



SRAP
Food & Farm
Network



SRAP
Water Rangers

WHAT IS THE AAWQ SUBCOMMITTEE?

The [Animal Agriculture and Water Quality \(AAWQ\) subcommittee](#) is a new subcommittee of the U.S. EPA Farm, Ranch, and Rural Communities Advisory Committee (FRRCC) formed in Spring 2024. It was convened by the EPA after they denied a [petition submitted by Food and Water Watch](#) (FWW) and allies across the U.S. urging EPA to strengthen its factory farm water pollution regulations under the Clean Water Act (CWA). The goal of the AAWQ subcommittee is to provide recommendations that will inform EPA's decisions regarding how to improve the CWA National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) permitting program to more effectively reduce nutrients and other types of water pollutants from CAFOs. This is a significant opportunity to voice concerns about the inadequacy of the current CAFO NPDES permitting program, which has left most CAFOs largely unregulated.

HOW CAN YOU TAKE ACTION?

The EPA and the AAWQ subcommittee are seeking public comments from community members impacted by CAFO water pollution through August 24. This is your chance to tell the EPA what is really happening on the ground!

The subcommittee is composed of SRAP allies and fellow advocates, but also powerful agriculture industry representatives working to maintain the status quo. EPA needs to hear, loud and clear, that the current NPDES CAFO regulations are inadequate. Submit a comment about your experience today, urging the subcommittee to incorporate more feedback from impacted communities and to recommend more protective CAFO regulations.

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE

General Commenting Guidelines

- Describe your interest in the issue and who you represent. If you are speaking for yourself: are you a farmer? Living near a CAFO? A water quality advocate?
- Be as clear as possible about what you want/don't want the EPA to do.
- Cite specific, measurable examples and impacts when possible.
- The most effective letters are short and to the point—keep it short & sweet!
- Do not submit personally identifiable information (e.g., address, phone number) that could be publicly disclosed in a docket or on the Internet.

Inspiration from Allies

At the most recent AAWQ subcommittee meetings, our allies offered powerful suggestions.

- Tarah Heinzen of Food & Water Watch asked EPA to draw more attention to the negative impacts of CAFOs. *"We've spent almost no time actually understanding and learning about not just water monitoring, water pollution, and how CAFOs work, but on CAFO water pollution: where it is, how it's affecting people, how it's affecting public health and the environment. So I'd really like to see some presentations from public health experts, environmental justice experts, and impacted communities so that we can really ground ourselves in the problems we're trying to solve."*
- Mike Callicrate, a farmer-rancher, owner of Ranch Foods Direct, and SRAP Board member challenged the subcommittee to look at the bigger picture. *"We've proven a food system that can be resilient, environmentally clean and friendly; what we're [discussing in this subcommittee] is tweaking the big industrial food system that failed... I don't want to mess with the fuel mixture; I don't care about the diesel exhaust fluid. I want to pull the engine out and put a new one in. I want to redesign a food system that's safe, that's healthy, that rebuilds rural communities, and that protects our water."*

Suggested Topics for Comments

1. Subcommittee Meeting Content: What do you want EPA to know about how your community is affected? How is the permitting system failing in your state or region?
2. Failures of the Industrial Livestock Model: How is the current CAFO permitting program further perpetuating this harmful industrial system where you live? What do you want EPA to know about the negative impacts to rural communities and local food systems?

Need more context? Check out the meeting recordings for [August 8](#) and [August 9](#).

SUBMIT YOUR COMMENTS

To submit your comments, email them to aaqw@epa.gov by 11:59 p.m. ET on Saturday, August 24. Use the subject line *AAWQ Public Comment Submission*.

STAY CONNECTED

Connect with SRAP's Food & Farm Network

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