

Foreword
For book by Nicolette Hahn Niman

I first met Nicolette Hahn in 2000 when she was working as a lawyer for National Wildlife Federation having just stepped down as elected councilwoman for the City of Ann Arbor. Inspired by her commitment to public service and her political and legal talent, I offered her the job as staff attorney to the newly established Waterkeeper Alliance. Soon after she came to work in our cramped basement offices in White Plains, New York, I asked her to head up a national campaign to combat hog factories. She seemed particularly suited for this job since she had formerly served as a county prosecutor in North Carolina, the epicenter for industrial pork factories. She threw herself into the fight with energy and passion; she seemed to have found her calling. Using her well-honed skills as a litigator and an inborn talent for grassroots organizing, Nicolette quickly made herself one of the nation's leading warriors and strategists in the apocalyptic battle against factory meat production.

By then the factory meat industry was already vying for the blue ribbon as America's worst polluter. As is always true with large scale pollution, the destruction of public resources accompanied the subversion of democracy. Factory meat barons were dominating the market place, not through efficiencies, as they pretended, but by ruthless market control and by externalizing their pollution costs. The big integrators could not produce pork chops or bacon cheaper than a traditional family farmer unless they broke the law. Since the industry produced far more waste than it could profitably dispose of, its entire business plan was based on its capacity to illegally dump industrial scale

quantities of raw animal sewage and toxic chemicals into the nation's waters and air and get away with it! To take advantage of public good will toward small farmers, big agribusiness employed slick pr firms and lobbyists to defend animal factories by costuming them as Old MacDonald's farm. Using strategically orchestrated public deception, campaign contributions and political clout, the meat moguls captured state and federal environmental agencies which obligingly (and illegally) waived environmental permit requirements, routinely ignored flagrant violations, and transformed themselves into taxpayer funded hand puppets aggressively defending every instance of industry mischief. North Carolina became a company town. With the exception of mountain top removal coal mining, no other industry in America's modern history had gotten away with systematic criminal pollution of this magnitude.

North Carolina's Neuse Riverkeeper, Rick Dove, a former Marine Corps colonel, Vietnam combat veteran, judge advocate general and commercial fisherman, was spending almost all of his time battling pollution from big animal operations. Just a few years earlier, North Carolina had been famous for some of the purest rivers and coastal waters in the US. But all that had changed. Rick showed us rivers and streams choked with algae fed by nutrient discharges from hog factories. Manure contamination caused beach closures and collapsed fisheries. A spill from one pig lagoon in 1995 killed a billion fish in the Neuse River that year. Bulldozers ploughed the dead schools under the sandy beaches of Pamlico Sound. Since then industrial pork producers have poisoned and killed upwards of 100 million fish every year on the Neuse. Arguing that animal factories are one of the most pressing environmental and social issues of our era, Rick

urged me, with irresistible persistence, to challenge the industry on a national level. Nicolette took on the job.

In North Carolina, the chef villain was the notorious “integrator” Smithfield Foods. Smithfield was once a simple meat packer with no experience of owning a pig farm but then its CEO, Joe Luter, began buying up farms as to control all aspects of pork production – ‘from piglets to pork chops,’ the company boasted, and from ‘squeal to meal.’ Luter is known for a ruthless approach to business that maximizes Smithfield’s short-term profits regardless of the long term costs to the community. Luter perfected a system of meat production that eliminates both animal husbandry and family farmers and subjects his stock, workers and neighbors to unspeakable and unnecessary cruelty.

Luter’s system ignores both civilized norms and legal niceties. Indeed, based on its own records, Smithfield can fairly be characterized as a criminal enterprise. Its facilities across the country are regularly cited for violating various environmental laws. In 1998 alone, Smithfield was fined \$12.6m for 6,900 violations of the US Clean Water Act, the largest penalty in the statute’s history. Company officials had knowingly dumped tons of toxic waste into Virginia’s Pagan River then fabricated phony test results.

Neither has the company limited its crime spree to the environmental theatre. The judicial system has frequently found immigration violations at Smithfield’s plants and has forced the company to fork over millions in penalties for antitrust violations and handed it record fines for ignoring worker health and safety rules under OSHA.

Smithfield is a serial violator of labor laws. A 1998(?) *New York Times* exposé by journalists who infiltrated Smithfield's North Carolina slaughterhouse describe labor policies that are practically Medieval. The series documented a deliberate company strategy to keep wages low and suppress labor activities by playing the races against each other.

Federal courts and the National Labor Relations Board have repeatedly cited and fined the company for beating employees, insulting them with profanities and racial slurs, illegally handcuffing and detaining them, unlawfully firing workers who participated in union activities and illegally spying on its employees and forcing them to spy on each other, and unlawfully threatening its employees with violence, arrest, plant closings, and job loss. Smithfield illegally threatened Hispanic employees with arrest and deportation by immigration authorities. In 2001, a judge found the company had engaged for a dozen years in "egregious and pervasive labor violations." In its Tar Heel, North Carolina plant, the court found Smithfield maintains a private armed police force. The bully brigade is composed of off-duty sheriff deputies who often garb themselves in battle gear bristling with weapons which they use to intimidate and menace, harass and coerce, arrest and beat employees who they suspect of union sympathies. Smithfield managers, the court found, had illegally conspired with local sheriff department to physically intimidate and assault union sympathizers. The court also found that Smithfield's attorneys and managers had lied under oath and suborned perjury.

In 2002, a federal court found Smithfield had violated the Ku Klux Klan Act of 1871,

ordered company officials to pay \$755,000 to two of its workers at a North Carolina plant who had been unlawfully arrested, beaten and jailed by company operatives employed to prevent union organizing activities.

Luter excuses this corporate culture of barbarianism in so many realms by describing himself as “a tough man in a tough business;” He is not tough enough, however, to live near one of his pig farms. His home is a \$17m Park Avenue mansion in New York. To finance this lifestyle, Smithfield builds football field-sized warehouses in poor rural communities in which it crams thousands of genetically manipulated pigs into tiny metal boxes where they are deprived of sunlight, exercise, straw bedding, and the rooting and social interactions that are vital to their happiness. A pig is as smart and sensitive as a dog. Deprived of these fundamentals, the animals are prone to stress-out and die. So hog barons keep them alive by constant doses of antibiotics and hormones most of which move through the animal undigested and into the waste stream.

The waste stream, incidentally, is prodigious. A pig produces 10 times as much fecal matter as a human. A factory with 100,000 animals produces the same amount of fecal waste as a city of one million people. One of Smithfield’s Utah factories- The Circle 4 - houses 850,000 pigs and produces more fecal waste than New York City’s 8.5 million people. Pig factory waste falls through slatted floors into a basement, where it is periodically flushed into giant open outdoor cesspools romantically called lagoons. While cities must treat sewage before discharging it, Smithfield’s meat factories spray their lagoon waste untreated onto fields which quickly become saturated. The lagoons

themselves invariably leak or overflow. The toxic soup then seeps into groundwater or is carried by rain into nearby streams or lakes. Waste from these factories contains a witch's brew of nearly 400 dangerous substances – including heavy metals, antibiotics, hormones, deadly biocides, chemical disinfectants, pesticides and dozens of disease-causing viruses and microbes. Antibiotic residues in this lethal soup foster the growth of deadly 'super bugs' – disease organisms that are immune to human antibiotics.

Millions of tons of fecal stew produced by pig-meat factories have poisoned the groundwater in 34 US states with deadly nitrates that can kill infants and cause severe mental retardation in children.

Pig factory contaminants have caused outbreaks of a previously unknown microbe, *Pfiesteria piscicida*, in the US's coastal waters. *Pfiesteria* -- the so called "cell from hell" -- kills fish by the billions, and causes open sores that won't heal, severe respiratory illness and brain damage in humans who handle affected fish or swim in polluted water. Pustulating sores cover the bodies of fishermen from the Neuse River. Thanks to *Pfiesteria* induced brain damage, some of the fishermen have trouble recalling basic information – including how to get home. After *Pfiesteria* appeared in Maryland in the summer of 1999(?), the state had to close the tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay to protect public health. Disease epidemics caused by meat factories have sickened and killed thousands of Americans. In 1993 another meat operation microbe, cryptosporidium, was thought to be responsible for tainting the water supply in Milwaukee. Some 400,000 people -- half the city's population -- fell sick, and 114 died.

Meat factories also produce dangerous and noxious odors. The putrid stenches from pig factories defy description. Neighboring farmers choke, vomit and faint from the fetid gases as they ride their tractors or work their fields. The smell cannot be removed from skin or clothing – even with the strongest soaps. Food eaten even a mile downwind of a pig factory can take on the odor and flavor of pig waste. In the summer, downwind neighbors are often unable to sit on their porches, open their windows, hang their laundry or enjoy their meals. The odors can be so strong that they have been known to nauseate people flying in airplanes as high as 3,000 feet above industrial pig plants.

The fumes inside hog sheds are so strong that the animals quickly die from asphyxiation if the ventilation systems fail. Hydrogen sulphide, methane and ammonia gases emanating from these factories also harm human health. Myriad scientific studies show that factory farm workers and downwind neighbors suffer disproportionately from lung disease, nausea, eye infections, nosebleeds, gastrointestinal illness, depression and even brain damage. Every year, pig factory workers become seriously ill and die from deadly gases emanating from liquid manure pits. Recent research papers produced by the US government indicate that toxic air discharges from pig factories are so poisonous they violate federal health and environmental laws and endanger the health of human neighbors. One study by the United States Department of Agriculture shows that millions of antibiotic-resistant bacteria move by air from pig factories every day, threatening public health and neighboring herds. Another study shows that some meat factories emit seven times the particulate matter allowed under US clean-air laws.

The growth of meat factories is the principal factor in the decline of the American family farm. Each pig factory puts 10 family farmers out of business, replacing high-quality agricultural jobs with three or four hourly wage workers in degrading positions that are among the lowest-paid and most dangerous in the US. Because the animals are fed by computer and are given almost no husbandry, as few as two workers may tend a factory of 10,000 pigs. Conditions are so miserable that employees seldom endure these jobs for more than a few months. Major slaughterhouses, including those owned by Smithfield, have a 100 per cent annual employee turnover rate. The situation in North Carolina is typical. Two decades ago there were 27,000 independent family pig farmers in the state. Today, there are almost none. North Carolina's pig farmers have been replaced by 2,200 pig factories – 1,600 by of which are owned or indentured to Smithfield. The firm now controls 75 per cent of pig production in the state. Leveraging the low cost hogs produced in North Carolina by its illegal methods, Smithfield moved to Iowa – America's number-one pig producer and forced that state and its farmers to adopt the company's destructive practices or perish in the market place. Because of the growth of factory farming, Iowa has lost 45,000 independent pig farmers in recent years. Now Smithfield has it eyes on Europe. Joe Luter told The Washington Post that Smithfield will turn "Poland into the North Carolina of Europe."

In 2001(?) Poland's Interior Minister(??) and former Parliamentarian and Presidential candidate and party president, Andre Leperer, told me that Smithfield's Vice President

Richard Poulson had offered him a \$1 million bribe to support legislation that would facilitate Smithfield's monopoly takeover of Poland's slaughtering capacity.

It's not just in Poland that the meat industry uses its money, power and political clout to silence the critics and disable democracy in order to get away with its unlawful conduct. In 1993(?) the Raleigh News & Observer won the Pulitzer Prize for its five-part series "Boss Hog" which showed how the hog industry had corrupted nearly every relevant politician in North Carolina to grease the skids for its illegal activities. Using its proxies, the American Farm Bureau and the Pork Producers Council, the meat moguls have been able to corrupt state legislators across the country into ignoring their oath to safeguard the constitutional guarantees of speech and debate and the democratic tradition of open government. In three states, legislatures under the sway of agribusiness, have passed laws making it illegal to photograph factory farms or factory farm animals. Eleven states have enacted laws making it illegal to publicly criticize factory farm food. In 1998, Oprah Winfrey, her network ABC, were forced to endure a two-month jury trial in Amarillo, Texas, for hosting a show in which a former factory farm owner confessed to the low quality and unsavory flavor of the meat produced by his industry. North Carolina, Maryland and many other states have strong laws prohibiting the public or government regulatory agencies from learning vital information about factory farms including their locations and the details of their waste disposal plans.

The industry routinely flexes its political muscle to muzzle government scientists and prohibit them from publishing studies that show the significant public health threats

posed by industrial agribusiness. Nicolette and I have personally experienced the efforts by the industry to stifle debate as we've travelled the country to speak against factory farms and prosecute the industry for its criminal activities in various states. In 2001, USDA under pressure from the Pork Producers Council forced one of its leading scientists to cancel a speech describing his scientific findings on the dangers of factory hog production to a national seminar of family farmers in Clear Lake, Iowa organized by Nicolette.

For many years the industry assigned a man to follow me around the United States, sit in the front row at my speeches and press events and pointedly tape record all my remarks. Wearing his cowboy costume including black Stetson, bandana, ostrich skin boots and handlebar mustache. He would stalk me in hallways or dark parking lots after I spoke often making menacing remarks. He shadowed me from California to New York and dozens of states in between. He maintained a Web site tracking my whereabouts and exposing my "lies." I was only relieved of his constant company when he was convicted of cattle rustling and fraud in South Dakota and his probation prohibited him from leaving the state.

Smithfield recently filed criminal charges against me in Poland for speaking out against its destructive style of meat production. The company never dared sue me in America where the Fifth Amendment guarantees of freedom of the press have set a high bar for libel actions. In Poland, however, where press freedom is less a sanctified tradition, Smithfield is currently suing me for remarks I made during a debate with Smithfield's

Polish director before the Polish Parliament. While U.S. law makes truth a defense to libel, the Polish law criminalizes insulting remarks against corporations even when they are accurate. So I now find myself facing a possible two-year prison sentence in that country. Smithfield thrives best in venues where democracy is hobbled or incomplete.

In this book, Nicolette eloquently and vividly describes what's wrong with industrial animal agriculture not just for the environment, but for democracy. She also lays out why industrial production is a threat to America's economy, the security of our food supply, and the quality of rural communities and small towns, and our most treasured traditions and values. Most significantly, she demonstrates that factory meat production with all its pollution and cruelty and economic/social disruptions is unnecessary; we can choose to raise farm animals in ways that are environmentally sound, healthful and humane and consistent with America's historic mission as an exemplary nation.