

# How to Advocate for Animals With or Without a Law Degree: Community Organizing for Farmed Animals

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# What is Community Organizing?

- Local residents coordinate cooperative efforts and campaigns to promote the interests of their community
- Can be formal or informal
- *Anyone can be an organizer!*
- Key is that affected individuals work together to educate and empower their community to achieve defined goals

Organized communities  Power



# How Does An Organized Community Help Animals?

- Information Gathering
  - On-the-ground observations (immediate and long-term)
  - Documentation
  - Records requests
- Local Expertise
- Powerful Networks
  - Spheres of influence can include local decisionmakers
- Direct Advocacy
  - Decisionmakers must (and do!) consider their constituents
  - Local town halls, public meetings, fundraisers, etc. are all opportunities
  - State and federal agencies have legal obligations to impacted residents
- Legal Advocacy
  - Articulating, documenting, and sharing stories with local, state, and federal lawmakers and with courts



# Legal Avenues for Community Change

- Local Ordinances & Actions
  - CAFO moratoriums
  - Agricultural or industrial zoning ordinances
  - CAFO siting requirements
  - “Site fights”
- State Legislation
  - CAFO moratoriums
  - Reporting & recordkeeping requirements
- Rulemaking Petitions & Administrative Advocacy
  - Force agencies to regulate CAFOs and their impacts
  - Civil Rights Act complaints
- Litigation
  - “Impact litigation”
  - Enforcement actions



# Roles for Community Leaders in Litigation

- Named Plaintiff (individual or organization)
  - *Jane Citizen v. CAFO Owner*
  - *Organized Citizens Group v. Farm Service Agency*
  - *Jane Citizen, on behalf of a class, v. CAFO Owner*
- Standing Declarant
  - *Animal Legal Defense Fund v. Farm Service Agency*
- Informal Strategists or Community Liaisons



# CASE STUDY: NATIONWIDE CAFO FUNDING

*Dakota Rural Action v. Farm Service Agency*

Community-Led Plaintiffs (Dakota Rural Action, Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement, Citizens Action Coalition of Indiana, Association of Irrigated Residents)

**TOGETHER WITH** members of Animal Legal Defense Fund and Food & Water Watch

11. One of my only sources of information about water quality for the waters around me is the Randolph County Conservation District, which started water testing in different locations. Their tests have shown some really high numbers of nitrates and other pollutants. However, they will not disclose the location of testing, and they only provide monthly reports for the previous month. There is no way for me to know about water contamination in real time, so that I can avoid certain waterways to protect myself. Starting in 2019, they have reduced the frequency of testing to only quarterly. I am very concerned about this, and have contacted several officials in my local government to find out why they are allowing the County to *decrease* testing at a time when the test results show contamination is *increasing*. It is a real shame.

# CASE STUDY: PROTECTING COMMUNITY HEALTH

*REACH v. Environmental Protection Agency*

Community-Led Plaintiff (Rural  
Empowerment Association for  
Community Health)

**TOGETHER WITH** members of Animal  
Legal Defense Fund and a coalition of  
national environmental organizations

5. There has been an influx of CAFOs in my community over the past few years. The closest CAFO to my house is 5 or 6 miles away. Ten miles away is one of the largest dairy facilities in the country, which has tens of thousands of cows. They also have hogs and chickens. New facilities have been proposed for permitting in the area, too.

10. With regard to air quality, there are many days I have to keep my windows closed and run an air conditioner; this is not what I imagined when I decided to move to the country. At times the air smells like sewage so strongly that guests have remarked that my septic tank must be leaking. The smell can be unbearable.

# CASE STUDY: PROTECTING ANIMALS THROUGH THE ENVIRONMENT

*Farm Sanctuary v. Department of Agriculture*

Coalition of animal protection organizations, on behalf of their individual members

4. I can regularly smell the offensive odor of the Smithfield facility from my home. Some days, when I would rather be outside, I am forced to go inside my home and keep the windows closed because of the smell. I specifically avoided buying property near the plant to avoid the smell, but even four and a half miles away, I am still negatively impacted by the smell. In fact, I suffer from migraines which are highly affected by light and smell, and the smell from the Smithfield facility sometimes makes me nauseated when I have a migraine attack.



# CASE STUDY: STOPPING CAFO EXPANSION

*Arkansas Rights Koalition v. Farm Service Agency*

Community-Led Petitioner (Arkansas Rights Koalition)

**TOGETHER WITH** Animal Legal Defense Fund and Center for Biological Diversity

<p><b>ARKANSAS RIGHTS KOALITION,</b> P.O. Box 121 Evening Shade, AR 72532</p> <p><b>ANIMAL LEGAL DEFENSE FUND,</b> 525 East Cotati Avenue Cotati, CA 94931</p> <p><b>CENTER FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY,</b> P.O. Box 2155 St. Petersburg, FL 33731</p> <p>Petitioners, <i>Filed With:</i></p> <p><b>UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FARM SERVICE AGENCY,</b> Administrator, United States Department of Agriculture Val Dolcini, Farm Service Agency Administrator 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W. Washington D.C. 20250</p> <p><b>UNITED STATES SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION</b> Maria Contreras-Sweet, Administrator 409 3rd Street, S.W. Washington, D.C. 20416</p>	<p><b>CITIZEN PETITION SEEKING A PROGRAMMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR NORTHEASTERN ARKANSAS POULTRY FACILITIES</b></p> <p>Submitted January 17, 2017</p>
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## INTRODUCTION

Northeastern Arkansas is a unique, ecologically diverse region, renowned for its recreational opportunities, unspoiled waterways, small family farms, rich cultural heritage, and species diversity. It is also currently experiencing unprecedented growth in its poultry production sector. That growth is expected to include the construction of approximately 1,000 new industrial poultry confinement houses, and is a direct result of the development and expansion of two slaughtering and processing companies, Ozark Mountain Poultry (OMP) and PECO, Inc. (Peco).

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Administration (FSA) and the Small Business Administration (SBA) are facilitating this growth by offering industrial poultry producers a variety of direct and guaranteed federal loans. This is big business for the federal government, and for participating private banks. Nationally, in fiscal year 2016 alone, FSA guaranteed loan assistance "reached an all-time high, totaling nearly \$4 billion dollars."<sup>1</sup>

# What Can You Do?

- Organize!
- Join the Animal Legal Defense Fund so we can tell your story in our legal actions
- Publicize and report what you see & learn on social media
  - <https://aldf.org/about-us/connect-with-us/>
- Contact Us!
  - [info@aldf.org](mailto:info@aldf.org)



# Thank you!

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