in the state and the environmental and health impacts of double-stocking confined animal feeding operation (CAFO) buildings. Today the Sierra Club called on Governor Kim Reynolds to:

- **Use her emergency powers to require the Department of Natural Resources to maintain a list on their website of double-stocked CAFOs** - Families living close to a CAFO may choose to shelter in another location if the CAFO near them is double-stocking. Given that COVID-19 causes respiratory issues and people living near CAFOs are already dealing with respiratory issues, double-stocking of animals could be a serious public health issue.

  On a normal basis, neighbors of CAFOs are under daily assault from the odors and toxic chemicals emanating from the CAFOs. The manure is loaded with toxic pollutants such as methane, hydrogen sulfide, ammonia, particulate matter (PM$_{2.5}$ and PM$_{10}$), fungi, bacteria, and endotoxins that become airborne. The physical reaction to the toxic chemicals in CAFO manure results in nausea, running noses, sore eyes, respiratory distress, and asthma attacks. Exposure to odors can cause changes in mood. Children face a special risk to air pollution.

- **Use her emergency powers to require owners of CAFO pigs to immediately stop breeding all pigs until the pandemic passes.** Given that the meat processing plants in the state are facing large outbreaks of COVID-19 and that a number of them have been shuttering their plants for several days, it is obvious that immediate action needs to be taken.

- **Use her emergency powers to protect Iowa’s waters by requiring the CAFO remain unused for the equivalent number of days that it is double-stocked.** Manure pits and manure holding tanks are designed to hold the amount of manure that is expected to be expelled by the animals in the building in a year given that most farmers empty their pits and tanks once a year. Although there is some free-board provided so that the manure does not over-top the pit or tank, the longer the animals are double-stocked, the risk increases that the pits will not be able to handle all of the manure that is created. To alleviate greater amounts of nutrients entering our water, the owners of the CAFO buildings should be required to idle the buildings for the same number of days that they are double stacked so that the pits and holding tanks are not over-topped.

- **Use her emergency powers to impose a moratorium on building new and expanding existing CAFOs.** Under the circumstances, it is time to impose a moratorium on building new and expanding existing CAFOs.

The measures identified above are commonsense solutions to dealing with the pending crisis that looms if we do not seriously handle the oversupply of CAFO animals and the inability of the meat processing industry in the state to handle the supply during the COVID-19 pandemic.