

## Opinion

# Report targets 'industrial farms'

## Commentary

By HAROLD HARPSTER

**P**RESSURE continues building to force more constraints on farm animal production. Animal rights and care advocates are pushing new restrictions in New Jersey and California. And now, these groups are starting to stir in Pennsylvania.

The latest report from the Pew Commission on Industrial Farm Animal Production will reinforce those efforts. The report recommends solutions to the problems created by "concentrated animal feeding operations" in four primary areas: public health, the environment, animal welfare and rural communities.

The commission includes 15 individuals from the fields of public policy, veterinary medicine, public health, agriculture, animal welfare, the food industry and rural society. It includes a former U.S. secretary of agriculture and is chaired by former Kansas Gov. John Carlin.

The commission heard about 54 hours of testimony from stakeholders and experts, and received technical reports from academics from institutions across the country. The members visited operations in Iowa, California, North Carolina, Arkansas and Colorado to gather information on each of the subject areas.

### Summary of report

Here are the summary points presented in the commission's final report:

- Ban non-therapeutic use of antimicrobials in food animal production to reduce the risk of antimicrobial resistance to medically important antibiotics and other microbials.

- Implement a disease-monitoring program for food animals to allow 48-hour traceback of those animals through aspects of their production, in a fully integrated and robust national database.

- Treat industrial farm animal production as an industrial operation and implement a new system to deal with farm waste to replace the inflexible and broken system that exists today, to protect Americans from the adverse environmental and human health hazards.

- Phase out the most intensive and

### Key Points

- Animal advocacy groups push for tougher animal care constraints.
- Pew Commission report targets "industrial farm animal production."
- Report takes aim at non-therapeutic drug use, manure handling and animal care.

inhumane production practices within a decade to reduce the risk of industrial farm animal production to public health and improve animal well-being (i.e. gestation crates and battery cages).

- Federal and state laws need to be amended and enforced to provide a level playing field for producers when entering contracts with integrators.

- Increase funding for, expand and reform animal agriculture research.

Is this report just one more attack on modern animal production systems or a balanced report to be taken seriously? You decide. You can access the full report at [www.pcfap.org](http://www.pcfap.org).

*Harpster is a Penn State animal scientist and a part-time cow-calf producer.*



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