



## Feedlot study moving forward on schedule

Researchers are moving ahead with the second phase of a landmark statewide study of Minnesota's livestock industry. Minnesota's generic environmental impact statement on animal agriculture is the first in the nation to explore the statewide impact of the entire livestock industry.

The study, slated for completion in 2001, will offer Minnesotans and their policy-makers scientific information on the livestock industry and recommendations on future options for the industry. Minnesota's Environmental Quality Board is conducting the three-year study, which is expected to cost between \$3 and \$5 million.

A major aspect of the study's analysis phase, a review of published scientific research on the livestock industry, is nearing completion. The 1,500-page research summary will be used as a reference tool throughout the study. The EQB will also use the summary information to make its decisions on the additional research needed to complete the environmental impact statement.

More than 150 researchers from the University of Minnesota and its outside partners reviewed U.S. and international studies on 12 topic areas affected by the livestock industry: social/community; land use; role of government; industry structure and competitiveness; profitability and economic viability; external benefits and costs; water; air quality and odor; soils; manure and crop nutrients; human health and animal health.

A statewide inventory identifying the location of Minnesota's feedlots and the species and numbers of animals raised is also being compiled as part of the study's analysis phase.

### Environmental Quality Board and Minnesota Planning play key roles

Minnesota's 15-member Environmental Quality Board and the state's long-range strategic planning department, Minnesota Planning, are responsible for conducting and managing the animal agriculture study. The Minnesota Legislature is slated to receive the study results in mid-2001, prior to the 2002 legislative session.

A 25-member Citizens Advisory Committee appointed by the EQB is charged with ensuring that the public, including interest groups and stakeholders, is involved throughout the three-year project in shaping the study and its findings.

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The **Clean Water Action Alliance** of Minnesota has left the Citizens Advisory Committee, citing concerns about the University of Minnesota's role in the literature review work.

"Minnesota's generic environmental impact statement on animal agriculture is the first such study in the nation. We are charting new ground with this study, and will miss the Clean Water Action Alliance's perspectives," said Mike Sullivan, Environmental Quality Board Director. The EQB is looking for another individual or group with a strong commitment to the environment, to replace the Clean Water Action Alliance on the advisory committee. Current Citizens Advisory Committee membership is listed on the Minnesota Planning website: [www.mnplan.state.mn.us/eqb/geis](http://www.mnplan.state.mn.us/eqb/geis)

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## Key study milestones

### December 1998

■ The study's scope and 12 major topic areas were officially announced in December 1998, following statewide public meetings attended by more than 1,100 Minnesotans.

### Summer and Fall 1999

■ The University of Minnesota and its research partners conduct an objective and thorough review of the scientific literature on each of the 12 study areas. The written summary of their review work, analyzing more than 10,000 citations, will be available in the Minnesota Planning Library beginning in September 1999.

■ The EQB, with Citizen Advisory Committee input, uses the research summary to decide which study questions can be addressed with existing research and which require further research.

■ Minnesota Planning's Land Management Information Center inventories the state's feedlots. It gathers information on the size and location of all feedlots in the state and the species of animals raised at each site. Information not available from existing sources is gathered with help from counties and producer groups.

■ The EQB requests proposals from researchers to conduct research on the study questions not addressed in the current literature.

### 2000

■ The EQB signs contracts with researchers for additional investigation of study questions.

■ Researchers complete their work and a draft generic environmental impact statement document is prepared.

### 2001

■ The draft GEIS is released for public review and public hearings.

■ The EQB revises the draft statement after considering public comments.

■ The EQB releases the GEIS to the public and the Legislature.

### Background

Animal agriculture, a major component in Minnesota's economy, has gone through dramatic changes. A decade-long consolidation of smaller farms into larger ones, agribusiness' continuing shift to larger feedlots and public concern over feedlot impact have generated much attention and controversy throughout the state.

As a result, the 1998 Legislature directed the EQB to conduct a statewide study of animal agriculture and feedlots to assess their present and projected impact on Minnesota. The study, a generic environmental impact statement, is examining the effects of animal agriculture and feedlots on Minnesota's economy, health, environment and quality of life. The objective of the study is to provide balanced information on the effects of animal agriculture and recommendations on future options for animal agriculture in the state.

The **Environmental Quality Board**, staffed by Minnesota Planning, draws together five citizens and the heads of 10 state agencies that play a vital role in Minnesota's environment and development. The board develops policy, creates long-range plans and reviews proposed projects that would significantly influence Minnesota's environment.

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