

For Immediate Release

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Neighbors of Illinois Swine CAFO Claim Victory in Property Tax Appeal

David and Renee Leifheit of Chana, Illinois were awarded a 12.5% reduction in their property taxes because of the impacts from a Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) near their home. The Illinois Department of Agriculture approved the siting of the facility within a ¼ mile of their residence in rural Ogle County six years ago.

A hearing was scheduled before the Illinois Property Tax Appeal Board (PTAB) on September 4th after the County denied their request to reduce the assessed value of their property. At the hearing, the PTAB Hearing Officer encouraged the parties to discuss resolution of the issue prior to arguing their cases, which allowed the Leifheits the opportunity to negotiate a settlement with Ogle County officials. Both parties agreed to a compromise on the dollar amount of their property taxes based on the CAFO's proximity to their land, which will apply retroactively from the date it was constructed.

The Leifheits used a written handbook to guide them through the Illinois tax appeal process, which was authored by Attorney Charles Cronauer of Sycamore, Illinois and the Vermont Law School (available at www.factoryfarmtaxprotest.org/stateinfo.htm). They also utilized data and case histories provided by expert property tax assessor, Dr. John Kilpatrick, in support of their appeal. Dr. Kilpatrick's evaluation of their property and the impacts the CAFO has had on its value is available at the Socially Responsible Agriculture Project website at: www.sraproject.org/factoryfarms/issues/economics/impact/.

The Leifheit's are pleased with the outcome, which they hope will set a precedent for future appeals by suffering CAFO neighbors in the state of Illinois and beyond.