



Op Ed Statement from Bion Environmental Technologies, Inc.

Bion Environmental Technologies would like to introduce you to the Fair Oaks Dairy Farm located in northwestern Indiana. Fair Oaks Dairy milks 32,000 dairy cows daily, producing enough milk for eight million people. It is among the biggest dairy operations in the country and the largest east of the Mississippi River with an education center that draws hundreds of thousands of visitors each year to learn about modern approaches to large scale agricultural production. Given their focus on environmental responsibility, Fair Oaks Dairy has become recognized throughout the industry as setting the standard for both environmental and economically sustainable dairy production.

The included link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JJRy82i8e5Q&feature=email> is a five minute video providing an introduction to the Fair Oaks Dairy operation and its emphasis on animal health and environmental stewardship that helps to explain the appeal of Fair Oaks to the public.

There is a simple reason that Bion brings the Fair Oaks Dairy to the attention of Oswego County. The principals of Fair Oaks are under contract to Bion to provide management services for the development of dairy facilities that will be part of integrated dairy projects located in the Midwest. These projects will incorporate large scale dairy operations and a dairy processing facility such as a cheese plant with Bion's closed-loop livestock waste treatment technology and renewable energy platform.

Bion's proposed beef cattle project in Oswego will be based on similar state-of-the-art operations and facilities, except that cattle finishing and processing (a combination slaughter and cooking facility) will replace the dairy and dairy processing. The same standards of excellence in design of regional cattle facilities, development of standard operating procedures, protocols for veterinary and nutritional services, feed sourcing and other operational practices that set Fair Oaks apart as an industry leader will be incorporated into Bion's cattle finishing operations.

As the video shows, Fair Oaks employs anaerobic digesters to convert the dairy manure to energy and help to condition the effluent for its reuse as fertilizer on cropland. Fair Oaks has not yet implemented a Bion waste treatment system because they cannot unilaterally justify the cost of implementing this additional environmental protection. No competing dairies presently use the system because there has been no compelling economic or regulatory driver for its adoption.

On the other hand, inclusion of Bion's waste treatment process at the proposed Oswego integrated cattle finishing facilities will allow economies of scale and vertical integration to offset the added cost of ensuring a standard of environmental excellence that moves beyond even the enviable record established at Fair Oaks Dairy. Bion's waste treatment technology significantly reduces the environmental profile for livestock agriculture, treating for both air emissions and nutrients in the water.

Unfortunately, the initial press on this cleantech project heralded “the largest slaughter house in the world” as though someone had proposed a 1930’s facility not worthy of a third world country. For starters that statement is simply not true. If sited in Oswego County, the beef processing facility of about 600 head per day with modern process and environmental controls would be among the smallest processing facilities to be built in the U.S. in the last decade. A number of Midwest-based slaughter facilities process 6,000 head per day or more.

Moreover, focusing on this one aspect of the project – the beef processing facility – misses the point entirely. The Bion project represents a dramatic application of clean technology to the livestock industry. The project as proposed will utilize a proven comprehensive break-through waste treatment technology to enable vertical integration close to markets. The resulting improved economics will help ensure long-term, stable regional economic benefits with an environmental profile that is well within regional standards for farming throughout upstate New York.

Here’s where we come back to the Fair Oaks video. Bion has developed a management team with consultants and specialists that collectively possess the experience and working knowledge to ensure that its cleantech, vertically-integrated livestock projects are both economically and environmentally sustainable. The standards, technologies and management capabilities needed to accomplish this goal really do exist, as evidenced by Fair Oaks. The difference is that with Bion’s waste treatment technology, the livestock facilities in Oswego will go much further to reducing environmental impacts in a regional project that will generate hundreds of skilled and semi-skilled jobs for the community.

It could even result in the creation of an agricultural learning center like the one at Fair Oaks that draws hundreds of thousands of tourists to the area every year!