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## PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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# **IATP Applauds American Public Health Association Call For Precautionary Moratorium on New CAFOs**

## **Immediate Research on Health Risks to Children Urged**

Minneapolis - The American Public Health Association (APHA) is calling on federal, state and local governments and public health agencies to institute a "precautionary moratorium" on the construction of Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) because of health concerns. The new policy statement, passed at the organization's national meeting in November, was only recently posted to its web site. It also urges immediate funding of new research to better understand the exposures of communities, particularly children, to pollutants from CAFOs.

An estimated 54 percent of U.S. livestock are now confined on only five percent of livestock farms. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, CAFOs are defined as more than 1,000 beef cattle, 2,500 hogs, and 100,000 broiler hens. CAFOs generate an estimated 575 billion pounds of manure annually.

"CAFO environments make workers sick, and pose public health risks to children and other vulnerable people living nearby," said David Wallinga, MD, director of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy's Food and Health Program. "This landmark policy says that we shouldn't add to the problems by building more CAFOs."

APHA cited numerous studies documenting serious health problems among CAFO workers, including respiratory problems and effects on neurologic function. CAFO generated manure can contain constituents and byproducts of health concern including heavy metals, antibiotics, pathogen bacteria, nitrogen and phosphorus, as well as dust, mold, bacterial endotoxins and volatile gases. CAFO-generated manure is typically stored in open or covered pits or lagoons and later spread or sprayed untreated on nearby cropland, posing additional risks to public health.

Runoff from manure-applied fields can carry human pathogens into surface waters, which often serve as drinking water sources, according to the APHA statement. Epidemiology studies have linked several outbreaks involving these pathogens to livestock waste. Manure land application in excess of the land's absorptive capacity also can lead to excess nitrogen and phosphorus in soil, eutrophication of surface waters and algae overgrowth—including some algae producing human toxins.

"The world's largest public health organization has now weighed in," said Robert Lawrence, M.D. of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. "We know enough science to stop continuing to build more of these meat factories that are miserable for animals, and which make people ill."

The APHA 2003 policy statement #7 on CAFOs can be read in full at:  
<http://www.apha.org/legislative/policy/2003/2003-007.pdf>

In November, the Institute for Agriculture and Trade and the Global Resource Action Center for the Environment (GRACE) launched a web site ([www.eatwellguide.org](http://www.eatwellguide.org)) that connects consumers with sources of meat and poultry that has been raised by non-confinement and without routine antibiotic use.

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