

IMPACTS OF CAFOs/BIOGASES

General Information on Hog Farms in NC

NC is the 2nd largest producer of pork in the U.S. with a large number of industrial-scale concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs).

Hog waste from CAFO cesspools is pumped and sprayed onto fields, often near homes and churches.



In 2007 NC put a moratorium on more hog operations and capped the number of hogs. Currently, there are 2200 operations totaling 8 million hogs.

The state's swine "general permit" regulates the management of the 27 billion gallons of hog excrement generated yearly, held in 4000+ waste lagoons, many of which are several acres in size.

https://www.democracynow.org/2017/5/3/nc_lawmakers_side_with_factory_farms

Environmental Impacts

Swine waste can contain hormones, antibiotics, heavy metals, chemicals, and pathogens (i.e., E. coli, salmonella, and Staph).

Contributes to high levels of hydrogen sulfide, particulate matter, and volatile organic compounds.

Ammonia, nitrates, and phosphorus from waste increase nutrient pollution in waterways and can lead to fish kills and algal blooms as well as groundwater pollution and drinking water contamination.

Mist containing hog urine and feces can drift into communities where droplets can be breathed in.

Noxious odors can be detected miles away affecting quality of life for those in the area.

Health



Living near a hog operation is linked to higher rates of asthma, kidney disease, and certain cancers, and can overall weaken our immune systems and lead to premature death.



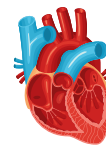
Nearby hospitals report higher admission rates, ER visits, & lower birthweights in infants.



Reports have linked living near hog operations to mental health disorders and feeling stressed, annoyed, nervous, and anxious.



The presence of antibiotics in hog waste can result in surviving pathogens having greater resistance to medicines.



Wells contaminated with nitrates create a risk of Blue Baby Syndrome, a potentially deadly outcome from mixing contaminated water with baby formula.



Exposure may produce symptoms such as headaches and eye irritation, and make it harder to breathe deeply.

BIOGAS is not a solution!

Placing covers over lagoons to capture methane only reduces part of the concern while continuing unhealthy practices and creating new problems. Waste from these "digesters," which can be more concentrated after methane removal, can be moved to a new open pit, and is still spread on the same neighboring fields as before. Waste must be processed to remove harmful pollution, and pipeline routes and gas facilities must not be allowed to add harm to already impacted communities.

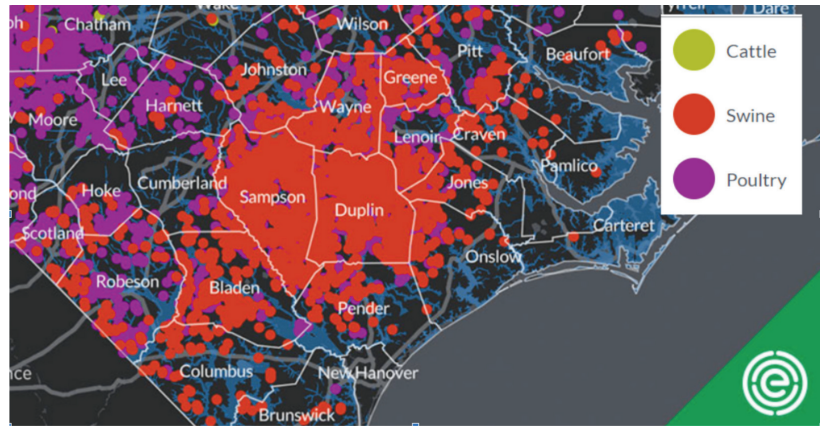
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Environmental Justice

The concentration of hog operations in North Carolina's southeastern counties like Duplin, Sampson, Bladen, and Robeson disproportionately harms Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and low-wealth rural communities.

Many of the same communities have long been burdened by pollution and health impacts from other sources, creating "cumulative impacts."

The risks from pollution are even greater in low-lying, flood-prone areas, especially with increasing warming and historic rains.



From Environmental Working Group (EWG) : <https://www.ewg.org/interactive-maps/2020-fields-of-filth/>

Solutions and Improvements

Advanced Technology

Cleaner and more protective waste management alternatives are available and used in other states — Don't North Carolinians deserve the same protection?

More Monitoring

Groundwater monitoring is only required at small portions of facilities. We need more monitoring wells, especially within floodplains.

We need a better understanding of the waste that remains in digesters after methane is removed. The state should require more testing!

Cumulative Impacts Assessments

North Carolina needs to determine how to assess which communities are overburdened by pollution, including other types of agriculture and animal waste, and put an end to unfair permitting and a lack of community protections.

