

March 4, 2018

To the Members of the House Agriculture Committee:

My name is Keith Longhofer and live at 20549 Evans road, Tonganoxie KS. I hold a degree from KSU both in Animal Science and Industry and a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine. I, regretfully, cannot attend the hearing on March 6, 2018, but would like the opportunity to voice some concerns about environmental impact, quality of life for the chickens and surrounding communities. I will try to be brief.

After hearing the testimony of Drs. Scott Beyer and Peter Tomlinson, I was reminded that fair and impartial research still goes to the highest bidder. The research cited is inconclusive. For instance, the comparison of particulate matter to background levels exhausted only went to 500 feet, these levels showed no significant decrease from 100 feet to 500 feet, but no data beyond 500 feet. It was suggested that the waste from these CAFO's could be used as fertilizer applied directly to fields: this poses additional risks from runoff, odor, particulate matter and potential disease spread. Studies have shown a threefold increase in asthma in residents surrounding existing chicken CAFO's. The increased population density proposed is based on a 3lb. chicken but they are raised to 6lb. thereby increasing an already overcrowded environment. The constant of 0.003 in calculating population density (vs. 0.005) will further increase numbers.

As stated, these operations would be totally vertically integrated. The benefit to the local economy according to Drs. Beyer and Tomlinson was based on anecdotal evidence. I have seen vertically-integrated catfish farming operations in the Mississippi Delta where abject poverty is the rule (hardly a fair comparison as catfish farming does not pollute as does the chicken CAFO's we are concerned with). A few became very wealthy but abject poverty still exists. The difference is that the wealth stayed in the state as the owners were also the producers and residents of the state, and the profits stayed in the state. Here, the majority of profits would go out of state. The other difference is the owners of these CAFO's contracting with the corporation would assume all the financial risk of owning the facilities but the corporation supplies the chickens, the feed and dictate the numbers fed out. In case of a disease outbreak, environmental violation or oversupply, the corporation assumes no responsibilities.

Tyson's record speaks for itself. The only thing that has kept them out of Kansas thus far are the setback safeguards now in place. I see little advantage and many disadvantages to our agricultural economy, environment or residents by allowing this industry to enter our state.

Sincerely,

Keith L. Longhofer, DVM

Tonganoxie, KS