



The Next Step—Organize

Once you have information about the factory farm issue, your next step is to organize.

First, see if other groups have already formed in your area. Dozens of grassroots organizations have sprung up over the past several years to deal with the effects of factory farming. Call the *Beyond Factory Farming Coalition* office and we can let you know if there are experienced groups in your area. Joining an already-existing group is usually easier than starting one.

If you can't find other groups, start your own.

If your community is unfamiliar with the factory farm issue, arrange a public informational meeting to both educate and find neighbors who are interested in helping out. You can set this up yourself or with others in your community who share your interests.

Meetings do not have to be fancy or formal—they can be as small as discussing the issues with a few neighbors. Some people gather at a local school or library; others have used barns, shops or garages. Find a place that is quiet with no distractions—no phones, no children wandering in and out, no interruptions. Restaurants, coffee shops and other commercial public places are usually poor choices unless they have private meeting rooms. If you think the meeting will last for more than an hour or two, provide refreshments or encourage everyone to bring something.

If you decide to form your own group, make every effort to maintain a working relationship with any other groups in your area. It is critically important to present a unified front of opposition to the factory farm. Consider forming an alliance of all the groups in your region—coordinate your activities and support each other. It is extremely important that people work together on this issue. Once you are organized, please contact the Beyond Factory Farming Coalition with information about your group. If you would like, we will include your group on our website.

We also encourage you to phone *Lisa Bechthold* at (403) 867-2999 or to contact the Beyond Factory Farming Coalition at help@beyondfactoryfarming.org if you want help with organizing. Please make sure to send your full contact information, including name, address (including the province and county you live in), and telephone number, so we may contact you. In addition, the Beyond Factory Farming website, www.beyondfactoryfarming.org, is full of information to assist you. If you live in a rural area where connection speeds are very slow, email us at the address above and we will send you the website on a CD-ROM.

2—Section 3: Get Organized

If your community is already familiar with the factory farm issue, and if you already have a group of people interested in helping out, you can skip the informational meeting and start by holding an organizational get together.

Name your Group

Give your group a name. This will help the media, elected officials, and the public identify you. Many groups use acronyms to identify themselves; for example, CAPER (Citizens Advocating Public Health and Environment Responsibility), or FARM (Families Against Rural Messes). Create a positive name for your group. The name you choose is important, so spend some time deciding.

Assign Duties

Divide up the responsibilities so the work is shared. Overwork and burnout have been a problem with other groups, so be sensitive to members' family and work commitments. Be flexible and understanding if a member cannot fulfill their duties, and have some type of backup plan so the necessary work gets done.

Spokesperson

This person communicates well and will represent the entire group. S/he must be willing to delegate work and encourage others, not dominate. S/he can be elected as the President or Chairperson of the group. This person must be comfortable with the media, and work well in public and in front of cameras. Make sure your spokesperson reads the *Media* section of this handbook too!

Press and media organizers

One or more people are needed to develop relationships with the press, send out press releases, organize media events, and get as much exposure as possible for the issues. This may also be your Spokesperson. (More in the *Media* section.)

Officers

Appoint people to other positions, such as secretary and treasurer and make sure they understand their responsibilities. Take notes at meetings and circulate to all, including people who could not attend.

Coordinators

Select one or two people to be coordinators so group members can stay in touch and act as a team. A successful organization keeps people informed and encourages participation. Make a workable phone tree and use it to convey new information to your group. (See the *Organizing Tools* section.)



Researchers

Assign people to work on gathering information and contacting local officials. Develop a list of concerns regarding the facility, including environmental, economic, health and social impacts. Issues to be considered include: water and soil contamination, air pollution from odors, gases and dusts, loss of family farmers, property devaluation, tax credits, exemptions, enterprise zones, road degradation and increased traffic. Write them down in order of importance to your group. Have members research the different objections. (Details on who to contact and what information to gather can be found in the "Gather Information" sections under "Dissect the ILO Proposal" below.)

Facility liaisons

Select a couple representatives to talk with the facility operator/owner. Consider having the owner/operator attend a group meeting to hear community concerns.

Set up a Bank Account

Decide how to handle finances and expenses before they arise. How will money be handled? Will each person pay a membership fee with extra money coming from fundraising efforts? Or will each person give as they see fit? Do you want to have a separate bank account for the group's money? What is your procedure when an unexpected expense occurs? How will you determine what your money will go toward? Answer these questions up front, before a situation occurs; otherwise, your group might end up with financial problems and disagreements that could undermine the organization's cohesiveness.

Taking Care of Business

Determine a regular meeting time, whether it be once a week or once a month. Try to pick the same day and time - it will be easier for people to remember. Use your phone tree to remind members of each meeting a day or two in advance.

Decide whether or not your group wants to incorporate as a registered non-profit organization. As a legal entity, an incorporated association has rights and responsibilities. It can enter into contracts, buy land, borrow money, and have bank accounts, etc., in its own name. The liability of the members is limited. The continuity of the organization is assured even if the membership changes. A corporation can own property in its name regardless of membership change. It can bring a legal action in its own name (an unincorporated body cannot). Its chances of receiving government grants may increase because of the stability the organization appears to have.

An unincorporated association is an agreement between individuals, and has no legal status. The members are personally liable to the creditors for the full amount of any debts they incur on behalf of the organization. An unincorporated body cannot sue or be sued; members must sue or be sued personally. (Summarized from *Non-profit organizations* by The Public Legal Education Association of Saskatchewan.)

However some groups prefer not to incorporate for various reasons. For example, doing all the paper work required may use up valuable time when dealing with an urgent situation. An unincorporated organization may be a more difficult target for SLAPP suits and other forms of intimidation.



For an excellent resource on setting up and running an incorporated non-profit organization, see: “Non-profit Organizations” a free handbook published by *The Public Legal Education Association of Saskatchewan*. The handbook is available on-line at:

www.plea.org/freepubs/npc/nonprofit.htm

Keep accurate records, both business and financial. It is important to record the date and time of phone calls, meetings, etc. You may need to refer back to them at some point. Keep a contact list, spreadsheet or rolodex. To help you stay organized, keep notes from calls, meetings, etc., in a spiral bound notebook.

Remember to celebrate your successes—no matter how small. Plan for some fun along the way in order to keep from burning out.

Reading Materials About Organizing

How to Save the World in your Spare Time

by Elizabeth May

A practical guide based on “How to be an Activist” workshops for grassroots organization led by May while she was executive director of the Sierra Club of Canada. The book includes sections on basic organizing, lobbying, using the courts, fundraising, media and public mobilization. Published by *Key Porter Books*, 2006.

Boundaries of Home: Mapping for Local Empowerment

by Doug Aberley

Whether opposing a clearcut or toxic dump, participating in local planning or zoning, or trying to learn more about your own region, *Boundaries of Home* will help you find, use and create the maps that are right for you. Using overlays, tapestries and stories, communities can map what’s crucial to them: water and air flows, commuting patterns, distribution of species, local history. Includes a step-by-step description of how to use accessible sources to compile truly empowering images of one’s home.

www.newsociety.com/bookid/3669

Organizing for Social Change

by Kim Bobo, Jackie Kendall, Steve Max

Chapters include: The fundamentals of direct action organizing; developing a strategy; organizing models; the underlying structure of organization; using the media; building and joining coalitions; developing leadership; working with religious organizations and with unions; public speaking; working with community organization boards; on line research and tactical investigation; grass roots fundraising; supervision; administrative systems; the new economy. Order your copy from:

Seven Locks Press

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The Troublemakers Teaparty: A Manual for Effective Citizen Action

by Charles Dobson

Thousands of small groups with few resources spend large amounts of time trying to influence decision-makers. For the most part, these groups are made up of ordinary citizens driven by a desire to make a difference beyond their own lives. Governments and corporations call these people “troublemakers.” Those who study complex problems ranging from health care to global warming say we need far more troublemakers, far more active citizens. Order your copy online or write to:

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