



PEW COMMISSION ON
INDUSTRIAL FARM
ANIMAL PRODUCTION

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ADVISORY – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Increasing Concentration in Animal Agriculture and the Impact on Rural America

Congressional briefing convened by Pew Commission on Industrial Farm Animal Production

Recent headlines over a Brazilian company's plan to purchase two of the United States' largest cattle feeding and beef processing companies have sparked new concerns over the consolidation of the animal agriculture industry. Both of Iowa's U.S. senators Tom Harkin (D) and Charles Grassley (R) expressed concern that the deal could not only reduce competition in the livestock market but also could increase prices for consumers. Many experts claim the consolidation of the nation's animal agriculture has led to a more concentrated industrialized model which has had dramatic and increasingly problematic impacts on rural communities and the traditional farm. Over the last 40 years, traditional family-owned farms have mostly given way to large-scale production facilities known as concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs), which often operate under strict contracts with large corporations. Especially in the cases of poultry and swine, a small number of corporations produce, process and sell the majority of America's food animal products. The corporate contracts provide farmers with little or no control over how the animals are raised, but leave them responsible for disposing of animal waste and by-products. While profitable for the corporations, this vertically integrated structure makes it difficult for small, non-contract farms to compete and perpetuates a system of intensive animal production that can pose harmful effects to human health and the environment.

Please join the Pew Commission on Industrial Farm Animal Production for a congressional briefing to discuss this emerging and important topic.

WHAT: Industrial farm animal production and its impacts on rural communities

WHEN: Thursday, March 13, 10:00 a.m. - 11:00a.m.

WHERE: Russell Senate Office Building, Room 485

WHO: **Frederick Kirschenmann**, PhD, Distinguished Fellow, Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa State Univ., Served on USDA's National Organic Standards Board

Brother David Andrews, CSC, JD, Former Executive Director, National Catholic Rural Life Conference, Member Iowa Food Policy Council

Bill Niman, Cattle Rancher, Founder of Niman Ranch, Inc.

The Pew Commission on Industrial Farm Animal Production is a project of The Pew Charitable Trusts and the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Antimicrobial resistance is one aspect of the independent Commission's two-year examination of the ways industrial farm animal production can affect public health, the environment, rural communities and animal welfare. The upcoming briefing is the second of a series to be held over the next few months on industrial farm animal production issues. On April 29, 2008, the Commission will issue a comprehensive report of its findings, including practical recommendations that will be made available for policymakers, industry stakeholders and the general public. To learn more about the Commission and the issues it has studied for two years please visit www.pcfap.org