

Town of Trenton CAFO Fact Sheet November 2023

Background:

- The DNR regulates larger farm operations like this (termed CAFOs, or Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations).
- State law requires the town to have a zoning district for this purpose.
- The town cannot deny a CAFO if the State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) approves it.
- In August, the town adopted an ordinance creating a new zoning district, AE Agricultural Enterprise, to allow livestock facility expansions as a Conditional Use.
 - Without the new zoning district, CAFOs would potentially be able to exist in other agricultural zoning districts in the town (EA, A-1, AT) .
 - The Plan Commission and Town Board can approve or deny a request for rezoning based on factors such as the use of surrounding properties (for example, an agricultural parcel in the middle of small residential parcels or a subdivision may be inappropriate for large-scale farming).
 - With new zoning district, a farm wishing to expand their facility to more than 1,000 animal units would be required to change their zoning to AE and if approved, also apply for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP).
 - The town's CUP cannot be more restrictive than the State DNR permit.

What's next?

- The Town Board is currently seeking additional legal counsel for advice on how to proceed with a rezoning application, to protect all parties within the limits of the law.
- Updates are available on the zoning page of the town's website at townoftrenton.wi.gov, and within the minutes of Plan Commission and Town Board meetings.