

Introduction

Consolidation of the globally financed livestock industry is in full swing in Wisconsin. Lawyers and financiers cobble together behind-the-scenes deals with factory farms and local officials worth \$50 million and more. ***Follow the Money*** will help your community understand and intervene in an opaque financing process that extracts local resources to enrich investors around the world.



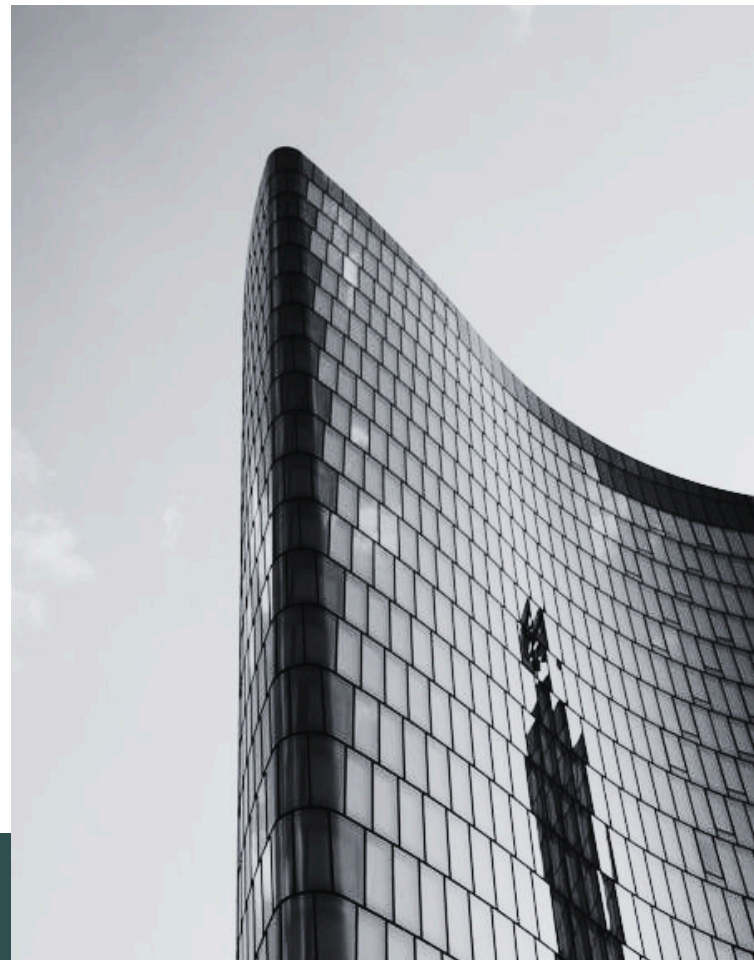
Bipartisan support of factory farms and [factory farm gas](#) is fueling massive new expansions. Corporate agents roam rural communities looking to set up financial deals for global investment groups drawn by the promise of sure profits. These expansions house millions of chickens and thousands of cows, pigs, and turkeys. Barns a ¼-mile long pump out millions of gallons of untreated liquid waste and toxic air pollution. Thousands of trucks roar up and down rural roads spreading waste on every corner of land they can find. Hundreds of fans run 24/7 so the animals don't suffocate.

Communities spanning the political spectrum are looking to protect health and property from this largely unregulated industry. Most of these community efforts focus on trying to improve Wisconsin's factory farm permitting program, which the state operates as part of the federal Clean Water Act.

An alternative approach uses local [Operations Ordinances](#) that require new or expanding factory farms to address community concerns left unregulated. These concerns include water and air pollution, road damage, fire risk, farm gas by-products, carcass disposal, and more.

Despite these important community efforts, investor profits are bolstered by governments without accountability. In many cases, weak regulatory oversight combined with billions in government tax credits and financing is the glue holding the whole deal together.

In fact, Wisconsin's economic development professionals [tout deals](#) worth \$10 million, \$20 million, \$40 million, and \$57 million. This financing helps drive more consolidation and harvest local resources to deliver tax-exempt returns outside the state for investors across the nation and the globe.



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Follow the Money shines a light on factory farm finance for communities looking to resist global strategies that further consolidate the livestock industry and degrade local resources.

THE PLAYERS



Summarizes the complex web of bond issuers, underwriters, lawyers, academics, promoters, and developers that drive these lucrative financial schemes.

THE RULES



Defines the federal and state programs that companies use to leverage local communities for private gain.

THE GAME



Lays out specific steps you can take to intervene in the opaque and complex process used to secure public financing for privately owned operations. Three case studies provide real life examples of recent finance deals along with lessons for Wisconsin communities.

Case Studies

RIDGE BREEZE DAIRY

1

Town of Salem,
Pierce County

COLEMAN PONDEROSA

2

Town of Pound,
Marinette County

WI RNG HUB NORTH

3

Town of Gillett,
Oconto County



INFORMATION SOURCES

Follow the Money presents original research based on personal interviews, review of government, academic, and media sources, as well as more than 1,200 pages of documents secured under the [Wisconsin Public Records Law](#). Every attempt has been made to portray this information accurately. Please contact us with questions or comments at hello@sustainruralwisconsin.org.

Follow the Money is a community guide fueled by original research that explains how Wisconsin factory farms and factory farm gas projects are financed, who profits, and how local residents can influence the process.

Three real-life examples show how the process exploits a weak regulatory environment while avoiding transparency and public accountability.

At the same time, you will see how communities such as yours can take action when public financing is used for projects that threaten local health and property.



MASSIVE CONSOLIDATION OF LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION IS NOT OUR MANIFEST DESTINY.

Just as the 19th-century slaughter of American bison and the 1930s Dust Bowl were driven by government policies, today's consolidation is the product of government agricultural and financial policies. Wisconsin communities can resist the global financialization of local food production.