**Illustration**

The saga of a proposal to build Wisconsin’s largest pig farm highlights what opponents call a gap in state oversight, with potential impacts to water quality. In the town of Trade Lake, landowners discovered their fields were designated for manure spreading without their consent. (Andrew Mulhearn for Wisconsin Watch)

**Schmitz**

Tim Schmitz is shown on his property in the town of Trade Lake in Burnett County, Wis., on April 29, 2023. Behind him is the possible site of Wisconsin’s largest swine breeding farm — a proposal he learned about only after purchasing the property. (Drake White-Bergey / Wisconsin Watch)

**No CAFOs**

A sign opposing a proposed concentrated animal feeding operation that would house thousands of pigs is shown in the town of Trade Lake in Burnett County, Wis., on April 28, 2023. (Drake White-Bergey / Wisconsin Watch)

**Wildlife refuge**

A wildlife refuge sign is shown at the Fish Lake Wildlife Area in Burnett County, Wis., on April 28, 2023 — about 1 ½ miles from where Cumberland LLC wants to build a pig farm. Opponents of the farm fear pig manure spread on fields would run into nearby lakes and streams. (Drake White-Bergey / Wisconsin Watch)

**Jeff\_Sauer1**

Jeff Sauer speaks to PBS Wisconsin in a 2019 interview. He arrived in Trade Lake, Wis., that year with a plan to establish the state’s largest pig farm. (Courtesy of PBS Wisconsin)

**Clarin email**

Trade Lake resident Judi Clarin sent this Aug. 4, 2021, email to Tyler Dix of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to express opposition to Cumberland LLC’s plans to construct a pig farm in her town.

**Kathleen\_Vineout**

Former Wisconsin Sen. Kathleen Vinehout, D-Alma, says verification of fields for manure spreading is a perennial problem when it comes to regulating large farms, even 15 years ago when she took state office. The retired dairy farmer says the issue must be solved legislatively. She is seen at the Wisconsin Senate on Sept. 12, 2017. (Coburn Dukehart / Wisconsin Watch)

**Schmitz 2**

Tim Schmitz is shown in his home in the town of Trade Lake in Burnett County, Wis., on April 29, 2023. His 5-acre property sits near the possible site of Wisconsin’s largest swine breeding farm. “This was supposed to be ‘the place,’ you know?” Schmitz says. “I don't know that I feel that way anymore.” (Drake White-Bergey / Wisconsin Watch)