

Cedar Rapids Gazette Sat 10-3-21: “Will we be part of the solution?”

It is interesting that industrial ag apologists, whether they be in government, business, or academia, never mention the inherent pollution from industrial ag that will continue to pollute Iowa no matter their hair-brained schemes of green-washing – ag digesters for hog confinements, and now climate-washing – burying carbon dioxide (CO₂) from ethanol plants. And, if these ideas are so good, why are they asking for subsidies from tax payers?

These are two of the latest bandaids that ag apologists put forth to allow the industrial row crop/confinement/and feedlot model of agriculture to continue with its onslaught of pollution to Iowa’s water, air, soil, and human health, and its effects on climate. Along with the myth that Iowa feeds the world (Iowa actually imports over 80% of its people food so if we can’t even feed ourselves, how do we feed the world?), ag allies come up with new climate- and green-washing schemes to try to confuse the public into thinking that modern industrial agriculture is actually good for the state and for farmers. It is not good for either but instead is good for the corporations that don’t care what happens to the environment or to farmers as long as they make money.

Why should Iowa be the toilet for the hog confinement industry, leaving us with confinement waste which is made toxic through cooking for months in pits and tanks? That confinement waste pollutes our air, soil, and water, and harms human health, all prior to any proposed treatment or ag digesters. In the past, pig manure was deposited directly onto the land. It was broken down into its benign beneficial parts in a few days by sun, wind, water, bugs, and soil organisms, and taken up by plants in the nutrient cycle.

Even if CO₂ is collected from ethanol plants, Iowa will still have some of the most polluted streams, rivers, ponds, lakes, soil, and air in the US, and be a major contributor of pollution to the dead zone in the Gulf. This will continue to happen because modern industrial mono-cropping of corn and beans relies on polluting fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides, and also results in soil erosion.

There are crops and cropping systems that exist today, that can be adopted wholesale now by farmers that would make Iowa a source of clean water, a flood mitigating sponge, a soil building and carbon sequestering state with a healthy agriculture growing crops and animals in sustainable and non-polluting ways for both people food and manufacturing goods. This model of agriculture would revitalize and clean up our rural areas making them once again a vibrant place to live, along with manufacturing and processing of healthy agricultural products and food.

Some of these crops and cropping systems can be read about in the epilogue of my co-authored book “Hog Confinements and Human Health: the intersection of science, morals, and law” which is free to read online at www.civandinc.com , click on Hog Ebook.

This is Iowa's choice. Will we continue to be one of the existential threats to human life on earth through this industrial model of agriculture now prevalent in Iowa, or, will we be part of the solution to those threats?

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