

RIDICULOUS BUT TRUE!

Misuse Of Law Could Be Toxic To Farmers

(NAPSA)—How would you like it if your home were suddenly declared a toxic waste site?

Sound like something out of Ripley's "Believe it or Not!"? Yet in today's topsy-turvy world, that is exactly what some people are proposing. If you have any land with horses, cattle, chickens or other livestock on it, you have reason to be concerned.

The proposal—being pushed by some of the nation's biggest environmental organizations—would bring all such farm and country property under the so-called Superfund law for cleaning up industrial waste sites.

How come? They argue that animal waste—manure—is a "hazardous substance" and therefore every property with animals on it should be labeled and treated just like industrial waste sites. The costs imposed on our farmers could be enormous. Thousands could be driven off their land. They are rightfully worried.

The ridiculous thing is that Congress never intended the 1980 Superfund law to apply to farmers—or to animal waste. It was meant to clean up industrial sites like Love Canal. But because farms were not specifically excluded, environmental groups are claiming the law applies to them, too. And farmers are already being sued.

As a result, the nation's major farming organizations have asked Congress to clarify—as a matter of urgency—that it never intended farms to be branded as Superfund toxic waste sites. All it would take is a simple amendment.

But again—believe it or not—environmental groups, trial lawyers and some state attorneys general have now mounted a campaign urging Congress NOT to clarify the law! They actually



want it to remain confusing, so they can sue farmers and force them to settle. "If the activists succeed, farmers could face penalties of many millions of dollars and thousands of small farmers could be forced off their land," wrote columnist Steve Milloy, publisher of JunkScience.com.

"The domestic livestock industry would be driven from this country, the grain industry would be crippled, and farm families and communities would be devastated," warns Oklahoma Farm Bureau chief Steve Kouplen. Adds Missouri cattleman Mike John, president of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, "If animal manure is legally declared a hazardous substance, virtually every farm or ranch in the United States could be written off as a Toxic Superfund site."

This is clearly not what Congress intended. The question now is whether members of Congress will be willing to stand up to the activists and lawyers who are urging them to do nothing to fix the problem.

To let members of Congress know your opinion on this important issue, visit their Web sites at www.house.gov or www.senate.gov or call them at the U.S. Capitol at (202) 224-3121.