1. Introduction

To write the essay you will need to view Joseph L. Badaracco’s *Defining Moments: A Framework for Moral Decisions*. The directions for accessing this video are below. You can also read a transcript of the video, which I have added to the appropriate module.

2. Background to Case:

First read the following articles:

1. *Iowa company will convert cow manure into natural gas. But is it an environmental asset or hazard?*  

2. *Walz Energy fined again for pollution in Bloody Run Creek trout stream watershed*  

3. *11,000+ cattle feedlot near Monona up for DNR review, no digesters this time*  

4. *DNR announces virtual public meeting for Supreme Beef, LLC nutrient management plan*  

You are welcome to read and use additional sources to support your arguments, but you are not required to do so. For any source that you use or quote, please be sure to cite it on a Works Cited page (this does not count toward your page count). This includes the above sources and the Badaracco video.

Next, read the following fact pattern and use it to guide your response.

3. Prompt:
A company named Supreme Beef, LLC (formerly Walz Energy) proposes to build a 11,000-head cattle feedlot in Clayton County, located in northeast Iowa. Supreme Beef says the feedlot will create jobs and boost the Iowa economy. Many people are concerned that the cattle operation will jeopardize water quality in nearby Bloody Run Creek, a trout stream designated as an Iowa Outstanding Water.¹

At the heart of the dispute is the “karst topography” which underlies the land in question. “Karst is a type of landscape where the dissolving of the bedrock has created sinkholes, sinking streams, caves, springs, and other characteristic features. Karst is associated with soluble rock types such as limestone, marble, and gypsum. In general, a typical karst landscape forms when much of the water falling on the surface interacts with and enters the subsurface through cracks, fractures, and holes that have been dissolved into the bedrock. After traveling underground, sometimes for long distances, this water is then discharged from springs, many of which are cave entrances.”²

Critics of the Supreme Beef project note that 11,000 cows will generate approximately as much waste (manure) as 500,000 humans. Supreme Beef has filed a “nutrient management plan” (“NMP”) which details how it intends to store and dispose of the waste generated by the cows. The initial plan included an energy-generating manure digester, but that project never came to fruition. The current plan is to collect the manure and apply it to land in Clayton and Allamakee Counties. Environmentalists worry that the manure will contaminate groundwater and streams used by people for drinking, fishing, and recreation. They also note that the cattle operation has been already been fined for “illegal discharges to Bloody Run Creek and lack of storm water control measures at the construction area. The DNR also handed down two separate administrative consent orders, both with $10,000 penalties.”³

You will assume the role of a research intern with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Assume for the purposes of this assignment that the Iowa DNR will have the final say in whether Supreme Beef should be allowed to open its 11,000-head cattle feedlot on Bloody Run Creek. Your assignment is to write a persuasive essay to the Director of the Iowa DNR (your boss), 1) advising her whether Supreme Beef should be allowed to open this operation in the proposed

² https://www.nps.gov/subjects/caves/karst-landscapes.htm
location, 2) showing your reasoning for your conclusion, and 3) explaining the ethical issues the DNR should consider in making this decision.

4. Structure and Format:

Use the following steps to assist you in structuring your answer (although you should not write the essay as just answers to the series of questions below). Your essay should have a clearly articulated thesis and effective claim statements for paragraph topic sentences in which you develop your position.

1. What is the ethical issue or problem?
2. What are the critical facts related to your decision?
3. What are possible solutions/actions/responses?
4. Who will be affected by your decision? (Who are the stakeholders?)
5. What is the effect of the likely solutions/actions/responses on the stakeholders?
6. What is your decision? How do you propose to justify your decision based on Badaracco’s four Frameworks for a Decision (i.e., best net/net, individual rights, messages sent about character, and what will work in the world as it is) and your own primary ethical values?
7. What makes your decision “ethical”?

Your essay should be written in paragraph form, with indented paragraphs and no headings or bulleted points. Essays should be between 3 – 4 double-spaced pages (one-inch margins, page numbers and 12-point font). Essays longer than 4.5 pages will not be eligible for the competition.

You may write in first-person or third-person prose. There is no one required citation style, but your style should be professional and consistent. MLA or APA styles are recommended. Please cite all outside sources used, including a "works cited" page if necessary. You do not need to cite Badaracco's speech or course slides (unless you quote verbatim, in which case you must cite appropriately).

All Tippie undergraduates are eligible for the contest. Essays should be submitted to the appropriate assignment on ICON. Your essay will be evaluated for originality/plagiarism through turnitin.com. You must cite all sources that you use, particularly where you quote text directly.

Thanks to the generosity of Mary and Dempsey Prappas, monetary awards will be given to the students whose essays are considered by the essay contest external review judges to be top-ranked. The amounts are to be determined by UPO and the
Frank Center, and are to be credited toward the winners' U-bills assuming they are continuing students at the UI.

Previous winning essays can be viewed here: https://tippie.uiowa.edu/about-tippie/centers-institutes/frank-business-communication-center

5. How to Access the Badaracco Video

The Defining Moments video is available on-line through the Business Source Complete (BSC) database on the University of Iowa website http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/biz/

Here is a permalink to the video:

You may also consult with a Tippie Librarian if you have difficult accessing this video: https://www.lib.uiowa.edu/biz/contact/