



Growing Your Livestock Farm Responsibly and Successfully **Megan Ritter, Field Specialist**

The Coalition to Support Iowa's Farmers (CSIF) was founded in May 2004 by the Iowa Cattlemen's Association, Iowa Corn Growers Association, Iowa Farm Bureau, Iowa Pork Producers Association, Iowa Poultry Association and Iowa Soybean Association.

CSIF is a not-for-profit organization comprised of three full-time staff. **CSIF does not develop policy, have a membership base or lobby.** It's directed by a six-member board of directors and funded by its six founding organizations, individual farmers, county farm organizations and allied partners. The Coalition does not charge farm families for its service.

The Coalition's mission is to enhance the prosperity of rural communities and Iowa by helping livestock farmers grow their farms responsibly and successfully. Since its launch, the Coalition has provided assistance to over **800 families** in the areas of:

1. Following rules and regulations
2. Identifying good locations for new farms
3. Enhancing relationships with neighbors and communities
4. Implementing best management practices that safeguard environmental quality.

In addition, CSIF sponsors educational forums for farmers and provides on-line resources that assist families in siting new livestock farms. We also conduct strategic communications and public relations activities to enhance consumer awareness and understanding of modern livestock farming and empower farm families to become confident spokespersons for their profession.

We are excited about the future of Iowa agriculture because the farm families who make our livestock farms work help put Iowa to work. Consider:

1. Crop and livestock farming employs one of every 10 Iowans (ISU).
2. Twenty-five percent of all Iowa industrial output leaves the state in the form of agri-food sector outputs (ISU).
3. One of every four dollars (\$46.7 billion of \$186 billion) of Iowa's industrial output is exported from the state as an agri-food product (ISU).
4. Approximately one of every eight dollars in personal income in the state comes from exported agri-food products (ISU).
5. Nearly 98 percent of Iowa's farms remain family owned and managed (USDA 2006).
6. Eighty-nine percent of Iowa's land area is devoted to food production, the highest percentage of any state (USDA).
7. One hog generates nearly \$1,000 in annual economic activity (ISU).

8. Cattle farming generates nearly \$3,500 per head in economic activity in Iowa (Minnesota Farm & Food Coalition).
9. One 2,400-head hog building represents a construction investment of more than \$500,000 (ISU).
10. Livestock consumes more than one-third of Iowa's corn crop (ICGA).
11. Communities that have strong livestock farms also experience strong K – 12 enrollment.
12. Iowa's renewable energy industry and livestock farming go hand-in-hand.

The Coalition works with farm families to be advocates for their way of life and inform the public on modern livestock farming. When we work with farm families we consider the following:

1. 97% of Iowans say agriculture is extremely or very important.
2. Only 63% of Iowans say livestock farms have a positive impact on Iowa.
3. Just 57% of Iowans say they support the growth of a nearby livestock farm.
4. Neighbors and the public want to know that modern livestock farmers are taking care of the land and safeguarding the environment for future generations.
5. 98% of farms are family owned and managed according to the USDA and Iowans want to know the families who make a living farming in Iowa.
6. Agriculture must have an open door policy and be willing to talk with the public about modern livestock farming.
7. The words we use to communicate do matter. When we use the terms "farming", "grow" and "farms" instead of "production," "expansion" and "producer," the public has a 20% more favorable opinion.

For more information about the Coalition, call 1-800-932-2436 or log on to www.supportfarmers.com for the latest livestock news and information.

E-mail Megan Ritter at mritter@supportfarmers.com to be added to the CSIF E-TEAM Newsletter.

COALITION ACCOMPLISHMENTS

8	Percent increase since 2006 among Iowans who say they have a positive opinion of Iowa's livestock farms
83	Farm and civic organizations spoken to be CSIF in 2007
118	Media requests facilitated in 2007
515	On-farm site visits conducted by the Coalition
2,700	Media placements focusing on livestock farming generated by CSIF
2,800	Average monthly visitors to www.supportfarmers.com in 2004
4,500	Average monthly visitors to www.supportfarmers.com in 2007
5,700	Number of people attending speaking engagements keynoted by CSIF in 2007
21,000	"Good Neighbors Building Trust" DVDs distributed to farmers and opinion leaders
10 million	Positive media livestock impressions generated by CSIF since its launch.