

## **CAFOs gone wrong: The North Carolina experience from the Iowa Environment Quarterly (Winter 2002)**

More than a billion fish killed. That's hard to imagine. But a few in North Carolina have seen it first hand.

The Waterkeepers Alliance toured Iowa recently to discuss the environmental impacts of North Carolina's CAFO industry.

Speakers included Rick Dove, a retired US Marine Corp Colonel who has been protecting the Neuse River in North Carolina for more than seven years. Nicolette Hahn, Waterkeepers' senior attorney, and IEC member Jim Braun were also featured.

Making seven stops -- five in Iowa -- the "Tri-State Whistle Stop Tour" was sponsored by more than 60 organizations, including the Council.

The tale they weave is full of sorrow and hope. It is the story of massive change and upheaval in agriculture -- with less than 1% of all hog operations now controlling more than 60% of US hog production.

It is a story of the environmental destruction that has accompanied these changes -- more than a billion fish killed and a huge ecosystem at risk -- and the battle in the courts to enforce protections.

But it is also a story of hope.

As Braun pointed out, "Today's rapid industrialization and concentration of agriculture is harmful to farmers, rural communities, and the environment. However, industrialization is not inevitable. Farmers and environmentalists must recognize their common interests and work together for the good of all human kind."