

Protect Your Town

Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) Operations Ordinances Passed by Wisconsin Local Governments

12.9.24

To date, we are aware that three counties and eight towns in Wisconsin have adopted Operations Ordinances. While each ordinance is unique to the community, three iterations have developed over the last decade, each building on past work. A short description of each version with links directly to the ordinance follows. (Please note: some of the links take a moment to come up from their government websites.)

Operations Ordinance 1.0

First versions of the Operations Ordinance were developed when counties in Wisconsin's Lake Superior highlands realized how little protection existing laws provided over proposed hog CAFOs. Permits granted under these ordinances may include conditions covering a range of concerns not addressed by Department of Natural Resources (DNR) CAFO permits. These include air pollution, biosecurity, animal mortality and property rights. The permits also require financial assurance that sufficient funds will be available for pollution clean-up, nuisance abatement, and proper closure of the CAFO.

[Bayfield County](#) - 2016

[Ashland County](#) - 2018

[Douglas County](#) - 2018

Operations Ordinance 2.0

When CAFO developers began efforts to build a hog industry in Polk and Burnett counties, six towns formed a partnership to develop model town-level Operations Ordinance based on Bayfield County's work.

A panel of legal, environmental and engineering experts guided development of the ordinance. In-depth research on the CAFO industry and a town was completed forming the ordinances' foundation. Findings of facts are pulled from the research laying out the need for the ordinance.

To secure a permit, CAFOs submit plans laying out how they will manage manure, air pollution, water usage, carcass disposal, biosecurity, fire protection and road damage. There are specific conditions for the waste and fire plans. Permittees have to pay for enforcement of their plans. In addition, they must post a bond to cover any clean up if they go out of business. Four towns in Polk County and two in Sawyer County have adopted their versions of the operations ordinance.

[Town of Bone Lake, Polk County](#) - 2022 with 700 animal units

[Town of Eureka, Polk County](#) - 2022 with 700 animal units

[Town of Laketown, Polk County](#) - 2022 with 700 animal units

[Town of Luck, Polk County](#) - 2022 with 700 animal units

[Town of Round Lake, Sawyer County](#) - 2022 with 500 animal units

[Town of Spider Lake, Sawyer County](#) - 2024 with 700 animal units

[Town of Maiden Rock, Pierce County](#) - 2024 with 1000 animal units

Operations Ordinance 2.1

Facing a proposed 26,000 hog farrowing operation, the Town of Trade Lake in Burnett County added more specific conditions to their version of the town-level Operations Ordinance.

[Town of Trade Lake, Burnett County](#) - 2022