

Report criticizes major ag businesses for pollution that causes Gulf dead zone



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A new report by a national environmental group cites major agriculture companies as culprits behind much of the pollution that scientists say causes the Gulf of Mexico's so-called dead zone every summer.



The report, released today by the Environment America Research and Policy Center, uses publicly available data to document pollution from Tyson and four other major agriculture conglomerates the group claims is responsible for an estimated 44 percent of the pork, chicken and beef produced in the U.S. The other companies are Smithfield, Cargill, JBS and Perdue.

“When most people think of water pollution, they think of industrial pipes spewing toxic chemicals,” John Rumpler, senior attorney with Environment America and author of the report, said in a news release. “But this report shows how, increasingly, corporations like Tyson are turning farms into factories and ruining our rivers and bays in the process.”

"Corporate Agribusiness and the Fouling of America's Waterways" points to the hundreds of billions of pounds of farm fertilizer and animal waste produced every year by five of the largest agribusiness companies in the United States, the center says.

The report drew the immediate attention of the Gulf Restoration Network, a New Orleans-based environmental group that has sued the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, claiming the agency has failed to enforce federal-state agreements to curb such pollution. That lawsuit continues to wind through the federal courts.

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