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Ethanol manufacturing, meat processing plant officials meet with Schroepel town leaders

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Schroepel, NY -- The representative of a Long Island company, proposing a complex that includes an ethanol production facility, waste management operation and meat processing plant in Oswego County, has been talking to Schroepel town officials about possibly setting up shop there.

Supervisor Paul Casler said Jeff Kapell of Bion Environmental Technologies on Long Island met with the town board and the public Monday night to outline the company's proposal.

Bion does not have a site selected yet in Schroepel, Kapell said Thursday.

Casler said once Bion has a project firmly mapped out, Kapell will come back to the board for some concrete negotiations.

The project entails a closed-loop operation that uses all of the waste it makes so there is no residue or pollution going into water or air.

It would make ethanol, use animal waste to make enough energy to power its ethanol plant, use ethanol waste to feed the cattle and then slaughter and package the beef to sell for consumption.

Here's what it would do:

Corn from the Midwest would be shipped here and enter through the Port of Oswego. Local corn also could be used, Kapell said.

The corn would be used to make ethanol. Kapell said about 50 million gallons of ethanol would be made in a year. It would be sold to the transportation market.

The ethanol waste, called distillery waste, would be fed to the 72,000 cows housed in closed barns on the site.

The cow manure would be gathered several times daily and put through a process devised by Bion that extracts the ammonia, nitrogen, phosphorous and other harmful chemicals from it. The remainder will be turned into cellulose, which would be used to power the ethanol plant to offset natural gas usage.

The cows would be raised and then slaughtered and processed into various cuts and products sold to food service, commercial establishments or in retail.

Casler said the big plus to the project is the 300-plus jobs it could bring to the area.

"This is real preliminary stuff they were telling us," Casler said. "But there was no negativity shown at the meeting. People asked questions, but there were a lot of people for it."

The project already has been turned down by St. Lawrence County. Kapell said "politics got in the way" there. In addition, Casler said St. Lawrence County was looking at Bion's project and one for a racetrack and decided to move forward with the racetrack.

Kapell said Bion would need about 1,000 to 1,200 acres, although it doesn't all have to be in one area.

There also would have buffer areas between its sites and other area farms. The company would grow crops on that land.

He wasn't sure yet which crops would be planted, but said it would be crops that do not need a high level of nutrients because any waste it would spread would lack phosphorus and nitrogen that was removed from the manure using Bion's waste management technology.