

# FEEDLOT LITERATURE SUMMARY COMPLETE

During the period April through August 1999, nearly 100 University of Minnesota researchers, with partners from other universities and the private sector, pored through existing research in search of information on the 12 major topics in the Feedlot GEIS. The work is now complete as a 1,500 page analysis of their findings. Interdisciplinary research compiled the final document and all reports were reviewed by the EQB, a GEIS Advisory Committee and a group of external reviewers convened by the U of M for this project.

As a result of their efforts, the EQB will soon have a reference tool to use throughout the feedlot study.

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"The summary is an excellent starting point for the next level of EQB decision making. The summary points out the differences of opinion and the gaps in the research. The advisory committee and EQB will use this information as they decide on the additional research needed to complete the GEIS," said EQB Chair, Gene Hugoson.

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## Literature Summary Available

Because environmental agencies in other states and several libraries are showing strong interest in the research summary, the EQB will make a limited number of copies available for sale at the Minnesota Book Store 651/297-3000 (metro) and 800/657-3757 (nationwide) (M-F 8am-5pm).

The report will also be available in October at the MNPlanning/EQB Library, the Legislative Reference Library and regional libraries in St. Cloud, Willmar, Fergus Falls, Marshall, Mankato and Rochester. In early November, the EQB will post the report on the Minnesota Planning website at: [www.mnplan.state.mn.us](http://www.mnplan.state.mn.us).

The literature summary work was completed under a tight timeline by nearly 100 researchers affiliated with the U of M. The GEIS Advisory Committee spent hundreds of hours reviewing drafts and advising the researchers on their work.

## Next steps

The EQB will develop a study workplan in cooperation with the Advisory Committee and other state agencies in December 1999. When it is complete the workplan will identify the research needed to complete the feedlot GEIS. Contract researchers will conduct the analysis in the year 2000.

## Feedlot Inventory Pilots

EQB is working with Minnesota Planning's Land Management Information Center (LMIC) and other groups to gather information on feedlot location and species, size of herd and number of operations in the state. Existing county level feedlot inventories augmented with statewide databases are the starting points for this count.

Pilot inventory projects now underway will allow the EQB to determine how to best gather similar information throughout the state.

**The literature summary explores the research on 12 areas affected by the livestock industry. The topic areas are: 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.**

### **New AC Member**

A 24 member Advisory Committee, appointed by the EQB, is charged with ensuring that the public, including interest groups and stakeholders, is involved in shaping the feedlot study and its findings.

The EQB welcomed **Pat Bloomgren**, Director of the Division of Environmental Health, Minnesota Department of Health, to the Advisory Committee in August. Pat brings years of experience working on tough environmental and public health issues for the state.

### **Farewell to Susan Schmidt**

**Michael Sullivan**, EQB Director, notified the EQB at its September meeting that **Susan Schmidt** would be leaving the GEIS project October 15, 1999 to take on a new role as State Director of the Minnesota Office of the Trust for Public Land.

Sullivan said, "**Gregg Downing**, who remains as Co-Director of the GEIS Project, will provide staffing continuity while a replacement for Susan is sought." EQB hopes to have the new team in place by early November.

### **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, a continuing shift to larger feedlots, and public concern over feedlot impact has generated much attention and controversy throughout our 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 (GEIS), 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 animal agriculture and recommendations on future options for animal agriculture in the state.

The comprehensive study is believed to be the first in the U.S. to explore the statewide impact of the entire livestock industry. When completed, the study will offer Minnesotans and their policymakers scientific data on the livestock industry and recommendations on future options for the industry.

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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