



State of Wisconsin  
Governor Scott Walker



**Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection**  
Ben Brancel, Secretary

**Department of Natural Resources**  
Cathy Stepp, Secretary

April 19, 2011

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**Subject: Use of Innovative Technologies in Agriculture**

Dear Rick and Mark:

As supporters of the state's livestock siting law and rules, we appreciate the advice and counsel you provide your members with respect to livestock siting issues. As you know, the law was put in place to try and eliminate local governments from making changes to their local ordinances with respect to acceptable farming practices unless environmental and public health risks can be demonstrated.

The latest technology that local governments want to prohibit (Rock and Walworth counties at the present time) is the use of center pivot technology to apply manure nutrients from farms. While not widely used in Wisconsin, there are several farms that have used center pivots to apply manure for many years with no demonstration of environmental or human health impacts. You may know that old center pivots have been modified using drop nozzles to place nutrients in a specified pattern directly on plants.

As you know, the application during the growing season has many benefits including getting nutrients on crops when they need them most and reducing the risk of nutrient runoff events that can happen with annual or semi-annual nutrient applications. The use of this system has the potential to significantly reduce truck traffic, thereby reducing the impact to town and county roads.

On the global level, improved agricultural technologies have focused on the improved genetics of plant seeds which has resulted in higher yield crops while reducing our dependence on pesticides, enhancing the health of our agricultural systems, and increasing the nutrient content of food. This is only part of the solution however. The entire system of agriculture production will see new applications of technology that will assist producers in

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meeting increasing production demands in the future while complying with regulatory requirements and remaining economically viable.

With the challenge of feeding the world's population, which is expected to grow by 3 billion from the current 6.7 billion by 2050, on limited arable land resources and water availability, it is our obligation to utilize innovative technological solutions in order to feed the world. We support and encourage farmers to use new and/or innovative technologies to meet the challenges ahead of us.

As leaders of your respective associations, we encourage you to work with your members to make sure they do not adopt local ordinances that restrict the use of approved and accepted technologies unless it can be documented and demonstrated that there are environmental or public health risks associated with them.

Please contact us for any assistance you may need.

Sincerely,



Ben Brancel  
Secretary, DATCP



Cathy Stepp  
Secretary, DNR