



**Linn
County**

NEWS



Contact: Alex Paul, Linn County Communications Officer, 541-967-3825 or email: apaul@co.linn.or.us

Commissioners uphold 1-mile chicken CAFO setback

ALBANY — On a 2 to 1 vote during a Public Hearing Thursday morning, the Linn County Board of Commissioners affirmed a December decision requiring a minimum 1-mile setback from neighboring properties for new large chicken Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs).

But the commissioners made it clear that their decision does not apply to other livestock operations such as beef cattle etc.

Commissioners Roger Nyquist and Will Tucker voted in favor of a motion made by Tucker. Commissioner Sherrie Sprenger voted against the motion.

In December, the commissioners believed their decision affected only new large chicken operations — some of which produce millions of chickens annually. After learning that the action did not specify chicken operations only, on June 11 they reopened the record to written comments. They received almost 200 comments, some from as far away as the East Coast.

More than two dozen people attended Thursday's hearing in the Board Room

and others listened telephonically. No oral testimony or public comments were accepted.

Commissioner Sprenger said she has been concerned about the 1-mile setback since December and the possible ramifications for producers and ultimately, the affordability of poultry products for consumers.

She said she would be amenable to reducing the 1-mile setback to perhaps three-quarters of a mile, but that viewpoint was not shared by her fellow commissioners.

Commissioner Tucker said he believes the 1-mile setback should stick and that there is always an option of producers seeking a land use variance concerning setbacks based on a particular potential site.

Commissioner Nyquist also supported the 1-mile setback for new large chicken CAFOs and agreed the decision should not be applied to other livestock operations including cattle.

He said he visited a poultry operation and it was "well run". But added, when

he spoke with people about the issue, the conversation usually always ended with them adding, "but I wouldn't want to live next to one."

In December, the commissioners learned there are about 90 properties in the county that would potentially qualify for the 1-mile CAFO poultry setback.

Commissioner Tucker said chicken operations could always apply for a land use variance to the setback rule, based on a specific farm site.

Commissioner Tucker made the motion to approve the code text amendment, specifying that it apply to new large chicken CAFOs.

Commissioners Nyquist and Tucker voted in favor and Commissioner Sprenger voted against the motion.

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