

NOVIERCAS: A 20 000 COWS FACTORY FARM



The Noviercas mega factory farm is a project of the cooperative Valle de Odieta to build one of the largest dairy farms in the world. Noviercas is a town of 155 inhabitants in the region of Castile and León, two and a half hours Northeast of Madrid. With 23,520 cows (16,128 dairy cows and 7,329 suckler cows), 900 hectares of land, a consumption of 600,000 kilos of fodder and four to six million liters of water every day - not to mention a planned production 180 million liters of milk per year - the Noviercas factory farm would be the biggest dairy farm in Europe.

Valle del Odieta is trying to import the factory farm model in place in the US, which has proven to have terrible impacts on the environment, water, animal welfare and local communities, to Europe. In the European Union the average dairy farm in 2011 ranged from 13 cows in Bulgaria to 142 in Denmark. The average size in Spain was 41 cows. In the US, in 2012 the average size of dairy farms was 1,661, while in states like Kansas it reached 4,539. The development of factory farming in the US has eroded rural economies, driven independent producers out of business and allowed the largest livestock operations to dominate animal agriculture.

BAD FOR EMPLOYMENT

Promoters of this project claim they will create 200 to 250 jobs. But they neglect to mention the potential jobs losses. In November 2015, there was a total of 95,494 dairy cows in the whole region of Castile and León, producing 866,303 tons of milk per year in around 1,200 farms. With 20,000 cows, Noviercas could produce a total of 179,740 tons of milk per year. The megafarm could then replace 432 farms, a third of all farms in the region, and destroy more than 700 direct jobs, as farms employ around 1,68 full-time equivalent jobs.



A THREAT FOR WATER AND ENVIRONMENT



A factory farm like the one planned in Noviercas can consume between 4 and 6.35 million liters of water per day. That means more than the total consumption of the 40,000 inhabitants of the city of Soria. Building the Noviercas megafarm would threaten the water supply in the entire region.

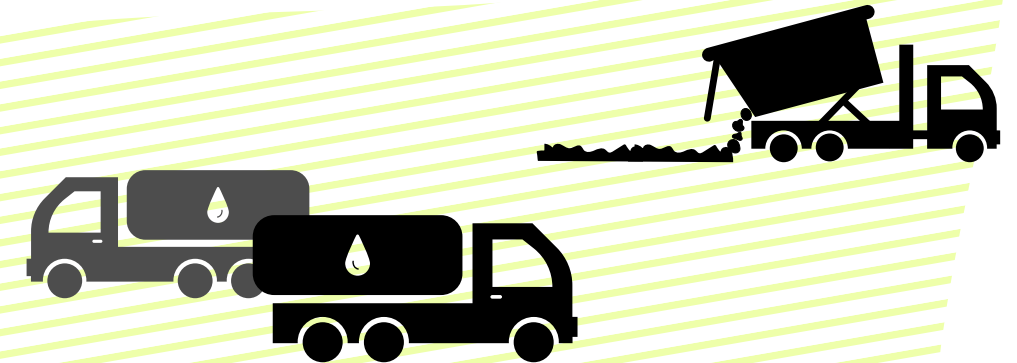
This factory farm would produce 368,000 tons of manure per year, the equivalent to the waste produced by a city of 4.4 million people. The experience of the US shows that the application and potential spills of that amount of manure to fields in the area would have severe consequences on drinking water, on public health, on local fauna, and on economic activities such as tourism.

BAD FOR THE DAIRY SECTOR



The European milk sector is currently in crisis. The end of milk quotas in 2015 brought an increase of production and a fall in prices. The Spanish dairy sector is already in a critical situation because of overproduction. Creating factory farms like the one planned in Noviercas would only increase the crisis of the sector and destabilize an important part of the Spanish rural economy.

NOVIERCAS FACTORY-FARM



HEALTH RISKS

Large quantities of decomposing manure can be a health hazard as well. Noxious gas emissions from manure holding tanks and lagoons - including hydrogen sulfide, ammonia and methane - can cause skin rashes, breathing problems and headaches, and long-term exposure can lead to neurological problems.

With thousands of cows crammed onto feedlots with no access to pasture or grass, animals in factory farms are treated with low levels of antibiotics to try to prevent illness and compensate for stressful conditions, creating an ideal breeding ground for antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

When some diseases such as the bovine brucellosis are detected, sanitary rules require the immediate killing of all animals in the farm to avoid more infections. Consequences of the detection of such a disease in the Noviercas farm would have massive consequences and huge compensation costs.



BAD FOR ANIMAL WELFARE AND FOOD SAFETY

POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF THE NOVIERCAS FACTORY FARM

WHO IS BUILDING THE NOVIERCAS MEGAFARM?

The Noviercas mega factory farm is a project of a cooperative called Valle de Odieta. This cooperative already owns a factory farm with 4,800 cows in Caparroso, Navarra, in northern Spain.

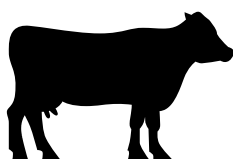
Valle de Odieta is planning to sell the milk produced in Noviercas to a cheese factory owned by the Saiona Cooperative, and to other dairy industries, which might then sell part of the cheese to the multinational company Campofrío, which owns a pizza factory in the same area.

THE BIGGEST MEGAFARM IN EUROPE

more than

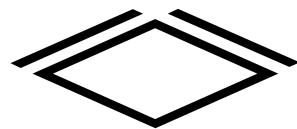
20 000

cows



900ha

of arable land



180 M



liters of milk /year

600 tons



of fodder /day

4-6 M



liters of water /day

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Sources and more information at:

Coordinadora de Organizaciones de Agricultores y Ganaderos (COAG), 2017. 10 Preguntas y Respuestas sobre el Proyecto de Macro-Granja Industrial de Noviercas (Soria).

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<https://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/insight/factory-farm-nation-2015-edition>

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