CLEAN ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION

HOG PRODUCTION INDUSTRY REVIEW

SCOPING MEETING

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Held at Friedensfeld Community Centre
Friedensfeld, Manitoba
MONDAY, JANUARY 22, 2007
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APPEARANCES:

Clean Environment Commission:

Mr. Terry Sargeant     Chairman
Mr. Norm Brandson      Member
Mr. Wayne Motheral     Member
Ms. Cathy Johnson      Commission Secretary
Mr. Doug Smith         Report Writer

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Reporter:
Lisa Reid
MONDAY, JANUARY 22, 2007

UPON COMMENCING AT 1:05

THE CHAIRMAN: Good afternoon. I think we will come to order now. I'd like to welcome you all here to this afternoon's meeting. My name is Terry Sargeant. I'm the Chair of the Manitoba Clean Environment Commission, as well as the Chair of this panel. With me on the panel are Norm Brandson and Wayne Motheral.

I have a few opening comments and then we will turn to those of you who wish to make presentations to us today. As you will know, the Manitoba Clean Environment Commission has been requested by the Minister of Conservation to conduct an investigation into the environmental sustainability of the hog industry in Manitoba. The Terms of Reference from the Minister direct us to review the current environmental protection measures in place relating to hog production in order to determine their effectiveness for the purpose of managing the industry in an environmentally sustainable manner.

Our investigation is to include a public component to gain advice and feedback from Manitobans. This will be done by means of public
meetings in the various regions of Manitoba to ensure broad participation from the general public and affected stakeholders. We have also been asked to take into account efforts under way in other jurisdictions to manage hog production in a sustainable manner.

Further, we are to review the contents of a report prepared by Manitoba Conservation entitled "An Examination of the Environmental Sustainability of the Hog Industry in Manitoba". And at the end of our investigation, we will consider various options and make recommendations in a report to the Minister on any improvements that may be necessary to provide for the environmental sustainability of hog production in this province.

To ensure that our review includes issues of importance to all Manitobans, the panel has undertaken to hold three days of scoping meetings, open to groups and individuals who would like to identify and suggest issues related to hog production in the province which could be addressed by the panel.

Today is the first day of those scoping hearings. We are not here today to engage
in an in-depth discussion of the issues that will be before us. There will be opportunities through a series of meetings to be held throughout the province, throughout southern Manitoba in March and April, for detailed input. A list of the dates and places for these hearings is available at the back table.

Presentations today are to be limited to 15 minutes. What we are looking for today is identification and an introduction of issues you believe we should consider in our review. We also want a brief reasoning as to why these issues should be considered by the panel. And also we will welcome suggestions on how the panel could approach our investigation.

I would note that written submissions in respect of scoping issues will also be accepted. Information as to how to submit written suggestions is available on our website, as well as, I believe, at the back of the hall. The deadline for written submissions in respect of scoping is February 2nd. There will be a later date for written submissions on more detailed items.

The panel will use the information
that we gather over the -- I was going to say the
next three days, but three of the next four days,
as well as any written submissions. We will use
this information to help us focus our review, to
investigate the issues we will review, and to
gather additional information from the public and
develop -- ultimately develop conclusions and
recommendations for the Minister.

Some administrative matters before we
begin. If you wish to make a presentation today,
would you please register at the table at the back
of the room? Also, as is our normal practice in
Clean Environment Commission hearings, we are
recording these sessions, transcripts of each
day's hearings will be available online within a
day or so. You can find the link on our website
to where the transcripts will be.

I should also note that for the main
hearings, the March and April meetings, there will
be a small participant assistance program. If you
or any group that you know, a community group or
an environmental group or an agricultural group
wishes to apply for participant assistance to help
you prepare a presentation for the main meetings
in March and April, information for that is
available at the back of the room.

We have had four people indicate that they wish to make presentations this afternoon, as well as a couple who are going to be coming after dinner, after the dinner break. One of the people who had been scheduled for 1:45 has indicated he might be a little bit late, so we may reverse or just change the order of presentations.

The first person up this afternoon will be Mr. Denis Vielfore from Hytek, followed by Mark Peters from East-Man Feeds, and then Al Mackling, if he shows up on time, and followed by David Wiens. If Mr. Mackling is late, we will just reverse that order.

Once all four of those presentations have been done, if anybody else wishes to make a presentation, they will be welcome to do so. If nobody wants to make another presentation among you in this room, we will remain here until 5:00 when we take the supper break, but we may all just be chatting or twiddling our thumbs if nobody is being -- wanting to make presentations.

Having said that, I would like to invite Mr. Denis Vielfore to come forward and make a presentation. If you would go to the table up
here, Mr. Vielfore?

MR. VIelfORE: It doesn't matter which one?

THE CHAIRMAN: No, it doesn't matter, either one is fine. Would you please, for the record, introduce yourself and spell your name, please?

MR. VIelfORE: Denis Vielfore, the last name is V, as in victory, I-E-L-F-O-R-E. It is Denis with one "N".

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. You may proceed, Mr. Vielfore.

MR. VIelfORE: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, and your panel members. Thank you for the opportunity.

I am one of the owners and founders of Hytek, based out in La Broquerie. Just a quick history in Hytek.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Vielfore, could you just raise the mike slightly?

MR. VIelfORE: A quick history on Hytek, it was started when two farm families. The Janson family and the Vielfore family aligned together back in '94 to align our interests in the hog industry. Since then, we have grown in
Manitoba, Saskatchewan, the Unites States and recently in China. Our growth has been stimulated by being able to surround ourselves by great people, and today we have about 450 employees. Our success is based on working with communities, and the people in the communities, and also working with government, and also facing the challenges and opportunities as we have grown this industry.

My presentation will be brief. I understand this is a scoping meeting. We will present a more detailed presentation at the public meetings. I just want to add, at this point, that I want to make sure that we recognize and emphasize to the Commission that Manitoba Pork Council is a producer association that I fully support and that they be given the necessary participant status and funds to support the hog industry through this investigation.

I will go through Hytek's position here on the scoping meetings. We have three comments we would like to bring forward. The first one is that the CEC must maintain its focus on environmental sustainability to the Manitoba hog industry. This is clearly mandated by the
And, number two, that the CEC must stay focused on the Terms of Reference. We acknowledge the Terms of Reference, as stated by the Minister of Conservation. And as long as the CEC remains focused on science-based evidence brought forward to the hearings that pertains to Manitoba landscape. We challenge the CEC on one of the Terms of Reference, to conduct public meetings, to remain attentive to the issues that are relevant to the Manitoba landscape.

Number three, the CEC must deliver on its mandate in a timely manner. The Manitoba hog industry is a vibrant industry that is quickly maturing and any long-term interruption will be devastating to the sustainable future.

In closing, I would like to say that the CEC needs to filter through information presented at public meetings to ensure rational science-based evidence is used when it prepares its recommendations to the Minister and that the CEC is accountable to link the public opinion to the Minister's mandate. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Vielfore. Any questions from the panelists?
Wayne?

MR. BRANDSON: No.

MR. MOTHERAL: No.

MR. VIELFORE: Just one question.

THE CHAIRMAN: Certainly.

MR. VIELFORE: Is the panel that is here today the same panel that are going through the meetings?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, but there may be one other person. And I can't identify that person because I haven't identified that person. We are hoping to have a panel of four. And we are talking to some people about being a fourth panelist, but the three of us will be on the panel for the main hearings, yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. VIELFORE: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Peters? Would you identify yourself for the record, Mr. Peters, and proceed?

MR. PETERS: Mark Peters. First name M-A-R-K. Last name Peters, P-E-T-E-R-S.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. PETERS: Good afternoon, members of the Clean Environment Commission, panel and
ladies and gentlemen of the audience.

My name is Mark Peters, and I am the
director of sales and marketing at East-Man Animal
Nutrition in Winnipeg. East-Man Animal Nutrition
is an independent, 100 percent Canadian family
owned and operated company. East-Man Animal
Nutrition began as a manufacturer of
vitamin/mineral premixes and supplements for
livestock in 1970.

Founder and president, Peter Friesen,
brought the concept of on-farm manufacturing of
feed to Western Canada by providing a missing
link; allowing producers to add vitamins, minerals
and supplements to their own grain to make their
own complete rations on-farm.

We have 137 employees in eight
locations across Western Canada and three
locations in the mid-west United States.

We work closely with independent pork
producers, from small to large. And our smallest
customer has 30 sows, farrow to finish, and our
largest customer is 1,000 sows, farrow to finish,
and so we work on.

On behalf of East-Man Animal
Nutrition, I sincerely thank you for the
opportunity to present our comments regarding the review of the environmental sustainability of the hog production industry in Manitoba. I would have liked that this review be entitled "A review of the environmental sustainability of pork production in Manitoba", as this would more accurately reflect what we do in this industry; that is to produce pork for the consumer, locally and globally.

It is often overlooked that we work within the community of food producers. Our job is to produce food that sustains and nurture our population.

As supporters of independent pork producers, we work with them to produce quality product in an environmentally sustainable manner. We understand and fully support the serious commitment that our pork producers have towards the stewardship of our air, soil, natural plants, wildlife and water resources.

We also support the Manitoba government's efforts to protect and maintain our surface and groundwater supply for current and future use. Manitoba's pork industry and Manitoba's pork producers' very existence are tied
to a sufficiently reliable source of high-quality water, water that is critical to the raising of pork. Good water is also vitally important to our company and our customers who live, work and raise families on the farm.

East-Man Animal Nutrition is concerned with nutrient management, and we support the testing of our customers' land so that the right amounts of nutrients are applied.

Hog producers are not the only cause for the recent increase in phosphorus levels in our lakes and rivers.

The rising levels of phosphorus in Lake Winnipeg, for example, come from a variety of sources: The U.S.A., other provinces, industry, human waste, cities and municipalities, natural deposits, dishwasher detergent, and lawn fertilizers.

In my 23 years of working with pork producers, I have seen massive improvements in the production of pork.

I have seen the kilograms of pork produced per breeding female increase by 80 percent. Today an average sow can produce 2,500 kilograms of pork, compared to
1,400 kilograms 20 years ago. In turn, feed conversions, or the amount of feed needed to produce this pork, has decreased by 25 percent. This means more food produced with fewer animals, using less feed, excreting fewer nutrients.

Innovation and technology has driven these production efficiencies. This innovation and technology has been driven by the Canadian consumers' demand of cheap food.

Canadians are fortunate to spend approximately 10 percent of their disposable income on food, one of the lowest in the world. It is interesting that these hearings are being held a few weeks before Canadians will reach their Food Freedom Day, the calendar date when, according to statistics, the average Canadian consumer has earned enough income to pay his or her individual grocery bill for the entire year.

This innovation and technology has been driven by the Canadian consumers' demand for safe food.

In Canada we never expect to get sick from the food we consume. Where in some countries, people expect to get sick from the food they eat 5 to 6 times per year.
That innovation and technology continues to evolve.

Last week at pork seminar in Alberta, we saw papers being presented on: Bio-digesters and manure processing; animal welfare: Obligation or opportunity?; use of net energy in feed formulation to reduce nutrient excretion; the use of natural enzymes to reduce phosphorous usage in swine diets.

900 delegates from around the world attended this seminar, and each of these attendees are directly involved in the production of pork. This meeting enabled us to make global connections and to converse with colleagues from other countries who are dealing with these very same issues. It needs to be noted that we have been researching and utilizing these new technologies whenever possible.

Research is ongoing, and is being conducted as we speak, around the world and in Canada. Canadian universities, and research centers such as Prairie Swine Centre, in Saskatchewan are world renowned for their research.

And this year the National Centre for
Livestock and the Environment at the University of Manitoba's Glenlea Research Station goes into operation. There's nothing else like it in North America! It's the only research facility where scientists will be able to study ecological interactions and the effects of management practices in a total crop and animal production system.

The Natural Centre for Livestock and the Environment will provide the facility and tools for researchers from many disciplines to work together on long-term solutions to key issues facing animal agriculture, including environmental health, food safety, as well as animal productivity and well-being.

The National Centre for Livestock and the Environment is unique. Using both conventional and alternative animal housing facilities, conventional and alternative manure storage and handling technologies, long-term crop rotations, and well-equipped laboratories, this will be the only location in North America with the expertise and facilities to tackle major issues facing intensive animal agriculture from
the molecular to the landscape level, using a whole farm approach.

The National Centre for Livestock and the Environment will support short and long-term studies of energy, nutrient and microbial movement in the farm ecosystem. This farm will be the only center we know of in the world with the capacity for this type of research.

The National Centre for Livestock and the Environment will be able to provide key data for economic analysis of alternative animal, manure, and land management practices, quantify economic and other risks, as well as identify other economic opportunities.

As you can see, our pork production industry is fully aware of the issues of today and the future, and we must continue to address these issues if we want to be sustainable.

We, in the pork industry, are as concerned with the protection of our environment as all Manitobans are. And there is no question that we must remain vigilant in our stewardship of this valuable, life-giving resource.

The Commission has been tasked with a responsibility that, upon its recommendations,
will impact agri-business, the environment, the consumer and, most of all, the farmer.

We respectfully request that the panel address the technologies that are currently being used, and to look at the innovation and future technologies that we are currently working with. We urge the panel to talk with our world-class researchers, go to our universities, and experience first-hand the work that they are doing. We urge the panel to tour a modern pork production facility and to talk with the farmers whose lives depend on the sustainability of this very important food industry.

In closing, I would like to leave you with the words of William Jennings Bryan's statement from the famous 1896 "Cross of Gold Speech." His words are even more relevant today:

"Burn down your cities and leave our farms, and your cities will spring up again as if by magic; but destroy our farms and the grass will grow in the streets of every city in the country."

Thank you for your time and consideration of our comments and concerns on this issue.
THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Peters.

If we were to look for issues such as innovation and future technologies, where would you suggest we might would be best to look?

MR. PETERS: Start at the University of Manitoba. Talk with the people that are working with these issues on a daily basis. Talk to us. Talk to pork producers that themselves are putting these innovations and this technology to practice today on the farm. Talk to as many people as you can that work, you know, with us in the industry because it is a very exciting and advancing industry.

THE CHAIRMAN: We have already talked with some people from the university, and will be talking with them a lot more. And we will probably be engaging some people from the University of Manitoba to conduct literature research for us. And we do hope to hear, through these hearings this week, and then in March and April, from as many Manitobans, including pork producers, as we can. We will be hearing from the Pork Council tomorrow. And I do know that we will be hearing from the Pork Council at the very onset of our main hearings in March and April.
Norm or Wayne, do you have any questions of Mr. Peters?

MR. BRANDSON: No.

MR. MOTHERAL: No.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any other comments you would like to make?

MR. PETERS: No. Thank you very much.

Your task is a huge responsibility that is going to affect a lot of people.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for your participation today.

Next up, Mr. Al Mackling.

Mr. Mackling, would you introduce yourself for the record, please, and then you may proceed?

MR. MACKLING: Yes. My name is Al Mackling. I have been a resident of the R.M. of Springfield. No longer there. I am in the City of Winnipeg.

But during my time in the R.M. of Springfield, I had the experience of being involved in hearings in respect to applications for intensive livestock operations, became aware of the issue and got quite involved. And I'm a member of the Springfield Hog Watch group. I continue to be and have a continuing interest in
this whole area.

My understanding, Mr. Chairman, is that this is an opportunity to give the Clean Environment Commission an indication of areas of concern that the public have, the better for the Commission to focus on issues that the public is interested in. And you don't want extensive argument at this stage in respect to the various concerns that individuals have?

THE CHAIRMAN: That's correct.

MR. MACKLING: But you do want an outline?

THE CHAIRMAN: That's correct. Today we are looking for an outline as to how we should scope our review process.

MR. MACKLING: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: In March and April, we will have an extensive round of hearings at which we will be looking for more detailed input.

MR. MACKLING: Yes. And I assume that those of us who have registered for these proceedings will be notified and be included in the more extensive hearings later on or do we re-register?

THE CHAIRMAN: I think you should
indicate again, perhaps before you leave today,
that you would like to speak at one of the
hearings in the spring or in March or April.

MR. MACKLING: All right. I will do
that. While we, as an organization, have concerns
about a number of aspects that intensive livestock
operations bring to the fore, including the very,
very important one of the degradation or possible
degradation of water systems and water supplies,
we also -- and I have some ideas that I want to
put before the Commission on that. And if there
is time, I can elaborate a bit now.

But two of the issues that perhaps may
go without enough attention to them are the
question of animal husbandry and the cruelty that
is perceived to occur to animals that are raised
in intensive livestock operations. We have become
aware of the fact that there have been practices
of animal husbandry followed in Europe that are no
longer acceptable there, but those same practices
occur here in North America and here in Manitoba.

The confinement of animals in very,
very limited space and the consequent stress that
those animals suffer as a consequence of the
intensity of their living quarters. I've had the
opportunity of seeing animals in intensive living quarters. And, quite frankly, I'm not a vegetarian, but one sometimes wonders whether or not we should consider becoming vegetarians if we have to raise animals in such very difficult conditions.

There is no question that when animals are raised in very, very stressful conditions, that the incidence of disease, and therefore, mortality is greater. There has always been a consideration for the mortality question in respect to the intensive livestock operations, and provisions are provided or are made for the disposition of the animals that die under these circumstances. And the reason there is that focus is because animals that are raised in such stressful conditions have a higher likelihood of dying.

Now, one of the concerns that we have, and I have presented this concern at a hearing in Springfield, was that we really don't know and appreciate the extent of contamination, atmospheric contamination and, therefore, pollution and health threats from animals or from airborne matter. Now, some people may scoff and
say: Well, airborne matter, you know, what is
carried any distance? You know, you are just
being a dreamer. You are being fanciful. Well,
the scientists tell us that viruses can be carried
in the atmosphere for great distances. And they
estimate or they guess or they ponder that some of
the viruses that are occurring in America come
great distances, not by humans carrying them, but
through the atmosphere. And it sounds pretty
wild, but that happens, apparently.

I know, from my limited experience,
having an extensive garden in the Springfield area
where we lived. I went out to the garden one
morning and I was amazed at the thousands and
thousands, and I am not exaggerating, of cabbage
butterflies that were suddenly all over the
garden. They weren't there the day before or the
few days before. And I marveled at all of these
creatures. They are all happy and fluttering
around. And I was wondering about the
consequences to my garden, of course.

I heard later on the news that there
had been a storm in Kansas, or somewhere deep in
the Unites States, that had the effect of lifting
this huge number of butterflies into the
atmosphere and taking them north. That's where they came from. Now, the butterfly, as most of you know, is a very fragile little animal. But, by golly, they weren't at all fragile when they were in the garden. They were carried a great distance. And they were very healthy and ready to go to work on my garden.

We know that life forms can be carried atmospherically. The scientists have told us this. When I first started addressing concerns about intensive livestock operations in Springfield, one of the concerns that we had was airborne pollutants. And to their credit, the early proponents of livestock operations engaged engineers who did address this problem. GDM Engineering were involved in providing material to support applicants for intensive livestock operations. And one of the considerations they always included was wind velocity, regular wind velocity, the prevailing wind direction and so forth. Later on in hearings in Springfield that whole issue was disregarded.

I am very concerned, and we are very concerned, about airborne pollution. We live in a society that's more and more dependent upon and
affected by chemicals and other things. We know that there is a growing incidence within every community, apparently, of bronchial and asthmatic conditions. What causes them? Who knows. Is it the food? Is it chemicals in the food we eat? Is it chemicals in the food we eat or the air we breathe? Who knows.

But we do know that animal danders are carried high into the -- into the air from livestock operations, animal dander. And animals shed a lot of skin. And we're animals and we shed a lot of skin. People scoff and say: What are you talking about? We shed skin all our lives and so do these animals. And there are going to be millions of them shedding skin. And that matter is lifted up and carried into the atmosphere and, along with it, what else? Do we know?

We know that these animals, raised in such close quarters and under stress, being subject therefore to disease, are carefully monitored. The producers here will tell you that they are very carefully monitored. And no one can just walk into those facilities because you might carry in a bacterium of some kind and the producer would lose extensively.
But in order to guard against disease, the producers, and the people who produce the feed, were known to have -- and it's common knowledge that they put antibiotics or similar medicines into the feed to protect the animals from disease. What happens to these, the leftovers of these antibiotics and so on? Does anybody know? Do they naturally degrade? What is their life -- what is their lifespan, either going into the water or being carried, as with some particulate matter, into the air? Do we know? I think we should care. So it's these areas, primarily, that I want to suggest that the Commission not overlook because they are important.

The water issue, yes, is so evident and is so clear. If I might take a moment, I would like to indicate that some, now near many years ago, I suggested to Members of Parliament, to the government, that in order to deal with the water contamination of run-off of nutrient, it be necessary to filter the water and go back to natural filtration of water. The natural filtration of water occurs through water being channelled and held in sloughs or marshes or
marshy areas where the vegetation is capable of removing the pollutants or the nutrients from the water. And then the water that is cleansed is allowed to flow back into the system.

Now, I know this by first-hand experience. I had a cousin whose husband was running a greenhouse in the Milwaukee area. And the authorities said, hey, you've got to do something about this because you've got -- in your run-off from your greenhouse you've got nutrients that are going to be a problem to our system. You've got to install a very elaborate system to clean this up, your run-off water from your greenhouse.

And then he learned about a simpler technique. He had enough acreage. He took a small portion of his acreage and ran the effluent, the water coming from his greenhouse, into that oversized pond full of cattails or bulrushes, as we call them. The result, they cleaned up the water. He didn't have a huge problem to deal with the nutrients, the water that was loaded with nutrients and pesticides, or whatever, that came in the greenhouse operation. And the authorities were satisfied.
Now, we know that we've got a problem with our lake system and our river system. It's not going to be cleaned up by just taking detergents off the market, or whatever, or whatever. We have got to go back to filtrating the run-off from agricultural operations through a natural source. And from my experience, I owned a quarter section, there is always a portion of land in every -- at least in every section that is low-lying where the natural drainage goes.

And I believe that what has to happen is that the farmers and the land owners and the local government and the conservation districts and the provincial government have to do a reality check and realize that there are portions of the land that should never be tilled. They should be left as a wet area, as a filter area. And the farm drainage should be channelled through that area, held and allowed to run-off. And I was involved with kind of a hobby farmer out in the Springfield area who wanted to do just that, but he couldn't get -- he couldn't get the help necessary in order to do it.

I think this has got to be done in the Red River valley on a massive scale. It's going
to cost money. We are either going to have to buy
or lease from farmers some acres. Maybe five
acres in one area. Maybe only two acres in
another area. But develop a system to naturally
filter the run-off because farmers have to have
their fields drained.

If the Commission goes out in the
countryside and looks in ditches, they will see
that those ditches are just rife with weeds and
growth and bulrushes. Why? Because they are
loaded with nutrients. Those nutrients should be
contained back in the field and then released to
the ditch which flows to the creek or the river.
Anyway, it's food for your thought.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you,
Mr. Mackling. Do either of you gentlemen have
questions of Mr. Mackling?
MR. BRANDSON: No.
MR. MOTHERAL: I would have comment,
but this isn't the time to comment.
MR. MACKLING: I would like to hear
your comment.
MR. MOTHERAL: Yes, I am just familiar
with a lot of the practices that you are talking
about.
MR. MACKLING: Good.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Mackling. Is Mr. Wiens here yet? He wasn't scheduled until 2:00. We have had another person who wishes to come forward, Wendy Friesen. Please introduce yourself for the record, Ms. Friesen, and then proceed.

MS. FRIESEN: My name is Wendy Friesen. I come from the Lowe Farm area.

THE CHAIRMAN: Bring the mike a little closer.

MS. FRIESEN: Okay. My name is Wendy Friesen. I'm here today to represent our family farm, which is made up of hog production and grain/oil seeds production.

The purpose of my presentation here today is to ensure that the CEC review of hog production in Manitoba will be focused only on the issues which fall within the intended scope. I know that the fears of the non-farming community will weigh heavily on you, so I ask that you be very careful in sorting through the many comments which I am sure you will receive in following your mandate only.

Key issues which should be focused on...
include a focus on the environmental issues, such
as protection of soil. And you will see that
there are many soil tests which have been done at
the cost of the farmer and that farmers are good
stewards of the land. After all, we raise our
families here and have every reason to take care
of our land.

Review the phosphorus and mortality
regulations which the hog producers follow to see
how far the farmers already have to go to be in
compliance. The land re-seeded with fertilizer is
not always owned by the hog farmer, but any land
owner has to consider the appropriate amount of
fertilizer to be applied for both long-term and
economical reasons.

Read the water tests which have been
performed on Lake Winnipeg so you can see that hog
manure contributes only about one percent of the
phosphorus in the lake. Where does the other
99 percent come from? Also, keep in mind that we,
too, drink the water and that, in itself, is
enough reason to keep the water clean.

Realize that timing is extremely
important to the hog producer, as any further
delays in building of hog barns, or expansions
thereof, will tie the hands of farmers and their right to continue on in the business of hog production. This pause has already forced the hog industry to rearrange the long-term plans that were already in place and have now been put on hold. I don't believe that any other industry would take kindly to this type of interruption of business either.

I know that your review needs to be thorough and focused. And I ask that you edit out any other issues which might come up so that this review can be done as quickly and efficiently as possible. Thank you for your time.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Any comments or questions?

MR. BRANDSON: No.

MR. MOTHERAL: No.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Ms. Friesen.

MS. FRIESEN: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Does anybody else wish to make a presentation at this time? What we will do, then, is we will just sort of adjourn until Mr. Wiens shows up. And then if anybody else shows up and wishes to make a presentation, we
will come back to order. We will remain here until 5:00, which is our supper break. So that anybody who comes in between now and 5:00, we will just sit back down and hear them and then we will adjourn again if there is nobody. We do have at least a couple of people scheduled for after the dinner break. So we will take a break right now until we have had some other person who wishes to make a presentation show up. Thank you.

(PROCEEDINGS RECESSED AT 1:50 AND RESUMED AT 2:39)

THE CHAIRMAN: Hello. Mr. Wiens, who had indicated he wanted to speak this afternoon, has yet to show up. But we have had another person who came out here today who is registered to make a presentation and we will hear him right now. And then if and when Mr. Wiens shows up, we will reconvene again. Mr. Dirks.

MR. DIRKS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and panel.

THE CHAIRMAN: Can you introduce yourself for the record, please?

MR. DIRKS: Okay. My name is Cal Dirks. I'm a pullet farmer in the R.M. of Hanover. And it is pullets grown for egg-layer production.
And we are very much aware of the importance of environmental protection and manage our farm accordingly for now and our future generations. And we know the impact on the hog industry will impact all livestock production, so I would like to make a few background comments to begin.

Egg and pullet producers operate under a cohesive well-organized system that enable us the dissemination and uptake of information relating to water protection and proper manure management. We are all well aware of environmental issues and prepared to do our fair share to ensure protection of our water resources. We consider this area a priority important to the overall sustainability of the industry.

Producer education has been ongoing since the development of farm practices guidelines. And some examples of initiatives are as follows: Proper manure management presentation at our producer meetings, production of manure management for laying hens and pullets brochures, promotion and hosting of environmental plan workshop and various informational newsletter articles to our producers.
Many producers have retooled and are in the process of retooling their facilities, which includes improved manure storage and handling. Many are moving from liquid to dry manure handling systems. Manure is recognized as a valuable fertilizer and soil conditioner for producers, as manure is utilized by the many egg and pullet producers who also grow crops.

So some issues for the CEC and the rationale. The CEC should focus on the issues very specific to environmental protection, not the broader social and economic landscape. The rationale would be to focus and prevent unnecessary delays so producers can be certain of regulations and start to proceed with required changes.

Secondly, we are supportive of the current limits and restrictions contained within the recently amended manure management regulations and look forward to discussions with the government regarding transition support. Our rationale: Much research and consultation has already gone into these amendments, which are broadly supported.

And, finally, we feel the CEC needs to
ensure that the nutrient management regulation under water stewardship gives appropriate emphasis to urban activities, such as direct discharge of urban waste and winter spreading of municipal human waste. Agriculture will do their part, and wishes the CEC to ensure other sectors share in the responsibility of the environment as well.

Thank you very much for your time.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Dirks.

Norm or Wayne, do you have any questions?

MR. BRANDSON: No.

MR. MOTHERAL: No.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

Does anybody else wish to come up and make any contributions to our process? Okay. We will take another break. We will be here until our supper break at 5:00. If anybody else comes in, or if Mr. Wiens does show up, we will reconvene and allow people to make their presentations. So we will stand adjourned again until at least 5:00.

(PROCEEDINGS RECESSED AT 2:45 AND RESUMED AT 4:15)

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Mr. Hofer?

MR. HOFER: Good afternoon.

THE COMMISSIONER: Good afternoon.

MR. HOFER: I didn't plan on speaking
here, but my colleagues and friends told me to come up with something. And I guess the question that I --

THE COMMISSIONER: Could you introduce yourself for the record, please?

MR. HOFER: James Hofer. I'm with Star Lite Colony Farms at Starbuck.

THE COMMISSIONER: Star Lite Colony Farms?

MR. HOFER: Yes, L-I-T-E.

THE COMMISSIONER: Okay, thank you.

MR. HOFER: I guess the question I ask myself, being here in this room: Why are we here? And if the answer is: Lake Winnipeg and the state of what that lake is in, then I would suggest that the Clean Environment Commission have a look at all of the point sources that contribute to the nutrients that end up in that lake. And if we look at the watershed and how -- what that watershed contains, how big it is, it goes west to the rockies, it goes south. And that lake is taxed, you know, putting through a lot of water.

So one of the other areas that, you know, I have questions on, and I am not sure on how that is being monitored or controlled, is the
way the City of Winnipeg handles its bio-solid wastes. In fact, just on the way coming down to the meetings, I drove cross-country, and they are spreading as we speak. They have been doing it for the last month. It is on the snow. I don't know how they are going to manage that. And how they get away with the licence to winter spread and who's monitoring it? Do they have to fill out a manure management plan or a nutrient plan to make sure that the application rates are being met?

And the hog industry has always responded to issues or challenges that have come up. And I think, in most cases, they've always acted in a responsible fashion and have never been out to just blatantly try to ruin the environment. We live and work on the farm. We drink the water that's in the ground there, and it's in our own best interests to farm and to run an operation that is sustainable and friendly to the environment.

Another, another thing that really bothers me is how can people, public, in some cases even government maybe, tell farmers how to farm when they have actually never, in fact, run a
One of my dad's favourite peeves is he says: Have you ever flown an airplane? No. Then how can you tell somebody that's a pilot that's licensed how to fly an airplane? I said: I can't. That's what I struggle with when I look at government. And I know we need government and I know we need regulations. But there never seems to be enough, what would you call it, credibility given to farmers. There seems to be none.

And in the past, we have had a lot of regulations come at us. And we have found a way to work with the regulations and, you know, come up with a doable solution. But to come in and totally shut down an industry, I mean, how is that doable? It just isn't doable and we don't know how we are going to do it.

We can't go out and make more land. There is only so much land. And, you know, if the government would come up with some form of maybe grandfathering the existing farms to continue to expand and not let any new ones in. But to shut the existing ones down is -- I don't know if that's the solution.

And look at the smaller farmer. If we look at the number of farms we had 25 years ago,
and the number of farms we have today, and we ask why and how were these farmers shut down? A lot of them just can't work with the regulations. The bigger ones have worked and rolled with the punches, but the smaller ones are just bowing out. And we are just getting more and more people that the family farm isn't there anymore. The urban population is not connected to the farm anymore. And they just don't understand the issues that surround the farm and the challenges the farmers are faced with.

And, you know, it always appears that the government, with the regulations or the programs that they come up with, there is very little assistance to the farmers. It is always, you know, on the backs of the farmers and coming up and adding costs to the costs of operating a farm. We have weather issues. We have market forces. It's just a non-stop barrage of challenges that farmers are faced with.

And then if we look at the province and why is the province producing all of the hogs that we are producing? It was led by the government. It was encouraged by the government. And I would say it was done in a -- it wasn't done
with -- it was done with their eyes open. They
didn't close their eyes and go and build a whole
slew of barns.

If we look at the grow rate, we lost
our subsidy when it came to shipping grain. And
it only makes sense that we try to walk this grain
off the farm because to ship it was just another
cost.

And if we look at the issue of -- I
know the hog industry, or I don't know if I can
call it the issue of the hog industry, but if I
ask: Why are we here today, besides Lake
Winnipeg, is it election? Is it focused around
election or is it being -- is the government doing
it because of elections? That's the question that
I just, you know, came to -- I am not comfortable
with.

And farmers have a lot of passion for
what they do. They love what they are doing and
they are good at it. And we continue to be -- we
continue to operate in manners that are friendly
to the environment and continue to produce food.

And in some cases, like I have alluded
to before, smaller farmers are bowing out. One of
the reasons that they are bowing out, they are
getting tired. They are getting worn out. The fight to push back, to stand up, in a lot of cases is not there anymore. They are getting tired. And the question is why? Why do we need to always -- why can't government and an industry that big not work together and come up with solutions to move on? There is just -- I am at a loss of words. You take the community life and the Hutterite colonies right now that are ready to establish new colonies. And they were planning on hog production and now that's totally, totally out of the question. It's a way of life.

THE COMMISSIONER: Mr. Hovers, does your colony produce hogs?

MR. HOFER: Yes, sir.

THE COMMISSIONER: How large an operation?

MR. HOFER: 600 sows, start to finish.

THE COMMISSIONER: 600?

MR. HOFER: Yes.

THE COMMISSIONER: And have you -- has that expanded in recent years or have you always had a fairly large hog operation?

MR. HOFER: We expanded from 400 sows to 600 10 years ago.
THE COMMISSIONER: Any other questions?

MR. MOTHERAL: Just a comment, from hearing what you are saying today, I encourage you to probably make another presentation when we have the public meetings in March and April to hear your concerns again.

MR. HOFER: Thank you.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, Mr. Hofer. Mr. Wiens?

MR. WIENS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity to present to you today. I'm David Wiens, a dairy farmer, actually, from the Grunthal area. As well, I am the Chairman of the Board of Dairy Farmers of Manitoba. So I speak personally, as well as on behalf of the organization.

Now, although I am involved in the dairy, certainly we see how this can have much broader implications. And, of course, we have concerns in this area as well.

At the same time, I appreciate the opportunity here to assist the Commission in scoping your work as you go forward from here and, of course, specifically in the sustainability on
the hog industry of Manitoba.

As I have been involved in the past, but so have many others that have participated, producers throughout all of the commodities in Manitoba, livestock commodities, have been working together with our conservation people and stewardship people in terms of drafting up these new regulations, the livestock manure and mortality management regulations. And this is a process that has been going on for quite a number of years now.

And we have been given the opportunity to have some input here. And, of course, some of our suggestions have been included, some very practical things that we thought should be part of these regulations. And we certainly have been listened to over the years and we appreciate that.

And, of course, as an industry, livestock industry, in Manitoba here, we are well aware of the need for clean water for both humans and livestock. And the need for well-managed soil nutrients for the economic production of both high grains and oil seeds, it is critical. And, of course, we need clean air for the protection of both plants and animals, so we come from there.
We come from those kinds of concerns. The Manitoba livestock producers do have to comply with the most stringent environmental regulations in North America. And that was, in fact, stated by the Minister of Conservation in December of 2006. And I can certainly testify to that from my own personal experience and having put up a manure storage just this last fall, and having completed last fall when we received approval from conservation in September. The standards to which this structure had to be built exceeded any standards in any other jurisdiction in North America. And I'm not -- I'm certainly not here to complain about it. I think, in the end, it will serve the entire industry well as we head in that direction.

And now just getting back, I guess, because these are scoping meetings, and we just want to ensure that this review includes the issues that are important to all Manitobans, as it states on your website. The way I see it, the issues that are of great importance here are, of course, to review those issues that directly impact the environment, as requested by the
Minister. My fear is if the scope becomes broader than that, that it will -- it will exceed the mandate of the Commission. But it also becomes a much more cumbersome debate and the risk is that it would continue on for much too long. So I would like to see the scope fairly specific.

And so, of course, we are dealing directly with the hog industry here and with the soil, water and air. And I think we should really try to focus on those three, soil, water and air in this Commission, without getting all kinds of other issues involved here.

There is a recent nutrient management research that has been happening together with the University of Manitoba Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences and that deals with hog manure and how it's applied and how it is taken up by the plants. I believe this study is nearing its completion at this point is my understanding. And I would certainly like to see the Commission consider that, the information coming out of that research, very carefully. I think it's very -- I think it's valuable research for us here in the province because it is actually -- the study has been done right here in Manitoba. Sometimes when
you get into other climates and soil conditions, it is really hard to replicate that in our climate and our soil. So I think we have a real opportunity to tap into that kind of research.

And, of course, as I alluded to earlier, the time factor here. It would be good to see this done in a timely fashion. Again, I'm not directly involved in the hog industry but, at the same time, you know, this study, it concerns all of the livestock agriculture, that we come to a final report in a timely fashion so that we can all carry on in a very timely way. And then, as producers, we can all move on from here, knowing exactly what the outcome is and how -- and if we need to make any changes, then we can begin to do those things.

So, really, that's all I had to present here. And, again, I appreciate the opportunity to come to you today.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Any questions? Wayne?

MR. MOTHERAL: I know this is going to be a difficult one to answer, but can you give me a definition of a "timely fashion"?

MR. WIENS: Well, I would like to
think that we could have something done, you know, by early of next summer. Now, having said that, I also don't want to give anybody the impression that I think this should be done in a huge hurry just to get it done. I think it should be done properly. But I think if it's focused, then you can hopefully get, you know, to your final report sooner rather than later.

And so I think it's -- and, I mean, it's hard for me to say exactly whether it would be two months or three months, but I would sure like to see something, you know, earlier in the summer, rather than later in the year, if that's possible.

MR. MOTHERAL: Thank you.

THE COMMISSIONER: By "next summer", you mean the summer of 2007?

MR. WIENS: Right. Sorry, yes, absolutely.

THE COMMISSIONER: I can't guarantee that, but we will work as expeditiously as we can, without compromising the review.

MR. WIENS: Right.

THE COMMISSIONER: Any other questions?
MR. MacARTHUR: No.

MR. MOTHERAL: No.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, Mr. Wiens. And we will adjourn again.

(PROCEEDINGS RECESS AT 4:30 AND RESUMED AT 7:05)

THE COMMISSIONER: Good evening.

Could we come to order? We will get back to business here. We have had four different people indicate that they would like to make a presentation this evening. The first up are Cliff Graydon and Adrien Grenier. Would you please identify yourselves for the record and then proceed with your presentation?

MR. GRENIER: I'm Adrien Grenier. I'm the president of SPADA, and this is going to be done in the name of SPADA.

MR. GRAYDON: I'm Cliff Graydon. And I'm his bodyguard.

THE COMMISSIONER: He looks like he needs help.

MR. GRENIER: That's fine. I am standing before you, sitting down, actually, as the president of SPADA. This is a small regional organization in the SE corner of the province representing farmers of diverse backgrounds,
including hog farmers. I wish to address a few
issues with respect to the CEC's review.

To be honest, I do not understand the
logic behind the ban on hog operations. I am even
more perplexed as to why the CEC is now inviting
me, and all other citizens of Manitoba, to provide
input into the scope of the review, especially
when we have provided input into the many
environmental regulations and livestock reviews
done since 1994. But since you have granted me
the opportunity to speak out regarding what will
be included in the CEC's review, I have taken the
liberty of preparing a few points that I believe
need to be looked at by the CEC.

How has the hog industry grown in the
past 10 years? Compared to other provinces?
Compared to other industries in Manitoba? And if
the industry has grown, does it have a large
enough land base to support these operations?
Have the provincial guidelines kept up with the
growth or exceeded it?

The second point is what kind of time
span is the CEC looking at with regards to their
study? The hog industry is a thriving industry at
this time and a ban of any sort will have serious
effects on the present and future producers, as well as all industries related, directly or indirectly, with the production of hogs in Manitoba. It is imperative that the CEC decide on a time span that is adequate for its research and review, but at the same time be respectful of the fact that time is critical to everyone involved.

The third point is the government requires an abundance of data with respect to the environment, starting from its own technical review on every proposed hog operation. Once the operation is running, the producers are required to fill out paperwork with respect to different aspects of their operation, but always at a cost to the producer. Is the province willing to cover these costs in order to keep their data current and keep the producers' costs at a reasonable level and on an equal footage with the rest of Canada and the world? And examples are technical reviews, manure management plan, soil sampling and water sampling.

My fourth point: Is the Provincial Government giving too much attention to public perception versus fact?

And here I would like to just give you
an example. The other day, on an appeal process that I am doing, of course the reason is irrelevant, but I phoned the Provincial Government, the Department of Agriculture, and I asked a simple question: Why am I being refused? Oh, probably it's because there is a hog ban on operations. And she asked: Do you have a hog farm? Yes. Well, that's the reason you are being denied. It just makes no sense. I don't know.

Farmers are a small minority of the Manitoba population. And they are spread all over the -- spread over the whole of the province. They are a very small group, compared to the population of Winnipeg or other large urban centers. For that reason, it is easy to disregard them when they speak out. How has this situation helped or hindered the agricultural producers?

Has enough been done by the Province to instill confidence towards the hog industry with respect to the environment?

How much time and effort is being spent on educating the public as to the role agriculture plays in our province? And what steps have been taken by agricultural producers and organizations to ensure the safeguarding of the
environment?

And my last point is a number of organizations, including SPADA, have been conducting ongoing research on a number of topics related to agriculture and the effects on the environment. Is the CEC prepared to look at this data with respect to its review? For example, the Roseau River project where there is an impact on sediments going into the Roseau River. And also application of manure on pasture and impact on yields and the environment.

In conclusion, I would add that my livelihood and that of a great number of Manitobans involved, directly or indirectly, with the hog industry lies in your hands. We have confidence that the CEC will deal with this matter efficiently and responsibly and, in the process, restore the confidence of the public at large towards the hog industry. Thank you. If you have any questions?

THE COMMISSIONER: A couple of questions, Mr. Grenier. What does SPADA stand for?

MR. GRENIER: He answers all of the question.
MR. GRAYDON: Stuartburn Piney Agricultural District Association.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. And you mentioned, Mr. Grenier, that SPADA has been conducting some research?

MR. GRENIER: Yes, we have some.

MR. GRAYDON: We have conducted a considerable amount of research, Mr. Chairman, in the past. And, unfortunately, we don't have the time, nor do we have the expertise, to put that together. It is only recently that we have understood that there was money available to hire someone to put that together for your perusal, but we didn't know that at the time. We only found out yesterday.

But, yes, we have done a considerable amount of research on, especially, hog manure on forages, also on pasture land. Also the study on the Roseau River was for water quality as well. We have done two replicated studies on that. The study with the hog manure on forages was replicated five times, so it's a scientific research.

And that's all available. Had we had the opportunity and the expertise to put it
together properly, we would have done that for
you. We just were not aware of it until just
yesterday. Thank you.

THE COMMISSIONER: I think,
Mr. Grenier, you asked a question of us whether we
would be interested in having access to that
research, and my short answer is yes. How we do
it, whether it's -- the amount of money that's
available for participant assistance isn't a lot.
But if you're successful in getting a small
amount, and if that's enough to document your
research, that would be fine. If not, we will try
to find some other way to get the information from
you. Perhaps just a small meeting with the panel
and some of your members. We will work something
out. But I think that we would certainly welcome
your input in that regard.

MR. GRAYDON: Is there a timeframe on
applying for financial assistance, Mr. Chairman?

THE COMMISSIONER: There is. I
believe there is a sheet over there that explains
it. Talk to Cathy, Mr. Graydon. She has the
information right there. There is a timeframe. I
just don't know what it is. But she has the
information at the table.
MR. GRAYDON: Thank you.

MR. GRENIER: Thank you.

THE COMMISSIONER: Any questions of either of these gentlemen? Wayne?

MR. MOTHERAL: I was going to ask the same question as you did, because we certainly don't want to ignore any information that's out there. That's our mandate is to gather all we can in the next timeframe for this. And we would appreciate anything possible. And I highly advise you, if you can, to make a presentation at the public hearings coming in March and April.

MR. GRENIER: Thank you, actually.

MR. GRAYDON: If we have that information compiled before that, do you want that forwarded to you?

THE COMMISSIONER: We would certainly welcome it, yes. Anything that is submitted to us in writing becomes part of our record, so that would be fine. But we will definitely, somehow or other, keep in touch and get that information from you.

MR. GRAYDON: Okay, thank you.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you, gentlemen. The next person on my list is Mark
Mr. Kostyniuk, would you please introduce yourself for the record and then you may continue.

MR. KOSTYNIUK: Hello. I'm Mark Kostyniuk. And I guess I am just a family member and a concerned citizen. Ladies and gentlemen, and representatives of the CEC, it is my understanding that the CEC, under directive of the Government of the Province of Manitoba, has opened public forums to learn what the issues of concern are in regards to the "temporary pause on hog expansion." I found it necessary to take the time to share my personal concerns with you tonight.

I would like to take a moment to give you some details of my personal situation, as I believe it will offer a better perspective as to the source of my presentation tonight. I was raised on a mixed beef/grain farm in the southeast of province. I am currently employed with the province's transportation department, and reside in an agricultural area south of Vita. My family is still operating the farm in the area, which has recently diversified into hog production. As well, my wife is also employed in the hog industry.
I believe, as most rural residents do, that water quality is a high priority; probably more so for us than for urbanites, as we do not have the availability of treated water supplies. Rural residents, and producers, hold water quality and all environmental issues in high regard. It is for this reason that producers are very conscious of the effects of their actions on our environment.

The issue that the CEC has brought forth is the increase in phosphorous levels in Lake Winnipeg. My concern today is that the current government has targeted one group in an effort to curb the problem. However, there is a lack of evidence that these actions will have any positive effect. The hog manure spread on agricultural lands is not merely a means of disposal; it is used as a substitute for chemical fertilizers. The amount of fertilizer has not changed; it is just coming from a more natural source. Research has shown that the agricultural industry as a whole is a minor contributor to phosphorus contamination. It appears to me that the government is unfairly, and unjustifiably, targeting a small, and possibly unpopular,
minority under the guise of proactive environmental policy.

Furthermore, the hog industry has grown to become the saviour of rural Manitoba's economy. The industry is one of, if not the largest, employers in southeastern Manitoba. The industry has created an opportunity for rural residents who value rural lifestyle and do not wish to commute to large urban centers for employment. This has spawned a decrease in emigration from the small towns that not too long ago were facing extinction.

In closing, I would like to suggest that the Commission do a thorough investigation of the consequences of these actions. Perhaps more research should be done to determine other sources of contamination and the feasibility of reducing them. More evidence is needed to support the actions already taken. The government needs to consider the ramifications of their actions, rather than charging at the hog industry blindfolded with guns blazing.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Any questions of Mr. Kostyniuk? Wayne?

MR. MOTHERAL: No.
THE COURT: Norm?

MR. MacARTHUR: No.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, Mr. Kostyniuk.

MR. KOSTYNIUK: Thank you.

THE COMMISSIONER: Margaret Remple?

Thank you. Would you please state your name for the record and then proceed with your presentation?

MS. REMPLE: Yes. My name is Marge Remple. And I thank you, Commissioners for making this opportunity available to me to share my comments with you. I am a farmer. I own and operate a mixed farm here in the R.M. of Hanover. My farm consists of 500 sows, farrow to finish. And in our enterprise, I have 1,500-acres of crop land on which I grow cereal grains, oils seeds, as well as some forage crops.

I feel the moratorium on hog production in Manitoba has been misguided and very shortsighted. I would suggest Manitoba, and the rest of the Canadian prairies, require a large increase in livestock production to maintain healthy agriculture into the next 25 to 50 years.

Currently our province is working hard
to facilitate a number of bio-diesel production sites. Someone involved in that sector asked me recently if it was possible to increase the amount of canola harvested from the current number of acres being planted to that crop? The average yield for canola across the province would probably be about 30 bushels an acre. It is possible to grow double that yield, but it's only possible if farmers increase the amount of fertilizer they use. The soil must be nurtured if it is to provide a greater return.

If we've learned anything in the past couple of decades, it must be that we, as a society, need to, in fact, expand our energy source options. Bio-diesel from locally grown crops providing fuel for transportation and heating, as well as a meal product very usable in livestock production, is a good fit.

The wrinkle would be requiring farmers to rely on petroleum-based fertilizer sources to grow that crop. Granular fertilizer price versus increased 40 percent in the past few months. Farmers cannot afford to maintain current levels of soil nurtures, let alone increased fertilizer costs, to grow higher yields to meet not only
Over the thousands and thousands of years that agriculture has developed, it has only been the past 40 or 50 years that crop production has become so reliant on petroleum-based fertilizers. In the long view of history, it's a short-term bubble, and a bubble which probably won't last much longer. Crop production based on petroleum-sourced fertilizers is not sustainable.

What is sustainable and has been common practice in agriculture for many thousands of years is the use of animal manure to provide crop nutrients and maintain healthy levels of soil fertility. To encourage responsible application of an animal manure is definitely appropriate. To curtail production of animal manure is extremely shortsighted and ill conceived. Manure is not a waste product. It is a vitally important resource, part of the completely natural organic and very holistic nutrient cycle.

As to our specific situation in Manitoba, farmers in this province have been busy completing their individual environmental farm plans over the past year and a half. Having the
EFPs certified makes farmers certified for partial funding dollars for any of some 30 green projects. Beef farmers are eligible for financial assistance to construct fences around crop land for the purpose of winter swathe grazing or other winter crop feeding. The reasoning is that the feed then does not have to be removed to a central feeding location. And the manure, in turn, does not have to be moved back to the fields where it will nurture next year's crops. At a time when we are becoming increasingly aware of ways in which to reduce transportation and related costs, it seems wise to encourage in-field winter feeding of cattle as a BMP or a best management practice.

Now, if I, as a hog producer, would place 10-kilos of hog manure on a snow-covered field between November and April, I would immediately be fined. Does anyone else see an inconsistency here? I put forward this example to point out that, for whatever reasons, hog production has become the target of emotional and unjustified prejudice. We can only dream of a rational and science-based dialogue.

The attempt of this government, and some of its citizens, to place the responsibility
for algae blooms in Lake Winnipeg on hog producers
is a travesty. Hog producers have been far ahead
of all other Manitoba livestock sectors and
responsible, and might I add, highly monitored
for manure management and environmental
stewardship for many years already.

We continue to use vast amounts of our
own money to fund research which can direct us
into the future in using ever-more accurate
application monitors and equipment, fine-tuning
feed rations to further reduce amounts of excreted
phosphorous and so on. We accept that we may be
contributing one percent of the phosphorous
entering Lake Winnipeg and will continue to work
hard to reduce that amount. However, for
government and people of this province to focus on
that one percent is, as I've already said, very
shortsighted.

If we're going to maintain, let alone
increase the yield potential of our crop land, we
need to feed the soil. And the most natural and
healthy way to do that is with animal manure. We
need an awful lot more of it.

Thomas Homer Dixon, in his recent book
"The Up Side of Down" describes in great detail
the collapse of the Roman empire. And he points
the finger directly at the empire leadership for
strangling agriculture. It is sadly not the only
once-sophisticated society to literally die
because they failed to honour the fundamental
importance of primary food production. It is the
very foundation on which human civilization
exists, the absolutely most crucial sector of any
society, ours included.

I hope that my fellow Manitobans
remember that when they tighten the noose around
the necks of hog producers, or any other farmers,
they are tightening the noose around their own
necks. Thank you.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

Questions?

MR. MacARThUR: No.

MR. MOTHERAL: No.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very

much, Ms. Remple.

I believe there is one more person.

Somebody filled out a form but, I'm sorry, I can't
read the name on it. Is there somebody else that
wanted to make a presentation this evening? Would
you state your name, please, sir?
MR. BEZDITNY: My name is Ernie Bezditny.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

MR. BEZDITNY: I'm a small farmer from Pansy.

Now since the hog operations started, I think the regulations came in a bit too late, because where I live there is about 35 barns in a three mile radius. To me, as far as I'm concerned, that's a lot. And that's not hog farming, that's factory farming.

The bush has been cleared. The ditches for the drainage that has been made is unbelievable. They are destroying nature and the country itself with hog operations. Everybody seems to be worried about water quality. But when it comes to hog operations, I think water is being abused, the same with water quantity. Everything is being ignored when it comes to factory farming with hog operations.

And to me, I see that manure applications are going on too late in the year. They should all -- I think manure should be spread out during the forage season, not when the ground is froze. Because, naturally, it is going to be
run off in the spring. And I think that should be tightened up. There should be an earlier deadline on manure applications.

And the way water is being ignored, I think the government should be forcing them to put water metres on the factory farming that's commercial. I can see family farms. But around my place, that's not family farming anymore, that's factory farming.

And to the barns that were built in Hanover, I think the moratorium should have been put on a long time ago. Like I say, 35 barns in a three mile radius is a bit too much. Thank you.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Any questions of Mr. Bezditny?

MR. MOTHERAL: No.

MR. BEZDITNY: No.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, sir.

Okay, is there anybody else this evening who would like to make a presentation? Going once, going twice.

Thank you all for coming out this afternoon and this evening. I guess that concludes our time here in Friedensfeld. We will
be reconvening tomorrow afternoon in Winnipeg and
on Thursday afternoon in Morden.

Thank you for your participation. If
any of you want to make any written comments,
you're free to do that and submit them to our
office. There is information at the back table in
that regard.

There is also a list at the back table
of the hearings that will be taking place
throughout southern Manitoba in March and April.
Thank you all and good evening.

(PROCEEDINGS ADJOURNED AT 7:35)
I, LISA REID, a duly appointed Official Examiner in the Province of Manitoba, do hereby certify the foregoing 70 pages are a true and correct transcript of my Stenotype notes as taken by me at the time and place hereinbefore stated.

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Lisa Reid
Official Examiner, Q.B.