

The Milkweed

Dairy's best information and insights

Issue No. 447 • October 2016



“Float like a butterfly,
sting like a bee.”

— Muhammad Ali

Grain Harvest Unsettled in the Upper Midwest

by Pete Hardin

In 2016, crops in the Upper Midwest enjoyed perhaps the most spectacular growing season in anyone's memory – even old-timers. But the old adage about not banking on the crop until it's safely in the bin or the barn prevails throughout the region.

Normally, by October's second week, grain analysts enjoy a pretty good idea about the status of the fall harvest – in terms of volume and quality. But that's not the case for the Upper Midwest in 2016. All bets are off, pending more details about this year's delayed harvest. Presently, the grain trade faces an unusual slowdown in early harvest season buy/sell decisions.

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Tipped and flattened soybean plants from drenching rainstorms (and sometimes even hail) in September has made fields across west-central Wisconsin and other areas of the Midwest look like this one (or worse) and will make harvest difficult. Market prices, quality and supplies will doubtless be impacted.
Photo by Jan Shepel

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U.S. Milk Flow Trailed Demand for Last 18 Months

by Pete Hardin

At World Dairy Expo's global dairy seminar on October 6, one of dairy's top analysts offered a stunning insight:

U.S. farm milk production has lagged behind growing demand for the past 18 months!

That's the wisdom from Tom Bailey, who heads the dairy branch of Rabobank's Food and Agribusiness Advisory Group. Bailey's perspective on dairy enjoys the best information and trends that his worldwide team of industry analysts can glean. Rabobank is the world's largest lender to dairy, and Rabobank also engages in lending to other agricultural sectors. Bailey *knows* dairy.

Bailey's exact notations on a power-point panel titled, "But U.S. milk supply not keeping up with demand" read:

"Demand now outpacing supply for 18 months." Unquote.

How, according to Rabobank's Bailey, can the U.S. milk supply not have kept up with demand for the past 18 months ... and yet U.S. prices for dairy commodities have generally fallen into the basement? By USDA's measures, large inventories of

cheese and butter infest U.S. cold storage warehouses. *The Milkweed* submitted a question to Bailey, during the questions-and-answer portion of the program, asking him if imported dairy commodities were responsible for the burgeoning cheese and butter inventories. Bailey correctly sensed a "loaded" question, and danced around it while basically concluding with a mildly affirmative response.

The following bulleted items summarize other key points in Bailey's presentation at World Dairy Expo:

- Global dairy commodity "prices have skyrocketed upwards." Since June 2016, global dairy commodity prices have climbed about 35%.
- New Zealand's milk supply is falling. Milk flow at the start of New Zealand's new "pasture season" is slower than anticipated.
- Milk production in the European Union is declining.
- At current trends of declining California milk volumes and rising Wisconsin milk output, Wisconsin could surpass California as the nation's leading milk-producing state by fall 2019.
- Milk supplies from major exporting nations (other than the United States) are falling.

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USDA Economist: Future U.S. Per-Capita Dairy Consumption “Flat”

by Pete Hardin

A high-level USDA economist informed attendees at a World Dairy Expo symposium on Thursday, October 6 that her agency views future U.S. dairy product consumption trends as “flat.”

That USDA presenter – Sharon Sydow – was a pinch-hitter for a pinch-hitter ... a “third-stringer” at best. Sydow showed complete ignorance of dairy consumption trends. Her title is “Senior Economist” at the USDA’s Office of the Chief Economist.

As a career-long dairy journalist, it was highly disturbing to sit still while a high-level USDA economist babbled such nonsense as that agency’s economics section viewing future U.S. consumer dairy demand as “flat.” That future vision ignores years of solid data showing gains in per capita cheese consumption and butter’s revived demand in recent years. “Flat” per capita dairy product consumption in the United States???

Won’t somebody please inform Ms. Sydow that U.S. cheese consumption topped 35 lbs. in 2015? In 2016, retail cheese sales in this country are up a spectacular five percent for the year’s first half. And food service sales gains so far in 2016 are even higher than retail sales! Butter demand is also strong.

It’s insulting that a high-level USDA economist can stand in front of a dairy crowd and claim that

future per capita demand in this nation will not grow. It’s a sad comment on the politics and ignorance that infest parts of USDA on Tom Vilsack’s watch.

Under Vilsack, USDA has primarily championed “Free-Trade” and biotechnology ... while ignoring many common-sense matters. A prime example of Vilsack’s dangerous policies is importing beef from Foot-and-Mouth Disease-infested countries like Brazil, Argentina and Namibia.

Sydow’s main function seemed to be as a pom-pom girl, cheering the merits of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and other “Free-Trade” Agreements.

TPP is the expansive “Free Trade” deal for Pacific nations, including the United States. The Obama administration is preparing a post-election thrust to try to pass TPP through the lame-duck Congress. TPP is scorned by both major presidential candidates, although campaign promises often fall short. (Note: President Obama ran in 2008 scorning “Free-Trade” deals as job-killers, but he became the greatest advocate of “Free-Trade” ever to inhabit the White House.)

Hard to believe that USDA’s top economists project no future gains for per capita dairy product consumption in this nation.

U.S. Milk Flow Trailed Demand for Past 18 Months, con’t

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- World-wide, most major dairy nation’s farm-gate prices have moved up.
- Global dairy inventories remain heavy, but slowing milk flow in EU nations and Oceania will pull down inventories.
- U.S. dairy commodity prices are re-aligning with international prices.
- U.S. retail demand for cheese and butter continues solid growth, while downward trends persist in yogurt and fluid milk sales.

- U.S. dairy exports are “picking back up” in 2016, despite continued strength of the U.S. dollar.
- China is “back in the market” buying dairy commodities in greater volumes.

In conclusion, Tom Bailey foresees more reasons for optimism than pessimism for future milk prices. The United States is the only major dairy exporting nation showing continued gains in milk output. China’s return as a buyer reflects emerging strength in global dairy demand.

European Union Dairy Producers Fully Contract Q4 Milk Reduction

by Pete Hardin

Exactly one and a half years after the European Union (EU) threw farm milk production quotas to the wind, the multi-nation economic community will pay dairy farmers to contract to reduce production in 2016’s fourth quarter. The payout is expected to total about 14 Euros per 100 kilograms of reduced milk production.

According to EU officials, over 52,000 dairy farmers have contracted to reduce milk output for October-December 2016. A payout totaling \$150 million Euros is the carrot being waved in front of dairy farmers. The EU has gone through a rough period during the past two years. In August 2014, Russia cut off food imports from virtually all European nations (and Australia). Next, in April 2015, EU farm milk production quotas were lifted. EU dairy farmers responded with strong production increases. Those two events, in tandem, dropped dairy commodity prices globally.

After big, same-month over year-ago milk output gains in early 2016, EU’s milk production momentum has slowed dramatically. In recent months, EU cheese and butter prices have strengthened. However, the EU remains burdened with inventories of dairy protein powders – a glut on world markets.

By nation, the approximate number of partici-

pating dairy farmers totals: France (13,000), Germany (10,000), Ireland (4,500), Austria (4,000) and The Netherlands (also 4,000).

The EU program to scale back farm milk production in 2016’s fourth quarter must be viewed as a short-term experiment. There seems to be no

guarantee that non-participating dairy producers will make the same volume of milk, or more – perhaps offsetting efforts to reduce overall production. Already there are discussions about another such program sometime in 2017.

Correction: Better Data on CWT’s Impact

by Pete Hardin

In the article analyzing the economic impact of the “Cooperatives Working Together” (CWT) program in the September 2016 issue, Pete Hardin was in error. Further review of legal documents finds that the annualized estimated economic impacts of the CWT program – as reported by University of Missouri agricultural economist Dr. Scott Brown – were far higher than the estimated “\$.60-something per cwt.” put forth by *The Milkweed*.

According to the “Third Amended Consolidated Class Action Complaint” filed by plaintiffs’ attorneys in the *Matthew Edwards et al. vs. National Milk Producers Federation, et al.* class action lawsuit, Dr. Brown provided the following estimates of CWT’s net returns to all dairy farmers for the following years:

2003\$0.05/cwt.
2004\$0.18/cwt.
2005\$0.42/cwt.
2006\$0.67/cwt.
2007\$0.75/cwt.
2008\$0.71/cwt.
2009\$1.54/cwt.
2010 Estimated \$1.75/cwt.

Dr. Brown ultimately assessed the net impact of the CWT “cow killing” program at \$9.5 billion. Brown might be viewed as an academic “juke box” – i.e., singing the tunes selected by those inserting the coins. Hilariously, NMPF later refuted the accuracy of Dr. Brown’s claims of the CWT program’s benefits, when challenged by plaintiffs’ attorneys in the lawsuit.

During this period of time (2003-2010), the CWT program was primarily engaging its resources in “cow killing” contracts. That program contracted individual dairy farmers agreeing to kill their entire herd of milking cows for compensation. The CWT program was created and operated by National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF).

Animal rights activists’ lawyers have attacked CWT’s legality and that long-running set of lawsuits resulted in a late August 2016 settlement of \$52 million. Now NMPF and the fellow defendants – Dairy Farmers of America, Inc., Land O’Lakes, Dairyalea Co-operative, and Agri-Mark – must simply figure how to pony up \$52 million (not including legal fees.)

In 2013, NMPF doubled its CWT dues to try to cover legal costs in the case.

Sept. ’16 Manufacturing Class Milk Prices All Decline

by Pete Hardin

USDA’s federal milk orders reported that the Class III (cheese) milk price for September 2016 fell to \$16.39/cwt. – a drop of \$.52 per hundred pounds. Meanwhile, the Class IV (butter-powder) price also declined for September, hitting \$14.25/cwt. (a drop of \$.40). Butter and Cheddar formula prices tumbled during September, while both nonfat dry milk and dry whey climbed modestly.

USDA uses weekly survey prices reported by manufacturers of various dairy commodities (Cheddar, butter, whey and nonfat dry milk). These weekly survey prices are incorporated into monthly average prices, which are then plugged into complex formulae yielding the various manufacturing class milk prices in USDA’s federal milk order system.

USDA’s weekly price surveys tend to lag behind actual cash-market trading by a week or more.

Unfortunately, declines in the September 2016 Class III/IV prices reflect only part of the drop in cheese and butter prices that have occurred since mid-August. Comparative monthly average prices are available for the past three months in the table below. The short-term outlook for milk prices in the federal milk order program is not pretty. For calculating the September 2016 Class III/IV prices, USDA used the following product prices in the agency’s formula:

- Butterfat price**\$2.3152/lb.
- Nonfat solids price**\$0.7097/lb.
- Protein price**\$2.5675/lb.
- Other solids price**\$0.1096/lb.

PRICES PER POUND	July ’16	August ’16	September ’16	August-September Difference
Butter	\$2.3155	\$2.2254	\$2.0775	-14.79¢/lb.
Nonfat Dry Milk	0.8363	0.8588	0.8847	+2.59¢/lb.
Cheddar Cheese	1.6419	1.8119	1.7514	-6.05¢/lb.
Dry Whey	0.2742	0.2846	0.3055	+2.09¢/lb.

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WI Gov't Bankrolling Water Polluters' Public Relations Efforts

by Pete Hardin

“Pride goeth before destruction, an haughty spirit before the fall.”

— Proverbs 16:18 (King James Version)

In Wisconsin, public outrage over contaminated water is blooming like algae in a manure-laced farm pond in mid-August.

Kewaunee County is “Ground Zero” in Wisconsin’s increasingly fierce confrontation over ground and surface water pollution. That battle pits rural residents and folks with environmental concerns versus nearly a dozen and a half industrial-scale livestock farms located in the county.

Hard to believe, but water from 34% of Kewaunee County’s tested, private wells is unsafe to drink — polluted with nitrates and/or *E. Coli*. bacteria. (The nitrates may source from fertilizers, livestock wastes and/or outmoded septic systems.) Kewaunee County includes more cows than people — about 98,000 dairy livestock (all sizes) and 20,500 citizens. The region features thin soils atop karst bedrock. That underlying reality leaves the groundwater highly vulnerable to pollutants. Karst bedrock consists of stratified layers of sandstone/limestone composite. Karst features numerous cracks and fissures (like sinkholes) that allow water to percolate deep into the underground water table. Groundwater may flow at rates of up to five miles per hour through karst bedrock.

The lobby groups that have effectively represented interests of many of Wisconsin’s big dairy farms are now starting to run scared, due to growing public anger over water contamination and other water-related issues. In response, Wisconsin’s agriculture department has anted up a pair of \$20,000 grants to help jump-start a new farmers’ organization — Peninsula Pride Farms. That group is specifically focusing on water quality issues in Kewaunee County and neighboring southern Door County.

Peninsula Pride Farms’ state-funded efforts are basically a public relations ploy. Unfortunately, in this case, even the slickest public relations scheme cannot gloss over the polluted realities of runaway livestock wastes.

Why should Wisconsin taxpayers help bankroll a start-up organization representing private interests? That’s a \$40,000 question.

Numerous documented incidents of human diseases have been traced to livestock wastes contaminating rural wells in the Kewaunee/Door County peninsula. Citizen anger has been fueled by bureaucratic paralysis at Wisconsin’s state agency that supposedly oversees water quality and CAFO compliance with environmental rules. Under the leadership of Governor Scott Walker, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) budgets have eliminated many staff positions previously assigned to water quality issues. A recent audit of DNR found the agency failed to follow up on 94% of complaints about water quality violations over the past decade.

[Near total demise of DNR’s water quality staff and oversight of water pollution complaints is politically intentional. The day after Walker was first elected governor, he declared “Wisconsin is open for business” at a meeting of the state’s Dairy Business Association (DBA — a lobby for larger dairy farms). Two or three months prior, DBA big-wig Jim Ostrom had hosted a \$10,000/head dairy industry fund-raiser for Scott Walker. Little did Wisconsin residents realize that Walker’s “open for business” mantra meant that the state government would be encouraging too many dairy cows “doing their business” (pooping and peeing) on too few acres.]

The State of Wisconsin is budget-strapped. Local property tax rates are basically capped by a state mandate. State aid for public education is retrenching, as resources are drained to fund private “charter schools.” Gov. Walker’s 2017-2019 fiscal budget calls for leaving incomplete several major highway projects — promising years of delays for commuters and commercial traffic. Walker is now deeply enmeshed in a “pay-for-play” scandal involving leaked documents that clearly depict coordination of private fund-raising groups with Walker’s political efforts to stave off a recall election challenge in 2012.

Despite Wisconsin’s cash-depleted larder, the state’s Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) issued in 2016 a pair of \$20,000 grants to newly-formed Peninsula Pride Farms. According to comments at a public meeting on September 28 in Door County by Don Niles (a local dairy farmer, veterinarian, and president of the Peninsula Pride Farms group), that organization of 43 farms (mostly dairy) representing 60,000 milk cows needed a \$20,000 grant from DATCP to get incorporated as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization in early 2016. In late August of this year, DATCP awarded another \$20,000 grant to Peninsula Pride Farms for three months’ distribution of free bottled water to rural homeowners who have *E. Coli*-contaminated wells. That second grant was provided on some sort of undefined “emergency” basis — the rule-making for which was apparently incomplete at the time that grant was provided to Peninsula Pride Farms. Emergency? Yes, public outrage over water quality issues in Wisconsin has become an emergency for polluters.

Niles has been quoted as saying that, “... we do not want any sick kids on our peninsula from drinking water.” Sorry, Don, but the manure is already out of the spreader, so to speak. Infants (and adults) have already required medical treatment due to liquid manure spreading that contaminated drinking water.

According to Niles’ public comments, the Peninsula Pride Farms group is also engaging in environmental assessments of members, conducted by a retired UW-Extension specialist. On September 28, Niles listed what he termed innovative practices for improved environmental stewardship being sponsored as test

Water Testing Form For Kewaunee Area Monitors
This form is not to be used for public water compliance samples

Collection Date (MM-DD-YY) 9/15/16	Time 12:21 <input checked="" type="radio"/> am <input type="radio"/> pm	Collected by William Iwan, Lynn Utesch & Dick Swanson N. Utesch
Additional Samplers (if any)	Sampler's Telephone Number (920) 388 0868	
Sampler's Street Address E5173 Fourth Rd		
City Kewaunee	State WI	Zip code 54216
Name Lynn Utesch		
Address E5173 Fourth Rd		
City Kewaunee	State WI	Zip code 54216
Laboratory Use Only		
Approved Method: <input checked="" type="radio"/> MMO-MUG (Colilert®, Colisure®, etc.) <input type="radio"/> Membrane Filter <input type="radio"/> Multiple Tube Fermentation <input type="radio"/> Presence/Absence <input type="radio"/> Other: _____		
Laboratory Results		
Bacteriological Interpretation: <input type="radio"/> Safe (Coliform Absent) <input checked="" type="radio"/> Unsafe (Coliform Present) and: <input checked="" type="radio"/> Fecal/E Coli Present 1:500D <input type="radio"/> Invalid (Submit another sample) 24196 CFU 1:10D <input type="radio"/> Old 60550 CFU 1:500D <input type="radio"/> Overgrown <input type="radio"/> Turbidity <input type="radio"/> Chlorine Present <input type="radio"/> Fecal/E Coli Absent <input type="radio"/> Frozen <input type="radio"/> Lab Accident <input type="radio"/> Shipping Problem		
Nitrate: _____ mg/L as N		
Date/Time Received 9-15-16 / 4:15 PM		
Lab Sample No. 16AL1319		
Date Reported 9-17-16 <i>[Signature]</i>		

Here is the laboratory report from water samples taken from the conduit near Dairy Dreams, LLC. E. Coli. contaminants are off the charts.

plots and trials by the group — measuring soil depths, grass strips, and fall planting of cover crops as test plots. Basically, Peninsula Pride Farms, in a flurry of publicity helpfully generated by the Dairy Business Association, is trying to climb out of the manure pit to higher ground in public controversy over groundwater pollution in Kewaunee and Door Counties. (Note: Niles’ claim that grass strips and planting winter cover crops are novel practices that today’s dairy farmers didn’t learn in college agriculture courses is a half-truth. Grass strips and winter cover crops have been around for decades, if not centuries. However, it is very likely that modern agricultural education for livestock science students at prestigious institutions such as the University of Wisconsin-Madison probably by-passed age-old, soil-saving practices in favor of biotechnology emphasis.)

When questioned about how much money farmers and agri-businesses had contributed to Peninsula Pride Farms so far, Niles estimated “about \$30,000” (through the end of August 2016). Thus, for a group claiming to represent 60,000 dairy cows, that ante comes to only a chintzy 50-cents per cow. Only fifty cents a cow? That’s peanuts!

Niles’ demeanor at the September 28 public meeting masked a very recent, manure-laden embarrassment. On September 15, local clean-water advocates — Nancy Utesch and Dick Swanson — collected samples of brown effluent from two sites near a conduit channeling run-off from prominent local dairyman John Pagel’s Dairy Dreams LLC. Utesch and Swanson are affiliated with a local clean water group, Kewaunee Cares. Utesch and Swanson are trained water-samplers.

That conduit from which Utesch and Swanson took water samples feeds into a ditch, which then flows into Silver Creek, which flows into the Ahnapee River, which ultimately empties in Lake Michigan. Utesch promptly took the sample of manure-laden liquid to a certified laboratory for analysis. Results: Unsafe, high levels of Coliform and fecal/E.Coli. contamination. (See lab report at top of page 6. **Also, see accompanying picture of manure-contaminated water in conduit on page 16 of this issue.**)

Utesch and Swanson promptly submitted the laboratory tests and accompanying pictures to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regional office, urging EPA regulators to promptly intervene. Utesch explained to *The Milkweed* that she first contacted EPA for federal intervention in the matter, citing the Wisconsin DNR’s poor history of responses to complaints about water pollution. EPA’s Chicago regional office simply referred the matter to Wisconsin’s do-nothing DNR.

Dairy Dreams LLC – registered manure offender

“Site 2” sampled by Nancy Utesch and Dick Swanson on September 15 was near the corner of Cardinal Road and Fir Road in the Town of Lincoln. Dairy Dreams LLC is located at E3576 Cardinal Road. “Site 2” registered 24,196 *E. Coli*. colony-forming units (at a 1:10 dilution) That’s a highly unsafe level of contamination. The Kewaunee Cares representatives have received no word from DNR about the status of any investigation involving the contaminat-

How to Fix What's Wrong with DMPP

by Pete Hardin

Over the past couple months, we're hearing and reading about a flurry of criticisms of USDA's so-called "safety net" program for dairy producers: the Dairy Margin Protection Program (DMPP).

Most recently, we read on page 1 of the October 1, 2016 issue of *Lancaster Farming* the headline: "Producers Complain to Officials About MPP, Negative Margins." That article was sparked by a meeting hosted by Pennsylvania U.S. Senator Bob Casey on 2018 Farm Bill proposals. Attending that meeting in Harrisburg was Val Dolcini, administrator of USDA's Farm Services Agency, who got an(other) earful on the subject of DMPP's inadequacies.

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WI Gov't Bankrolling Water Polluters' Public Relations Efforts, con't

Continued from page 6

ed samples they submitted to the EPA. Remember, DNR's historic track record of failing to respond to 94% of water quality complaints over the past decade. Odds are that, if past DNR performance is any indication of future actions, Utesch and Swanson won't ever hear anything from DNR.

Dairy Dreams LLC is a registered manure offender. Dairy Dreams, LLC – which listed John Pagel as the "Registered Agent" – was cited for pollution violations in 2014 by Wisconsin's DNR. Two years ago, Dairy Dreams LLC's violations included improper management of feed materials and improper handling of manure from calf hutches. Both of those violations polluted a nearby waterway – the *same* waterway from which contaminated samples were drawn on September 15, 2016!

DNR's August 1, 2014 "NOTICE OF VIOLATION" letter to Dairy Dreams, LLC contained notation of a copy sent to Don Niles, who is believed to be the manager for Dairy Dreams, LLC. Recent correspondence from the Wisconsin DNR was addressed to "Don Niles, DVM, Peninsula Pride Farms, E3579 Cardinal Road, Casco, WI 54205." Those addresses are a pretty close match, as they say in forensic sciences.

An even more recent letter ties Niles directly to the E3576 Cardinal Road address. Even the EPA got into the bogus, "high-fiving" act over the bottled water distribution scheme. On September 9, 2016, the regional administrator of EPA's Chicago office wrote a letter congratulating Peninsula Pride Farms on the "Water Well" program. The letter was addressed to:

Don Niles, DVM
Peninsula Pride Farms
E3576 Cardinal Road
Casco, WI 54205

That letter stated, "The 'Water Well' program announced by Peninsula Pride Farms is a good example of how a collaborative process can lead to innovative responses to difficult issues of public health and environmental protection. EPA is pleased that Peninsula Pride has stepped forward to address an aspect of an urgent problem."

If three months of "free" bottled water to rural residents stuck with *E. Coli*-contaminated wells constitutes a "good example ... of [an] innovative response to ... public health and environmental protection," then EPA continues asleep on the job. (Note: EPA's Regional Administrator for the Chicago office resigned in 2016 following the lead-contamination scandal involving Flint, Michigan's municipal water supply.)

Thus, Don Niles – Peninsula Pride Farms' president — is caught in a bind. On one hand, in his capacity with Dairy Dreams LLC, Niles is affiliated with a registered manure offender, while blathering about local livestock agriculture taking greater responsibility for finding solutions to water pollution problems in Kewaunee and Door Counties. On the other hand, *IF* those September 15, 2016 samples of liquid effluent emanating from Dairy Dreams, LLC, accurately reflect contaminants ultimately flowing into waters that feed Lake Michigan, then Niles miserably fails to play the environmental stewardship game that he's talking.

But that's nothing new. For years, Niles served as "Mr. Monsanto" in north-east Wisconsin, promoting dairy farmers to purchase and use recombinant bovine growth hormone (trademarked and sold as "Posilac"). Thus, for a couple decades, Niles has devoted considerable amounts of his time trying to convince the public on the merits of what's generally been deemed unpalatable to many — milk from dairy cows injected with biotech hormones ... or contaminated ground and sur-

face water emanating from farms owned by supposed "environmental stewards."

The uproar in Kewaunee County Kewaunee County over contaminated ground and surface waters will continue. Great debate lies ahead in these issues regarding what constitutes adequate livestock density atop various configurations of soils and bedrock. Continued debate also lies ahead about environmentally-appropriate methods for managing livestock wastes (from all sizes of farms). Mega-dairy operators are starting to panic in the Kewaunee/Door County peninsula, where it's obvious that the manure waste carrying-capacity of thin soils atop karst bedrock has been exceeded, with polluted surface and groundwater as the results. The turbid waters of increasing public uproar over water pollution by livestock operations will not be stilled by public relations and a few months of "free" bottled water to rural residents with *E. Coli*-contaminated wells.

While some of its members may be sincere, Peninsula Pride Farms looks primarily like a state-funded, public relations effort to provide the illusion of "doing something" – with the ill-chosen Niles as the talking-head. That public relations sheen was evident in the glowing letter written to Peninsula Pride Farms on September 2, 2016 by DNR Secretary Cathy Stepp. Stepp effusively praised Peninsula Pride Farms, writing:

"We wish to thank the Peninsula Pride Farmers Organization (sic) for the generous offer to supply drinking water to private well owners who have positive tests for e-coli (sic) in their wells in Kewaunee and southern Door Counties. This is a large pro-active step toward providing solutions to the issues facing businesses and citizens in karst areas with shallow soils. It is even more impressive that this offer is available regardless of the source of the e-coli (sic), whether it is from agricultural activities, a septic system, or even from the well itself. Peninsula Pride is to be commended not only for the voluntary offer itself, but the spirit of helping neighbors through which it is made. This is local initiative at its best, and the type of action that Governor Walker had in mind when he included formation of the Farmer-led Councils in his FY 2015-17 budget."

"[L]ocal initiative at its best ..." — with a pair of state-funded, \$20,000 grants. So much for private initiative.

The State of Wisconsin has extended no such financial largesse has to water-quality advocates in the Kewaunee/Door County peninsula. In fact, Wisconsin's DNR has been outright hostile. In 2015, Stepp's office placed both Nancy and Lynn Utesch (Nancy's spouse and fellow clean-water advocate) on the "DO NOT RESPOND" list. In simple parlance, that means DNR will not respond to any contact from Nancy and Lynn Utesch. Thus, during the past year-plus, Nancy and Lynn Utesch's questions and requests for information to that state agency have given a whole new meaning to the acronym "DNR" when it comes to clean water advocates: "DO NOT RESPOND." Basically, Wisconsin's state government is trying to make the polluters look like "good guys" while failing to conduct its mandate to keep Wisconsin's waters and environment clean.

(Note: Lynn Utesch is currently running as a Democrat for the 1st Wisconsin Assembly seat. His opponent, Joel Kitchens, is a retired large animal veterinarian closely tied to the mega-dairy interests in the region. "Water politics" is coming to a head in Wisconsin, particularly in the 1st Assembly District. Maybe, just maybe, if Lynn Utesch were elected to the state Assembly by his neighbors, he might serve on a committee that oversees the Department of Natural Resources. Wonder if DNR's Secretary would black-ball his requests for information then???)