



The Socially Responsible Agricultural Project  
has Woven a Web of Animal Rights Connections



## What you need to know...Socially Responsible Agricultural Project Threatens Agriculture

It is vitally important that farmers and ranchers become aware of an anti-agriculture group with a misleading name. The group, Socially Responsible Agricultural Project (SRAP), is closely tied to a number of radical animal extremist groups and other non-governmental organizations (NGO's). SRAP is the driving force behind many recent nuisance lawsuits that are working to devastate large family farms. They specialize in agitating community members, sowing seeds of discontent, offering pro-bono legal advice, and coalition development all under the seemingly innocent title of "community organizing".

SRAP started as a small, local organization targeting large, modern farms. It was originally part of a larger organization called Global Resource Action Center for the Environment, SRAP's co-founder is a man named William Weida. Weida had no agriculture experience at all and was in fact a professor at Colorado College in their Economics Department at the time. Fast forward to present day, the group has expanded to a national presence. Funding for the organization is a closely held secret. William Weida, SRAP's co-founder, says "support comes from several sources that prefer to remain anonymous."

Within the past few years, SRAP has inserted themselves into lawsuits across the country involving beef, pork, and dairy industries. Guided by former CEO Kendra Kimbirauskas, Executive Director Terry Spence, Director of Field Operations Danielle Diamond, and several others, the organization has come from humble beginnings to becoming a major threat for farmers and ranchers throughout the nation.

Our American heritage is important, vital and what we value most. Unfortunately, extremists are working to control farming and ranching, land use, and to restrict animal ownership.

As farmers, ranchers, sportsmen, livestock and pet owners, we need to stand up and protect our way of life.



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## Radical Beliefs Cloaked in Catchy Descriptions

Animal extremist organizations often have a clever way of disguising their radical beliefs as “humane” or “logical”. The Socially Responsible Agricultural Project (SRAP) is no different, they lead people to believe that they are working towards a worthy cause – keeping our natural resources safe while protecting family-owned farms. That is not their end goal, however. They gain support and garner donations with this cause, but by digging a little deeper we know they are pushing to end animal agriculture as we know it.

## Animal Extremist Organization Ties Run Deep and Shape the Direction of the Organization

As we have mentioned in previous animal extremist organization expose’s, the culture of the organization comes from the top down. So, by having high-level leadership aligned with and deeply connected to radical groups, we can assume the ideology of the entire organization is also aligned.

At first glance, their Board of Directors and staff boasts many so-called “industry experts”. However, with a closer look you can find ties to major animal extremist and environmental extremist groups, like the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) their legislative arm, Humane Legislative Fund (HLF), Sierra Club, and the ASPCA.

## SRAP Leadership’s Ties to Radical Groups and Individuals

Below we review the leadership of the Socially Responsible Agricultural Project and their ties to those groups, especially highlighting one person in particular, Joe Maxwell, who has a storied history of animal extremist activism. Maxwell’s deep involvement with SRAP and other associated groups warrants a short review of him below as well.

### John Ikerd – SRAP Board of Directors (Missouri)

SRAP Board Member John Ikerd is a professor who retired in 2000 (corrected by John Ikerd). He has been a speaker or panel member for many HSUS sponsored events throughout the country. In 2015, Ikerd and former Vice President of Rural Outreach for the Humane Society of the United States and Humane Legislative Fund Senior Political Director, Joe Maxwell, were both on the Board of Directors for the Jefferson County Farmers and Neighbors (JFAN) group. In 2014, John Ikerd was commissioned by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to write the regional report "Family Farms of North America." According to Ikerd's comment on our Facebook post: "The greatest threat to animal agriculture is not SRAP, OCM, HSUS, ASPCA, or even PETA. The greatest threat to the future of animal agriculture is CAFOs".

### William Weida – SRAP Co-founder (Colorado)

William Weida co-founded SRAP as a “food-oriented arm” of another organization called Global Resource Action Center for the Environment (GRACE). Previously, Weida had been the Executive Director of GRACE. Weida is a professor emeritus from Colorado College Department of Economics. William Weida also contributed to a report called State of the World 2008: Innovations for a Sustainable Economy. This report was put together by the organization World Watch Institute. Another noteworthy contributor of the report is Miyun Park, Park was



formerly the Vice President of "Farm Animal Welfare " for the HSUS, and before that President of Compassion Over Killing and associated with PETA.

### Don Stull – SRAP Board of Directors (Kansas)

In addition to being an SRAP Board Member, Stull is the President of Organization for Competitive Markets (OCM). Stull has been a member of OCM since it started (1998) and has held a board position since 2011. Stull's relationship with HSUS is at least 7 years old. In 2012, per his published works in Journal of Business Anthropology, HSUS volunteered their pro-bono legal aid for an OCM driven lawsuit against the USDA & NCBA surrounding misuse of beef checkoff dollars. Currently, Joe Maxwell (formerly of HSUS and HLF) is the Executive Director at OCM.

### Terry Spence – Executive Director (Missouri)

Terry Spence is SRAP's current Executive Director. He is also the President of Citizens Legal Environmental Action Network (CLEAN) and Family Farms for the Future (FFFF). According to the radical animal extremist group, Animal Liberation Front, Terry Spence was a consultant on the animated animal extremist movie, "The Meatrix" which was a collaboration with the group that started SRAP, called Global Resource Action Center for the Environment (GRACE).

### Danielle Diamond - Director of Field Operations (Illinois)

Danielle Diamond had previously served as the Executive Director for SRAP and is now the Director of Field Operations. She has partnered with several animal extremist organizations in the opposition of the Farm Bill's "King Amendment", such as the HSUS, ASPCA, Mercy for Animals, and the Animal Legal Defense Fund (ALDF). She is also associated with the Illinois Citizens for Clean Air & Water. Danielle and SRAP member Karen Hudson are founding members of Illinois Citizen for Clean Air and Water (ICCAW). She also works as ICCAW's attorney advocate and community organizer. ICCAW has been very active in the harassment of Adams County Illinois hog farmers.

### Kendra Kimbirauskas – Former SRAP CEO (Oregon)

Early in her career, Kimbirauskas was the Agriculture Issues Coordinator for the animal extremist influenced Sierra Club. As the former CEO of SRAP, Kimbirauskas was a guest speaker at Lewis & Clark Law School's animal law conference. According to Law Crossing, Americas Top Legal Job Site, the Portland-based law school's animal law department is a training ground for animal extremist lawyers. Numerous graduates are currently involved in animal extremist legislation and litigation. Of note, Steven Wise, past president of the Animal Legal Defense fund and current president of the Nonhuman Rights Project is an adjunct professor at the law school.

### Lynn Henning - Field Representative (Michigan)

Henning has been involved in numerous lawsuits against dairy farmers and it is said that she files lawsuits on behalf of citizens "so they can remain anonymous". Henning helps run the Water Rangers program for SRAP alongside Scott Dye. She is a member of the Sierra Club and has served as a Water Sentinel for the organization. She has also been recognized by numerous radical animal extremist organizations, including PETA for her activism.

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## Karen Hudson – Regional Representative (Illinois)

Karen Hudson is a consultant for SRAP, she started her work to end CAFOs several years ago when she founded the group “Families Against Agricultural Messes”. She is closely involved with the Sierra Club and was even awarded “Conservationist of the Year” by their Illinois chapter. She is also the co-founder of the Illinois Citizens for Clean Air and Water, an organization that others within SRAP are also involved in. She has fought “ag-gag” laws and is also the President of another anti-animal agriculture group called “Dairy Education Alliance” which teamed up with several organizations including the HSUS to petition the EPA to list CAFOs as “air pollutants that endanger public health and welfare.” Based on Karen’s pattern of starting anti-agriculture organizations, then letting them fall out, and starting new ones, we can assume she starts groups to make it seem like there is large support for the legislation or lawsuit. Then when it suits her, she disbands the group. Both Families Against Agricultural Messes and Dairy Education Alliance are no longer active.

## Chris Peterson – Regional Representative (Iowa)

Chris Peterson serves as a Regional Representative for SRAP, is a board member for OCM and is a member of the HSUS National Ag Advisory Council. A 2017 article by Minnesota Farm Living outlined a conference sponsored in part by the HSUS where Chris Peterson was a guest speaker. The article reported that Chris misrepresented large modern farming practices and delivered an emotionally charged talk. Minnesota Farm Living reported, “I just have a real issue with Chris. Why are we villainizing fellow pig farmers? I would never stand up in front of an audience and criticize the way Chris raises his pigs. Never. We need ALL pig farmers, no matter how the pigs are raised. There is room for all of us. What works for Chris may not work for us and vice versa. And that’s okay.”

## Diane Rosenberg – SRAP Consultant (Iowa)

Diane Rosenberg serves as an SRAP consultant and is a steering committee member of the Iowa Alliance for Responsible Agriculture. She is also the Executive Director for Jefferson County Farmers and Neighbors (JFAN). Both Joe Maxwell and John Ikerd are/were on the Board of Directors.

## Joe Maxwell – OCM, HSUS, HLF, JFAN, FFA, The Elephant Project (Missouri)

Throughout our research, Joe Maxwell’s name continued to surface in connection with SRAP and other related groups. Maxwell held esteemed positions with the confirmed anti-agriculture group, Humane Society of the United States (Vice President of Rural Outreach) and its legal arm, Humane Legislative Fund (Senior Political Director) for many years. Later, after HSUS gave pro-bono legal aid to the Organization for Competitive Markets, he became their Executive Director.

In addition to those ties, Joe Maxwell is involved in a number of NGO’s like The Elephant Project & Jefferson County Farmers and Neighbors (JFAN). He is also Founder and President of the group Family Farm Action. An advisor of Family Farm Action is Anim Steel, an animal extremist, who has been quoted saying, “The old logic of the slave plantation is still the logic of our industrial food system, 500 years in the making.” Steel is the Executive Director of Real Food Challenge an organization that partners with the Organization for Competitive Markets (OCM) and radical animal extremist and eco groups like Farm Forward and Friends of the Earth.



## SRAP's Most Recent Targets

In recent years, SRAP has been involved in many attacks against swine, poultry, beef, and dairy operations. Animal Agriculture Alliance and Protect The Harvest have compiled a list of the campaigns they have been involved in, which include:

- According to their own year end report for 2018 SRAP is involved in anti-farming campaigns in 162 communities and in 29 states.
- In 2016, SRAP partnered with Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future to send an 8-pg letter to Eastern Shore residents urging them to oppose industrial agriculture.
- Formed the Renewable Harvest Program – works to “help communities transition from conventional production to sustainable, humane and independent family-scale farming.”
- In 2015, SRAP co-hosted a Twitter chat with ASPCA about “factory farming.”
- SRAP hired Spears Law Group to file a nuisance lawsuit against Smith Valley Dairy.
- SRAP was involved with the “Ag-gag” lawsuits in North Carolina against Smithfield Inc.
- SRAP members are connected to the nuisance lawsuits against a number of North Carolina hog farmers.
- Karen Hudson and Danielle Diamond of SRAP have been involved in actions against Adams County, Illinois hog farmers.
- They helped to form a community coalition to stop the expansion of Valley Oaks Steak Company and engaged PETA and the HSUS in their efforts. Members of this SRAP organized coalition also filed a nuisance lawsuit against Valley Oaks’ current operation. It is important to note there were no complaints in the community prior to Valley Oaks filing for a permit to expand their operation.

## EPA Filings Most Likely Lead SRAP to Animal Ag Facilities

In our investigation of this organization, we found that SRAP is likely watching filings from animal agriculture facilities for EPA permits. When a facility requests a permit to build or expand, SRAP swoops in. They are also known to rile up the community residents to oppose their intended target. Often, the facility will have no previous complaints against them until SRAP comes on the scene. We have heard sentiments from locals familiar with some of the suits that this has “divided towns and created animosity between neighbors”.

## Recognize SRAP When They Come to Your Community - What Their “Community Organizing” Really Looks Like

This organization is well funded and is on the move. According to their year-end report, “We currently have over 20 team members, who are actively engaged in anti-factory farming campaigns in 162 communities, located in 29 states. Between our community organizers and technical experts, we have a team unlike any other in the country on hand to assist rural communities...”

The Socially Responsible Agricultural Project’s website offers a “Help Hotline” which says: “If you need help protecting your community from a factory farm, we can provide free, professional assistance.”

SRAP is known to gather residents of a community for “educational meetings”, in these, they speak out against animal agriculture by sharing rhetoric produced by animal extremist organizations. They essentially set up “cell” groups with a unique name so that it appears all of the actions against their target producer are “community”



based. The groups they help organize have clever names like, Save Our Smith Valley, Illinois Citizens for Clean Air and Water, Iowa Alliance for Responsible Agriculture, and Lone Jack Neighbors for Responsible Agriculture. SRAP members even file complaints within communities, “on behalf of a resident who wants to remain anonymous”.

As you can see SRAP has been very clever in how they go about inciting discontent and acting against producers. In one instance, they held a meeting in Nevada which was meant to sway residents into opposing the building of a dairy in the area. This meeting shared animal extremist themed anti-dairy propaganda, which in turn riled up emotions to promote their agenda.

## Using Out of Date Data and Information to Incite Fear

The organization’s website is full of out of date, and incorrect information about animal agriculture. The cited information on the website is mostly 20 years old. It appears that SRAP members are not aware that the United Nations admitted that the report, “Livestock’s Long Shadow” was incorrect after it was debunked by UC Davis Professor, Frank Mitloehner.

Agriculture is one of the most progressive industries in this country – technology and research is constantly changing to assist a farmer or rancher make better decisions for their crops or animals. By including information from the 1990’s- early 2000’s on their site, it shows that they are grasping at straws to fit the data to their agenda, rather than the other way around.

For more information about livestock and emissions we recommend reading articles by UC Davis Professor, Frank Mitloehner.

## What They Don’t Tell Communities: The Farmer’s They Are Putting Out of Business Are Their Neighbors, Not Corporate Entities

We’ve listened to some of the YouTube recordings of the speakers at SRAP organized community meetings. In addition to out-of-date information on their website, the presentations of their speakers are emotionally charged and full of misinformation. As an example, in one video of a community meeting Dr. Ikerd gets gasps from meeting attendees when he informs them the owners of the farms are Chinese. What is conveniently left out is the fact that these farms are operated by community members. This has certainly been the case in North Carolina where farming families have contracts with large companies to breed, raise and finish animals. In his guest article, “Texas Law Firm Targets North Carolina Farmers”, Trent Loos emphasizes this fact, “Here is the real story that needs to be proclaimed throughout the nation. Yes, a Chinese firm called the WH Group does own Smithfield Foods, although the management team is exactly as it was when Joseph Luter owned the farms. Most importantly, the farms that are being targeted are the contract growers for Smithfield Foods; people like Joey Carter. People tend to forget that Smithfield contracts with independent growers, which creates a very beneficial relationship for both parties.”

## More Information about the Involved Animal Extremist Organizations

### The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS)

As shown, the HSUS has a strong relationship with SRAP and many of their staff and leadership. The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), is not what they have been leading people to believe. They are NOT a



humane society. They are an animal extremist organization. They do not own, run, or operate any animal shelters. They use their donors' money to write, fund, and push legislation. They also use it for marketing, advertising, fundraising, salaries, retirement plans, for investments in offshore bank accounts and publicly traded securities.

In its own "Statement on Farm Animals and Eating with Conscience", HSUS reveals its true beliefs about food. Outlined on their website, you'll find their "Three R's" approach:

- Reducing the consumption of meat and other animal-based foods;
- Refining the diet by eating products only from animals who have been raised, transported, and slaughtered in a system of humane, sustainable agriculture that does not abuse the animals;
- Replacing meat and other animal-based foods in the diet with plant-based foods.

As you can see, any move HSUS makes towards agriculture is all in pursuit of the goal of reducing the demand for animal products and drying up the market for these goods.

For more information about the HSUS go to our website and look under the What You Need To Know tab for Overview of Animal Extremist Groups

## Organization for Competitive Markets (OCM)

While many of their causes seem noble and ag friendly, the strong OCM/HSUS connection is very concerning. They have a confirmed Animal Extremism Activist at their helm with Joe Maxwell as Executive Director. Joe Maxwell has held several positions with the Humane Society of the United States as well as their legislative arm, Humane Legislative Fund where he served as the Senior Political Director. They also accepted pro-bono legal aid from them and defended HSUS as an animal welfare group.

## American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

In recent years, SRAP has put on a "Factory Farming Summit" in which people gather from all over the country to disparage large modern farms. The ASPCA sponsored both the 2016 and 2017 conference, and a representative from the ASPCA spoke at the event in 2017.

It is important to note that the ASPCA may have started with an admirable cause, but over the years the leadership has become centered on the animal extremist ideology. The ASPCA has participated in many anti-agriculture and anti-animal ownership initiatives.

## Sierra Club

The Sierra Club is an environmental organization that is frequently at odds with agriculture. Their magazine Sierra has even praised Wayne Pacelle, the former CEO of HSUS and radical animal extremist ideologue, for his book "Humane Economy" which pushes for Americans to end animal agriculture. Within the Socially Responsible Agriculture Project, there are some overlaps between the two organizations. SRAP's Scott Dye, Karen Hudson, and Lynn Henning are all closely affiliated with the Sierra Club. Scott Dye is one of their representatives, and Karen was even awarded "Conservationist of the Year" by their Illinois chapter.

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## Less = More Coalition

Less = More Coalition is located in Michigan and is a sub-group of the Sierra club. This is evident as seen in a google search and their website has a 2018 copyright by the Sierra Club. This group is centered around stopping large modern farming practices. Sierra Club Michigan Chapter, the HSUS, and SRAP are all members.

## Be Informed So You Can Be Proactive – Animal Extremist Organizations Attack All Agriculture

These groups attacking large modern farms are affiliated with animal extremist organizations that want to eliminate all animal agriculture. Their approach is “divide and conquer”. Don’t let them fool you, they make no distinctions. There are even newly emerging groups like Direct Action Everywhere (DxE) that are specifically targeting small organic farms to send the message that they are opposed to all use of animals in agriculture, no matter the number at their targeted farm or how they are housed.

We support all forms of agriculture big and small, and each has its place. However, if we do not stay ahead of these anti-agriculture organizations soon, the only agriculture businesses that can afford to withstand the activities of extremist groups are the large agricultural companies with very deep pockets.

It is now more important than ever for each animal industry sector to band together to stand up to animal extremist organizations to protect our heritage and way of life. SRAP has proved that no sector of animal agriculture is safe from their lawsuits, fear mongering, or anti-agriculture propaganda. We urge you all to stay informed about animal extremist organizations, both big and small. By staying ahead of their agenda and tactics we can protect animal agriculture and our American traditions.

People need to know about agriculture and all of the great things farmers and ranchers are doing every day to protect the environment and the welfare of their animals.

Together our voices are strong.

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