

DRAFT AS OF 12-12-18
Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation
WORKING GROUP

Background

In September 2018 the Lancaster County Board voted to establish a Working Group to examine the commercial feedlot zoning regulations in the County. As established by the County Board, the purpose of the Working Group is as follows:

- Review the County Commercial Feedlot zoning regulations for all animal types.
- Review regulations in other communities and agencies including the Nebraska Department of Agriculture Livestock Siting Assessment Matrix.
- Establish a Working Group of operators, neighbors and government agencies to review and advise on potential changes to the existing Lancaster County regulations regarding commercial feedlots.
- Provide for public input on any potential changes.

Commercial Feedlots, also known as Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs), is a use allowed by special permit in the Agriculture District. Currently the zoning regulation has one condition for the special permit. This provides for flexibility in establishing conditions based on the particular aspects of the property. However, it does not provide guidance to the Planning Commission or County Board to consider the appropriateness of any application. This has led to uncertainty and debate on what conditions should be required.

Working Group Membership: The working group should provide a variety of viewpoints on this topic, including feedlot operators, farmers, acreage owners and other interested parties. Previous Working Groups on zoning topics have included 9 members. However, the 2015 Wind Energy Working Group included 12 members from Lancaster County and 7 from Gage County for a total of 19 persons. Larger groups provide for more variety in viewpoints, but also limit the ability of each member to have time to ask questions or express their thoughts.

Potential Members

Farmer, not associated with a commercial feedlot
Realtor
2 to 3 residential acreage owners
Commercial feedlot operator
Resident of small town or village in Lancaster County not in farming
Member of Alliance for the Future of Agriculture in Nebraska
Member of Nebraska Farmers Union
Planning Commission member
Environmental Advocacy representative

Each meeting of the Working Group will have presentations on the one or two topics that are the focus of the meeting. Then Group members will then offer their viewpoints, questions and discuss the various topics. Meetings will be held every one to two weeks starting in February at a location to be determined.

In order to accommodate various schedules, meetings would begin in early evening and last no more than two hours. The timeline for the Working Group is to meet frequently so that a draft report is complete by the beginning of May. The first meeting will be an introduction and organizational meeting allowing time for Working Group members to introduce themselves and express their interest in the topic. It will also include an overview of a commercial feedlots by a current operator and current regulations in Lancaster County.

The Planning Department will organize and lead the meetings. Working Group meetings will be open to the public with time allotted at the end of each meeting for comments on the meeting's topic by others attending. Written comments and information will also be welcomed.

Staff from the Lincoln/ Lancaster County Health Department will also be an integral part of the meetings. Presenters from other fields and interests may be invited to attend working sessions. The proposed report will be drafted by the Planning Department based on the input received by the Working Group and comments made by the public.

Public agencies to provide assistance to the Working Group

Lincoln/ Lancaster County Planning Department
Lincoln-Lancaster County Health
Lancaster County Engineer's Office
Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality
Nebraska Department of Agriculture
Lower Platte South NRD