APPEARANCES:

Clean Environment Commission:

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

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TUESDAY, MARCH 13, 2007

UPON COMMENCING AT 1:10 P.M.

THE CHAIRMAN: Good afternoon. I would like to welcome you all here this afternoon. My name is Terry Sargeant. I'm the Chair of the Clean Environment Commission. I am also the Chair of this panel investigating the environmental sustainability of hog production. With me on the panel are Mr. Edwin Yee and Mr. Wayne Motheral.

I have a few opening comments to make before we proceed. We have had about a half a dozen people indicate that they wish to make a presentation this is afternoon, and another five or so for this evening, so we could have a reasonably full day.

By way of opening comments, the Clean Environment Commission has been requested by the Minister of Conservation to conduct an investigation into the environmental sustainability of hog production 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 Manitoba, 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 by means of public meetings in the various regions of the province to ensure broad participation from the general public and affected stakeholders.

We have also been asked to take into account efforts underway in other jurisdictions to manage hog production there.

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."

At the end of our investigation, we will consider various options and may make recommendations in a report to the Minister on any improvements that may be necessary to provide for the environmental sustainability of hog production.

To ensure that our review includes issues of importance to all Manitobans, the panel has undertaken to hold 17 days of meetings in 14 communities. These meetings will continue through March and April, with the final public meeting
currently scheduled for April 27th in Winnipeg.

It is open to any groups or individuals to make a presentation to this panel on issues related to our mandate. For the most part, presentations are to be limited to 15 minutes. Exceptions will be made in cases where a presenter needs more time. But, in most cases, we would ask that you speak with us prior to the presentation.

Those who make presentations to us will be asked to take an oath promising to tell the truth. Presentations should be relevant to the mandate given to us by the Minister, and to the issues described in the guide to public participation in this review. If a presentation is clearly not relevant, it may be ruled out of order. And, further, if it is clearly repetitive, it may also be ruled out of order.

Members of the panel may ask questions of presenters during and after their presentation. There will be no opportunity for other persons to question or cross-examine presenters.

In addition to the public meetings, the CEC is engaging consultants to assist us in this review. The results of those research
endeavours will be posted on our website upon receipt, which will likely be about the end of June. Parties will be given, and by parties I mean anyone who is interested, will be invited to provide comment on any of those reports, if they so wish. A reasonable, albeit brief period of time, will be allowed for this.

Written submissions will also be accepted. Information as to how to submit a written suggestion is available on our website, and the deadline for those is May 7th.

We also realize that many people are reluctant to make presentations in public, for a variety of reasons. To address that, we have engaged a graduate student from the University of Manitoba to meet with or talk with, on the phone, people who would rather not speak at meetings. These meetings will be kept in confidence. Information as to how to contact her is available on our website, as well as at the back of the room.

Just some administrative matters. If you wish to make a presentation today, and you haven't already told us so, please register at the table at the back of the room. As is our normal
practice, we are recording these sessions. Verbatim transcripts will be available online in a day or so. You can find the link to the transcripts from our website.

Finally, cell phones, I would ask that you turn cell phones off, or at least turn the ring tone off. If you must take a call, I would ask that you leave the room. And I would also ask that you don't engage in any conversations in the room while people are making presentations. Thank you.

We will now proceed. The first person on our agenda for this afternoon is Mr. Marvin Magwood. Oh, could you take a seat at this table, please, Mr. Magwood?

MR. MAGWOOD: Okay.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any one of them. Would you please state your name for the record?

MR. MAGWOOD: Marvin Magwood.

MARVIN MAGWOOD, having been sworn, presents as follows:

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. And you may proceed.

MR. MAGWOOD: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Chairman, and Commissioners of
the Review Board. My name is Marvin Magwood. I
have lived in Killarney for my entire life, and I
plan on staying for the rest of it.

I would like to take the opportunity
to speak about the hog industry and how it has
impacted Killarney and the area. The industry is
relatively new to the area, with the first large
barns being built about ten years ago, and the
bulk of them being built in the last seven years.

Before the industry came to the area,
employment opportunities were minimal, with most
of our graduate classes going to university or
moving out west to seek employment.

Now that the industry has become
established here, there are more than 60 full-time
well-paying jobs right in the industry of hogs, as
well as the feed mills that supply the farms, with
18 full-time employees working there. These jobs
are well-paying, full benefits jobs that you can
raise a family with. These jobs were jobs that
weren't there before.

I, myself, have worked in the industry
for the last seven years now, and it has given me,
and many others, the opportunity to raise my
family in the same place where I was raised. It
also gives us the opportunity to support the community and help keep Killarney from becoming a retirement community.

I also want to speak on behalf of the many people that work in these facilities, and talk about how the sustainability of these facilities is just as important to them as it is to anybody else.

With these farms being built in the last ten years, there is lots of good information on how to make sure these farms were managed in a way that would make them environmentally friendly, as well as good neighbours. The Manitoba government has already set out good regulations that helps the large facilities stay within the recommended guidelines and become good partners with our surrounding landowners.

Most of the people that work on these farms live right here in Killarney, and the lakes, rivers and parks are just as important to them as anyone else. We would like to protect them, these resources, as much, if not more, than people who live elsewhere.

I get disappointed when I tell people what I do and they automatically jump to the
conclusion that we aren't environmentally friendly, when it is one of the most heavily regulated industries there is. When the Clean Environment review does its audit of our industry, I will be happy to see the results, so that the province can see that we are doing our part to help ensure that this industry is long-term and sustainable. I am proud to say I'm a pig farmer because I know that we are doing our part. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Magwood. Just what do you do in the industry?

MR. MAGWOOD: I work as a production manager for two sow farms in the area, as well as nurseries and some finishing barns.

THE CHAIRMAN: So you work at a number of different places?

MR. MAGWOOD: I have six different facilities that I work at. I started six years ago as a breeding technician at one of the farms. And just through the different jobs and things that I have had through promotion, I have worked through to being a production manager at these facilities.

THE CHAIRMAN: Out of curiosity, were
you able to go into the business right out of high
school, or did you get agricultural education?

MR. MAGWOOD: I grew up on a mixed
farm just southwest of town here. And, actually,
I did construction for ten years before I got into
the industry. But with the construction in our
area, that is mainly seasonal. And so that is
what appealed with me with getting into this
industry.

THE CHAIRMAN: So you've basically,
aside from the knowledge you brought from growing
up on a farm, you've learned on-the-job?

MR. MAGWOOD: Right. It's been
on-farm training.

THE CHAIRMAN: And moved up to a
management position?

MR. MAGWOOD: Right. And with the
training from the companies that I worked for,
along with past experience that I have had, it has
I enabled me to move up and be in the position
that I am today.

THE CHAIRMAN: And all of these
facilities, the six, I think you said, they are
all close to Killarney?

MR. MAGWOOD: Four of them are right
directly in Killarney. And two that I actually
got involved in, in the last six months, are
actually in the Shoal Lake area.

THE CHAIRMAN: How far is that from
here?

MR. MAGWOOD: Two hours.

THE CHAIRMAN: Up near Clear Lake?

MR. MAGWOOD: Up north, an hour north
of Brandon.

THE CHAIRMAN: And you say that there
are some 60 or more jobs in the industry in the
Killarney area?

MR. MAGWOOD: In the Turtle Mountain
area, yes. I have 35 employees that work in
Turtle Mountain with me, personally. And the
other jobs are with other hog operators that are
in our area, not to mention the owner/operators
that employ. So 60 is a modest number, as far as
full-time employment.

THE CHAIRMAN: And when you say Turtle
Mountain, what are, more or less, the boundaries
of the Turtle Mountain area?

MR. MAGWOOD: Just the R.M. Like we
have farms going over to Highway 5, finishing
units over there. The sow farms that I work with
are actually a mile straight east of town, so they
are right in the R.M. And then there are some
other farms that are towards -- that are west of
us, that are in Turtle Mountain as well. So when
I talk Turtle Mountain directly, right in the R.M.
of Turtle Mountain is where these farms are
located.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you.

Wayne?

MR. MOTHERAL: Yes. Mr. Magwood, are
you in charge of -- like, are you the boss of the
35 employees?

MR. MAGWOOD: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: You are?

MR. MAGWOOD: Yes.

MR. MOTHERAL: Would you consider that
the employees are happy in their jobs?

MR. MAGWOOD: Yes.

MR. MOTHERAL: Okay. And I don't know
if this is a fair question or not, and maybe you
are not -- what would be the approximate total
payroll of these employees?

MR. MAGWOOD: Total payroll? You
would be taking me to school, and I would need to
do the math. But our average hourly rate, for the
employees that I work with, is between the $18 and $20 per hour.

MR. MOTHERAL: Okay.

MR. MAGWOOD: Including benefits and bonuses and all that we put in towards our employees.

MR. MOTHERAL: And as you say, it appears as though you are planning on retiring in Killarney?

MR. MAGWOOD: Absolutely.

MR. MOTHERAL: And I don't know if you are ever going to stop it from being a retirement town because you should be proud that it's a retirement town.

THE CHAIRMAN: Say those of us that are approaching retirement.

MR. MOTHERAL: Yes. I'm proud to be anywhere.

MR. MAGWOOD: Well, it is a good retirement town, because we are also very proud of it, but we also want to keep young people in it so it is long-term.

THE CHAIRMAN: We people who are either retired or approaching, we need young people to look after us at times.
MR. MAGWOOD: That's right.

MR. MOTHERAL: That's all I have, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Edwin?

MR. YEE: Yes. Mr. Magwood, you've indicated in your presentation that you feel that the hog industry, I guess, in particular, you are talking about here, is the most heavily regulated industry. Do you feel that it is being over-regulated?

MR. MAGWOOD: I don't think over-regulated. These are regulations that have been in place since I was involved. So I can't comment what it was like 30 years ago before these regulations came in, but they are always been there. It is something I am very used to. But I know about these regulations because we use them every day. They are good regulations. And there is a lot of regulations, so I think they are a good part of the trade-off to make sure that we are doing our job practically.

MR. YEE: And these facilities that you work at, or that you are involved with, are these fairly large operations or do they vary in size?
MR. MAGWOOD: They are fairly large. The facility's sow farms themselves, they have 14 employees. There is 3,700 sows and a 10,000 head nurseries attached to them, so those facilities are quite large, yes.

MR. YEE: Okay, thank you.

MR. MAGWOOD: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: The employees, the 60 or so, are they mostly young people from around here?

MR. MAGWOOD: We have a fairly mixed group of employees. A lot of them, or half of them, would be younger people right out of high school. There is zero training required. We train on-farm, so those jobs are available. We also have people that have farmed for 20 years that have had enough of the farming and want to try something different that are with us. And middle aged, like myself, so it is a mixed group of who works at the farms.

THE CHAIRMAN: I might take exception to you referring to yourself at middle age. I don't know what that makes me. But, anyway, most of the people, or all of the people, are from the area?
MR. MAGWOOD: Right. I think the farthest drive anyone has is 20 minutes. We have some people who live in Ninette.

MR. MOTHERAL: Just one more, and this is a more technical question, will the new phosphorus regulations affect any of your manure management?

MR. MAGWOOD: As far as how -- like, as far as how we manage to -- I am not completely up-to-date with the new regulations that you guys are looking at bringing in. But because we have been managing our phosphorus close anyway in the last ten years, I can't see it catching us off guard. We have been trying to do the best we can with our nutrients to get the most out of them, anyway.

I know there is some new technology that the company has been trying to work with to lessen our phosphorus in our manure, anyway. So without knowing what the new regulations would be, I think we are probably working towards that, anyway. So whatever would come into place, as long as it was feasible for the farms, I can't see it affecting us too much.

MR. MOTHERAL: Thank you. And just a
clarification, we have nothing to do with the
regulations.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much,
Mr. Magwood.

MR. MAGWOOD: Okay, thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Next is Miriam Nichol.

Please state your name for the record?

MS. NICHOL: Miriam Nichol.

MIRIAM NICHOL, having been sworn, presents as
follows:

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. You may

proceed.

MS. NICHOL: Mr. Chairman, members of
the Commission Review Panel, ladies and gentlemen.

It's a privilege to present at this
very important public hearing for the hog
production industry review being conducted at the
request of the Manitoba Government.

We have reviewed the guide published
by the Clean Environment Commission and decided to
make a presentation based on our experiences, and
the wisdom we have gained from those experiences
in the hog industry.

My husband, Ron and I, have farmed in
the Killarney area for 35 years. During that
time, we have raised a variety of animals, including pigs. We started out with an old hip roof barn, raising mainly feeder pigs. We went from there to a small farrow to finish operation, where we cared for the sows in a loose housing structure and farrowed and finished the pigs in a hip roof straw-based barn. We progressed from there to moving a neighbour's barn to our farm, where we, again, had a farrow to finish operation. We soon realized that we needed to expand again. So, in 1997, we built a 4,800 head nursery barn, which we have owned and operated to this day.

Over the years, we have experienced many changes in how we raised and fed our pigs. Our initial experiences in raising pigs would be considered archaic based on how we raise pigs today. In the beginning, we never worried too much about the quality of the feed, about medicating pigs before slaughter, or about how we got rid of the manure. Now, we follow very strict rules and regulations for these things, plus many other things. When we built our barns in 1997, we were introduced to all of these rules and regulations. And we, without hesitation, followed them to a tee. Every one of the rules and
regulations were implemented in an effort to protect the environment, enhance the health of the pigs and the workers, and to satisfy the consumers of our pigs. My, how things have changed in 35 years!

We believe that the way we raise pigs today is far superior than the way we raised pigs in 1972. Today, the pigs are fed a feed ration that is developed by nutritionists, and it is based on the age and the size of the pigs. The pigs are housed in a climate-controlled environment which, in many cases, are superior to the housing of some of the people living in our province.

We follow strict protocols of the Canadian Quality Assurance Program that ensures appropriate withdrawal times of all medication, and addresses any incidents of broken needles, plus many other quality assurance details. The nutrients of the manure are carefully assessed and injected into our spread fields based on the nutrient and soil analyses.

Given the scope of the investigation, we have the following comments to make about the issues the CEC is particularly interested in. We
recognize and value the scientific evidence and
the expertise that is available in regards to
these issues. In addition, there is ongoing
research being conducted on these various issues
which will, in turn, change hog production
practices in the future. We have grouped some of
the issues outlined in the CEC guide simply for
ease of presenting, and to avoid duplication of
comments.

Nutrient management, manure management
and soil analysis. The rules and regulations in
place for applying hog manure to spread fields
provides protection to the environment. As
mentioned earlier, the nutrients of the manure are
carefully determined, and the manure is injected
into the spread fields based on the nutrient and
soil analyses. Once the nutrient content is
determined, manure is managed to benefit crop
production, with minimal risk to soil and
groundwater contamination.

The manure contains a number of
nutrients besides nitrogen and phosphorus that add
to the organic structure of the soil. These
nutrients eliminate the need for synthetic
fertilizers, and many of the manure nutrients are
not found in synthetic fertilizers. Therefore, for the grain farmer, the cost of fertilizing a crop is substantially reduced and the soil is given other micro-nutrients, for example, potassium, sodium, calcium, et cetera. Not all of the manure nutrients are immediately available to the crop, with approximately a quarter of the organic nitrogen being available in the first year, and decreasing amounts becoming available during the next three years at a decreasing rate.

It is interesting to note that although the livestock sectors, all livestock sectors, are governed by these regulations, it is our observation that the hog industry is probably the most compliant and forward-thinking in regards to environmental stewardship activities. Another observation is that there is no government monitoring of the application of synthetic fertilizers. The only person monitoring the application of synthetic fertilizers is the farmer. In the majority of cases, farmers voluntarily follow the soil analyses results because synthetic fertilizers are expensive, and no one wants to waste money on excessive use, just as no one wants to waste manure, as it comes with
a price tag, too.

Groundwater quality, Groundwater supply and surface water quality. As the majority of the contents of the lagoons are essentially water, and the contents of the lagoons, in most cases, are being injected into the spread fields based on the nutrient and soil analyses and the set-backs from waterways, it is difficult to understand that there would be a concern with these issues.

The hog industry sets a wonderful example of "recycling" the lagoon contents into valuable crop nutrients. In addition, it has been our observation that with spring application of the lagoon contents, the germination of crops is enhanced as a result of the extra moisture provided, and this ultimately increases the probability of higher yields in the fall. That has been especially noted when spring moisture levels are low.

We regularly test our well water to ensure that there are no changes in the quality of our water. Our well provides water to the pigs and to our house; therefore, we drink the same water as the pigs drink. Our well is located
approximately halfway between our house and the barns. We have full confidence in the integrity of our earthen storage lagoon; confidence that we did not have when our pigs were housed in the loose housing structure and our hip roof barn.

We believe that the government regulations and the hog industry ensure that every possible measure is taken to protect our groundwater and surface water quality. We further believe that the Manitoba Government should be protecting our groundwater quality, and surface water quality, by reviewing the waste disposal practices of our cities, towns, villages, members of the general public living on waterfront properties, to ensure that our lakes and waterways are not being polluted.

Odour. As with any industry, there are times when there is more odour than other times. We live in a farming community, and our livelihoods depend on livestock and grain. There is odour from any and all animal waste, including human lagoons, as well as from certain grains. Human perception is a huge factor, as odour affects humans differently. For example, one person may find the odour of something very
offensive, while the next person doesn't notice it at all.

Our barns are located less than two hydro poles away from our house. We acknowledge that there are times that there is an odour. However, we had our daughter's wedding in our front yard, in the latter part of July, and for all of the festivities, there was no odour.

With the ongoing research and improved management practices, we have full confidence that odour issues will continue to be increasingly minimized in the future.

Disease transmission. Aside from the fact that the Manitoba Government was encouraging farmers to diversify, one of the main reasons that we decided to build a nursery barn and operate within a three-site production system was for the strong evidence that it maximizes disease control. We follow strict bio-security practices, which assist in mitigating disease transmission. With my pre-retirement life being a nurse, it is my impression that the bio-security protocols followed in our barn often exceed infection control practices followed in hospitals. In addition, the health of the pigs is closely
monitored, on a regular basis, by a veterinarian.

The distance from neighbouring barns and hog transportation routes are factors that are seriously considered when determining the site for a new barn. It is our experience that hog producers are sensitive to each other's existing locations and practice due diligence in the control of any outbreaks.

Climate change. This is an interesting one, as there is so much media talk about global warming. Yet, on the other hand, we watched a program on the Discovery Channel that showed there is evidence that we may be entering into other ice age. We believe that it is everyone's responsibility, not just the hog industry, to take reasonable steps to ensure minimal pollution of our environment.

Singling out the hog industry in such a drastic manner, by putting a pause on all new construction of hog barns, does not foster an environment of cooperation and mutual responsibility. It points the finger at one sector, a sector that has apparently impacted water quality by a mere one percent, with no action being taken toward the big offenders. We
I have one question: Why did the Manitoba Government not impose a "pause" on all new construction, including other industries and housing, especially in areas where the population is the most dense?

Environmental liability. Just as it is everyone's responsibility to take reasonable steps to ensure minimal pollution of our environment, it is also the Manitoba Government's responsibility to ensure that there are appropriate regulations in place for all Manitobans, and that those regulations and rules are reasonable, achievable and enforced.

Education is a key component to environmental stewardship, with equitable application of the rules and regulations.

Final thoughts. It is noted under "The Scope of the Investigation", in the Guide to Public Participation in the Clean Environment Commission Hog Production Industry Review that:

"...the focus of this Investigation to be an inquiry into the impact of the hog-production industry on the indefinite sustainability of Manitoba's physical and biological
The Commission also notes that Manitoba's Principles and Guidelines for Sustainable Development stress the inter-relationship of the economic, environmental, social and human health decision-making, recognizing that the decisions made in one sphere have impacts on the others."

"Indefinite sustainability of Manitoba's physical and biological world,"

that's a long time and a huge undertaking. We believe that if it is the desire of the Manitoba Government to do this, then it is important for the Government to look at all of the factors impacting on Manitoba's physical and biological world.

The hog industry in Killarney has provided jobs and a rural lifestyle for many of our young people, not only in the barns, but also in all of the "spin-off" jobs. It has provided a multitude of other economic spin-offs within the Town of Killarney, and has provided an increased assessment, which, in turn, benefits all of our residents.
In the Rural Municipality of Turtle Mountain, there are several proposed new barns now on hold as a result of the "pause" imposed by the Manitoba Government. The Government's action has negatively impacted on our rural economic development. In addition, one of the local contractors, who is in the business of building these barns, is heading to Alberta with his crew of eight to ten people to work there for the next ten months. We all know what happens to people who go to Alberta to work, the vast majority does not come back to Manitoba.

The more we think about what has happened as a result of the Manitoba Government's actions towards the hog industry, the more we think that this whole process is nothing but "smoke and mirrors" in an election year, something to camouflage other more important issues that the public should be addressing. In the meantime, Manitoba loses out again with economic growth and development, something that is very much needed in this province, both rural and urban. It would be great if the Manitoba Government focused on things that would turn our province into a "have" province, instead of the "have not" status that we
currently hold.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our views.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Ms. Nichol.

Wayne?

MR. MOTHERAL: Yes. I will just have to gather my thoughts here, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that excellent presentation. It was certainly well structured. And you didn't just do that in one passing, it looked like you did some research.

MS. NICHOL: No, I didn't. I think this might be the hardest part, though, is the questions.

MR. MOTHERAL: No, we don't ask hard questions. In your operation, are your lagoons covered?

MS. NICHOL: Straw covered, yes, we have done that.

MR. MOTHERAL: You have done it.

MS. NICHOL: We empty our lagoons in the spring and fall. We are a smaller operation, if you can believe that. We started out being the biggest operation in the municipality, and now we are about the smallest.
MR. MOTHERAL: And how big is that?

What do you have?

MS. NICHOL: Well, we have a 4,800 head nursery, which means we get baby pigs from the moms at 20 days old and raise them to about 60 pounds, and then they go to the feeder site. That's what I mean by the three-site production system. The babies are born in one site, and then they come to us, and then they go to the feeder barn.

THE CHAIRMAN: You only do that middle part?

MS. NICHOL: Yes, we do.

MR. MOTHERAL: When you mentioned, and we have heard it now in two presentations, it's the economic development in Killarney area in the past seven to ten years, has certainly been focused on the hog industry. Is there any other economic development in this area that would match that?

MS. NICHOL: I would say not. But maybe, you know, when one of the councillors presents, they would be able to talk to that topic.

MR. MOTHERAL: Okay. I am not going
to let council off the hook, either, being a former councillor.

MS. NICHOL: I am passing the buck.

MR. MOTHERAL: Do you believe that the development plan of the municipality has sufficient, is sufficient, let's say, for example, set-backs, et cetera, like that for the industry, or do you think it's very onerous? Do you think that everything is fine that way?

MS. NICHOL: We have always been able to live within the existing rules that are out there and the regulations that are there. And so we have not had a problem with implementing anything.

MR. MOTHERAL: Well, that's good to hear. I mean, I know there are minimum set-backs that are set out in the Act. But, I mean, every municipal council can change them. I mean, they have to go with the minimum, but set-backs can be more. And maybe I'll have my chance to speak to somebody afterwards about that. I will maybe come back, Mr. Chairman. I will go over my notes to ask some more questions.

THE CHAIRMAN: Edwin?

MR. YEE: Maybe just along the lines
of the regulations, we have heard varying views of
the regulations. In most cases, most people think
they are acceptable and they can live within them.
And I have often asked this question, in terms of
regulatory controls, though, we have heard that
there has been some difficulty, or there lacks a
one-window approach, in terms of getting approvals
for expansion of your activities in the hog
industry. Do you find that at all or has that
been noted in this particular part of the
province?

MS. NICHOL: Well, I think when we
went to get approval in 1996 here, it seemed like
it took a lot of time to get all of the different
permits in place, and the approvals, and whatnot.
But just by, you know, going with hearsay, I think
it's far more difficult now and takes a lot
longer. It's not a quick and dirty process to put
up a hog barn.

MR. YEE: So do you see some value in
government looking at streamlining the process or
having better coordination of approvals?

MS. NICHOL: Definitely, yes.

MR. YEE: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Do you have any
thoughts on how that might be done?

MS. NICHOL: Well, you know, I worked in government, so I know that you can get bogged down in a lot of red tape. And, you know, there is different agencies that are involved within the government departments within the government that are involved in getting a barn up and running. Perhaps if they had one that, you know, fielded all of those different departments into one part then it would be easier. I don't know. Like, I haven't even thought of that.

THE CHAIRMAN: Are you suggesting perhaps a one-stop shop or something?

MS. NICHOL: Yes. It seems like we all want that, whether we are shopping at Wal-Mart or whatever.

MR. YEE: No, that's it for me.

THE CHAIRMAN: Ms. Nichol, you made a passing comment about -- where is it? Another observation is that:
"There is no government monitoring of the application of synthetic fertilizers."

You are not suggesting that they get into that, are they?
MS. NICHOL: No. I would be shot before I got out of the building.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. I just wanted to clarify that.

MS. NICHOL: No. But I think what I want to say there is that government -- or that the farmers are very careful about their own property. They are not wanting to ruin their soil so that they can't grow a crop, say, the next year, and it is not there for the next generation coming along. So I think farmers, they practice due diligence when it comes to that kind of thing. And the cost of it is very prohibitive too, so you don't want to be wasting it, to begin with. There is not a lot of money rolling around in farming. At least if there is, most of the people in this community haven't seen that.

MR. YEE: Just one more question, Ms. Nichol. You mentioned your hog operation is now one of the smaller ones. Do you see a trend that, because of the economic sustainability in the hog industry, that there is a requirement to operate fairly larger operations than smaller operations?

MS. NICHOL: I would think so. But it
is difficult to think about expanding when you have something like a pause land on your plate. It is something that I think has really, you know, been a real detriment to the hog industry. And it sets a feeling of uncertainty within you as to, you know, well, should you expand or should you just, you know, wait? Like, I think generally the way things are going, yes, expanding is the way to go. But then when you have a pause like this thrown at you, you know, and it is very unexpected then you think, well, what else can come our way? And then you have all of these hearings that are being held, you know, to determine if our environmental regulations are up to snuff. And then you think, well, what else is going to come? So, you know, there is an element of reservation, and even fear, when it comes to, you know, what we might be facing down the road.

And yet, on the other hand, we don't want to ruin our environment either. Like I said, we think the review is good, but then you want to make sure that whatever comes out of it, that it is reasonable and it is achievable. Because, after all, when you talk about the environment,
you know, we are all polluting the environment in this room just because we are all breathing, you know, and so you can't get ridiculous about what we do.

MR. YEE: Thank you.

MR. MOTHERAL: Ms. Nichol, the process that an intensive livestock operation, hence the hog barn with the intensive -- or with the planning process that municipalities have in this area, is it -- do you find, in this particular area, with the combined, with rural and the town under one jurisdiction, that it is probably an easier or more difficult process to go through with the conditional uses, et cetera, with the public hearings? Now, I'm talking about how you have got everybody all involved now. It is not two corporations, it's one. Do you find it beneficial from the perception of the hog industry?

MS. NICHOL: I think time will tell with that. To my knowledge, there hasn't been a conditional use hearing with the new council. But I certainly recognize that the town councillors that are currently on our council know how important the hog industry is. And a lot of them
come from the farming background. So, you know,
we just hope that if the conditional use meets all
of the requirements that the council will not
stand in the way.

MR. MOTHERAL: No. I mean, that's
just good news to hear. There has been part of
that push for years, and I'm glad to see that it
happened. I don't know. There are probably mixed
feelings out there.

MS. NICHOL: Well, I think, too, that,
you know, in the last few years, most of the
economic growth and development in this community
has been in the rural part of the community, and
the town knows that. I know they have struggled
to get things going in the town, but it's been
difficult.

MR. MOTHERAL: Okay. Thanks very
much.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Ms. Nichol.

Gerry Blixhavn. Please state your name for the
record?

MR. BLIXHAVN: My name is Gerry
Blixhavn.

GERRY BLIXHAVN, having been sworn, presents as
follows:
THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. And please proceed.

MR. BLIXHAVN: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and members of the Clean Environment Commission. My name is, as I have stated, Gerry Blixhavn.

I am here today to represent a family farm operation that includes Blixhavn Farms and South Pork Feeders. We produce cereals, oilseeds, forage and hogs. Blixhavn Farms is owned by my brother, Tom, and I. South Pork Feeders is owned and operated by my nephews, Jason and Jeffrey.

My hope here today is that the Clean Environment Commission will be focused on issues that fall within the intended scope, and base their recommendations on scientific fact.

Manure is recognized as a valuable fertilizer and soil conditioner for producers. As producers, we recognize the importance of nutrient management regulations under Water Stewardship and comply with the Manure Management Plans and soil test for manure application and apply nutrients accordingly. I believe that the hog industry has always responded to challenges and, in most cases, have acted in a responsible fashion. We are very
concerned with water quality and supply in both
surface and groundwater. And it has always been
in the best interests of producers to protect our
water supply. We need well managed soil and clean
water for both humans and animals.

As producers in Manitoba, we have to
comply with the most stringent environmental
regulations in North America. This was stated by
the Minister of Conservation December of 2006.
The standards to which manure storage has to be
built exceed any standards in any other
jurisdiction in North America. And I believe
these standards serve Manitoba's hog industry
well.

Nutrient management research is
ongoing through the University of Manitoba,
Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences, that is
studying hog manure, its application and plant
utilization. This study is based in Manitoba, and
will provide valuable information for our climate
and soil.

As for odour control in the R.M. of
Killarney, Turtle Mountain, we are required by
conditional use to provide straw covers for our
lagoons. The straw cover is applied twice each
year, in April and July, which works as well as a synthetic cover, when maintained. I can verify this personally, as our home sits 200 yards away from our hog barn. Odour is an issue for many people, and can be minimized if covers are in place. Industry research is looking for new uses for manure, such as the production of bio-gas which, in turn, will reduce odour and provide job creation and revenue.

The hog industry is a thriving industry at the present time. The current moratorium is having a negative effect on present and future producers, as well as industries directly or indirectly related. It seems very unfair to hog producers to have all of the attention focused on us as the bad boys of the environment.

We are required to have an abundance of data with respect to the environment, starting with the province's own technical review on every proposed hog operation. Once the operation is running, we are required to file a Manure Management Plan, and provide soil and water samples.

With regards to the moratorium, it
seems like the present government is focusing too much attention to public perception versus facts. It would appear that the present government is unfairly targeting hog producers to support their environmental policies.

I believe more research should be pursued to seek out all other sources of water and soil contamination, and make those sources just as accountable. Don't just point fingers at the hog industry, which is already regulated, and are being good stewards of land and water.

In closing, the hog industry has allowed my nephews to stay on the farm and have a future in Manitoba. Our hog operation has made the family farm financially viable to pass down to the next generation. Not all young people wish to move to urban centers or out of the province for employment. Some, like my nephews, value a rural lifestyle and have chosen to remain in rural Manitoba.

As quoted in the Brandon Sun recently:

"Farmers should not have to fear that they will be expected to do otherwise by politicians driven to win urban votes in an election year."
Thank you for this opportunity to speak on behalf of my family farm.

Mr. Blixhavn. Did you say that the local municipal conditional use approvals require straw covers?

No. Yeah, the conditional use approval does.

"We as producers in the R.M. of Killarney-Turtle Mountain are required by conditional use to provide straw cover on our lagoons."

Right.

So that is a conditional use?

Yes. There is a tree buffer that's also required around the sites, as well.

That's part of the municipal requirement, as well?

Yes.

And what kind of a tree buffer?

Trees.
THE CHAIRMAN: But how many rows of different?

MR. BLIXHAVN: I forget the minimum. I think it's three rows. Yes, I think it's three rows.

THE CHAIRMAN: And different kinds of trees or same kind?

MR. BLIXHAVN: I think it says fast-growing trees. I am not certain on the exact wording.

THE CHAIRMAN: I know that one municipality we heard from, it was two different kinds of trees and three rows. Wayne?

MR. MOTHERAL: And I have really read a lot about hogs in the last two months, I'll tell yeah. And, like, I'm a farmer, but I've never raised any animals. This technical review on every proposed hog operation, I understood that it was for 300 animal units or more?

MR. BLIXHAVN: Yes, it is now.

MR. MOTHERAL: Because you said here that it is on every one.

MR. BLIXHAVN: I'm sorry about that.

MR. MOTHERAL: So I was right? I'm
proud of myself.

MR. BLIXHAVN: There isn't many hog operations started under 300 animal units any more in our municipality.

MR. MOTHERAL: That's all, thank you very much.

MR. YEE: Oh, Mr. Blixhavn, just one quick question.

MR. BLIXHAVN: Yes.

MR. YEE: What types of soil management do you use when you spread it on your fields?

MR. BLIXHAVN: Well, we soil test. And whatever the soil test requirement is, we put the manure on. I have actually sold -- or my brother and I have sold the hog barn to my nephews just this past summer. And we are still involved in the family farm, but I don't look after that anymore. And my nephew is more up to speed on that, so he can be more specific on those questions.

MR. YEE: Is it a liquid manure or solid?

MR. BLIXHAVN: It is liquid.

MR. YEE: Would it be injected?
MR. BLIXHAVN: Yes, it is.

MR. MOTHERAL: One more, and I don't know if this is a fair question or not, have you had any complaints from your neighbours? And maybe that's personal. I don't know if I should be asking that.

MR. BLIXHAVN: And I will answer that question. I'm on council, so I have a lot of complaints about hog barns. Well, not a lot of complaints, but I have had complaints about hog barns. But from our neighbourhood, and our neighbours where our barn is located, I just cannot recall anybody complaining to me about our barn.

MR. MOTHERAL: And what I should have said was concern, any concern?

MR. BLIXHAVN: Well, no, I can't say that I've had complaints about our barn.

MR. MOTHERAL: Okay, that's good.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, hopefully, Mr. Blixhavn, by the end of our review, or at the end of our review, hog farmers will be viewed as the good boys of the environment, at least in the agricultural field. Thank you. Dwight King.

Please state your name for the record?
MR. KING: Dwight King.

DWIGHT KING, having been sworn, presents as follows:

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. You may proceed.

MR. KING: I would like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to speak. I am a grain and oilseed producer. The R.M. of Killarney, Turtle Mountain has 17 ILOs with licensed lagoons, representing approximately ten percent of the portioned assessment.

I have, as a councillor for the R.M., attended all of the conditional use hearings over an 11-year period. Notices are sent to the residents and landowners within a two mile radius for the conditional use hearings. They are also invited to an informal meeting with the Technical Review Committee, and members of council to review the report, usually two weeks before the conditional use hearing. As a member of council, I have relied heavily on the Technical Review Committee's report and expertise.

The Government pause fuels uncertainty in the livestock industry. A large number of changes to the regulations have been implemented,
and based on science, these have been considered improvements.

In 2001, the councils of Turtle Mountain and the Town of Killarney implemented a three mile buffer zone around Killarney and a one mile buffer at Ninga, Holmfield and Pelican Lake. Within these areas, no ILOs could be located.

The R.M. of Killarney-Turtle Mountain requires all lagoons to be covered by May 1st. Extensions are granted, with written requests; for example, completion of spring application for manure, which is required to be injected into the soil, spring or fall.

Killarney Lake is located in our community as a water source for potable drinking water and recreation. It is very important to our community. It is a typical prairie lake that has suffered from algae blooms for centuries. The past treatment for this problem was Blue Stone, or copper sulfate, of which 60 tons lie at the bottom of Killarney Lake.

Killarney Lake Water Quality Committee was formed in 1996, and was made up of members from the Manitoba Conservation, PFRA, Council and members of the community. Water tests were
checked at designated locations along the Long River Watershed. This watershed begins in a large, forested area in the Turtle Mountain, Wakopa Conservation area on the United States and Canadian side of the border. Water samples were collected at several locations. The first was at the edge of the Turtle Mountain natural area. The second was downstream from spread acres for manure management. The third was several miles of crop land. And a final collection was downstream from a cattle operation. The steep elevation is the largest contributor for turbidity and phosphorus loading.

The Long River runs parallel to Highway 3 and Killarney Lake, with flow access by two bridges crossing the highway. Peak flow pushed the cleaner water out of the lake and replaced it with nutrient-rich water. Highway reconstruction and removal of the old bridges allowed for an opportunity for controls. Culverts with control gates allow the heavy flow to pass by on lake -- by the lake. And with testing and experience, the gates are opened to recharge the lake with the slower flow, which is cleaner and has reduced levels of phosphorus.
The Canadian Manitoba Farm Stewardship Program, which ends March 2008, is a program that allows producers to self-evaluate their operations and accelerate the adoption of beneficial management practices on farms for water, soil and the environment. There is a benefit to this program, and funding of the program should be extended with producers evaluating and implementing improvements to their environmental farm plans yearly.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. King.

You note in your first paragraph that:

"As a council member, you rely heavily on the Technical Review Committee report and expertise."

Are you generally -- as a councillor, are you generally satisfied with how that operation or that process works?

MR. KING: Yes. It wasn't in place the first few technical or conditional uses. And then they were implemented a few years later, and it was a vast improvement. And they do take a lot longer. The turn-around time, it is in their hands for -- well, it went from months for the whole process to almost a year now. It's taking a
lot longer, and the paperwork is almost identical.
It's just that they are taking a lot longer,
that's for sure.

THE CHAIRMAN: You've said, though,
that it does work well?

MR. KING: Oh, yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: And then that it works
better than it used to?

MR. KING: Oh, yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: But the length of the
process, do you think that that should be
shortened, or are they conducting more reviews in
that time?

MR. KING: Well, it is -- I am not
sure how much they are doing. But I know that
from the time that we forward the paperwork from
the office to the Committee, it's several more
months longer now. And we've just changed from
one district to another, and now we have new
people. And we have only had one technical review
under that system.

THE CHAIRMAN: But, in general, you
think it works well?

MR. KING: Oh, yes, very well.

THE CHAIRMAN: And they provide you
with good information to help you make your
decisions?

MR. KING: Yes. And, you know,
sitting down with the Committee informally, and we
go right through it, we've learned a lot of how
they do arrive at what they do. It's been very
important.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay, thank you. I'm
sorry, Wayne?

MR. MOTHERAL: Yes, just on the
environmental farm plans, I know this was brought
up yesterday at our hearing in -- where were we
yesterday?

THE CHAIRMAN: Morden.

MR. MOTHERAL: Oh, my hometown. I'm
sorry. Is there financial assistance involved
with that?

MR. KING: Yes. I went through the
system and using it now. Some of it is just
30 percent. But you can see that you need to make
changes, and it helps, yeah. And it does make you
do them a little quicker.

MR. MOTHERAL: And this is strictly a
volunteer type of program?

MR. KING: Very volunteer. You do not
leave any data for them. You go through the booklet yourself. And then they sit there, and they don't take any notes, and you're not under the finger of the government.

MR. MOTHERAL: You evaluate yourself what you are doing?

MR. KING: Yes.

MR. MOTHERAL: And just one more question in this, you lost me in the Killarney Lake, but actually what was happening was help cleaning the lake?

MR. KING: Yes. And Killarney Lake does have several algae blooms. And last year was our best year. It was very good for the amount of sunlight we have had. But there is a two-year cycle on algae. You maybe have a good year and then next year she is wild.

MR. MOTHERAL: That's all I have.

THE CHAIRMAN: On this Blue Stone, or copper sulfate, that you used to attack the algae, does that have any other affects? You said that there is 60 tons of it lying at the bottom of the lake?

MR. KING: It doesn't break down. It only kills the algae. As it passes it, it
ruptures the cell. And at one time they used to
use a scoop shovel, to be really crude. And then
they separated it and were using only a small
number of bags. But it is something that you are
not allowed to use, and shouldn't be allowed to
use. They just -- what will happen is the algae
will, I would say, mutate and then be resistant to
it, anyways. There is some in the country. But
in this lake it was heavily used.

THE CHAIRMAN: So this is in the past?

MR. KING: Yes. It has been several
years since they were allowed to do it.

THE CHAIRMAN: But it is still at the
bottom of the lake?

MR. KING: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Does it have any
affects on the lake?

MR. KING: Not once it is down below
it doesn't.

THE CHAIRMAN: It doesn't affect fish
or anything?

MR. KING: No. Other than when algae
dies, it takes the oxygen out. And if you were to
do the whole lake, it would have been a detriment.
They only used to do a portion of it.
THE CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MR. MOTHERAL: Would you attribute any of the algae to the hog industry?

MR. KING: No. It was there before. They did tests out of the university. An individual tested core samples, and back in the buffalo days, it was pretty bad.

MR. MOTHERAL: Okay, thank you.

MR. YEE: Mr. King, I have noticed you mentioned in your presentation about some of the requirements. And we have heard earlier on from other presenters R.M. requirements for hog operation covered lagoons. You in noted it needs to be injected into the soil. Is that a by-law or conditional use requirement?

MR. KING: It is part of it for cultivated acres. We prefer the aerated system for forage and pastures, but it is a requirement for anything that's cultivated.

MR. YEE: So I guess my next question is my understanding of the new Planning Act is that municipalities no longer have that ability, they require this?

MR. KING: Yes.

MR. YEE: How do you see this
affecting you, or how do you see this affecting
the municipality here?

MR. KING: Well, it is under
government regulations now. We don't -- it is not
part of our -- we are, more or less, in charge of
smell and odour, and that's about, as far as it
goes. The Conservation people have their
technicians for the site, and everything else.
We're just a small part, but we are just location
and odour control now.

MR. YEE: So do you feel the new
Planning Act has negatively affected how the
municipality reviews?

MR. KING: No. It was very minor
changes. We just weren't allowed to have a couple
of clauses in there. And we just switched
ownership, more or less.

MR. YEE: Right. Okay. And, I guess,
because of your good rapport with the Technical
Review Committees, like, you can address these
issues?

MR. KING: Yes. No, we found that
what started off with having all of these people,
we had one site that it was the crowd of people
that pointed out things. And we wanted to be more
on top of our game, because we do not want to hear
them at the technical review level. At our
conditional use level, we want to know about it
before.

MR. YEE: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much,
Mr. King.

MR. KING: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Next is Mr. Wayne
Nichol. Please state your name for the record?

MR. NICHOL: Wayne Nichol.

WAYNE NICHOL, having been sworn, presents as
follows:

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. You may
proceed.

MR. NICHOL: First of all, I would
like to thank the Clean Environment Commission for
giving me a chance to make a presentation at your
hearing.

My name is Wayne Nichol, as you've
heard. My brother, Calvin, and I farm 3,000-acres
of crop land. We have 130 cow/calf operation and
a 5,200 finisher hog operation. In addition, we
have 40 percent ownership in Cloverleaf Pork,
which is a 10,400 feeder hog operation.
To begin with, I would like to explain how we got into the industry. Back six or seven years ago, grain prices were low and the farm was struggling financially. We were not making very much progress. Calvin and I talked a lot about this, and decided we had to do something more or we were going to risk losing the business. Rather than get bigger in the grain and cow/calf operation, we decided to diversify into the hog industry. There looked like some good benefits to that. The industry showed, for example, that there was a decent return on investment, and the value of the manure as a fertilizer would definitely reduce our fertilizer costs. The financial benefit was the most important to us. As of today it, has been real good to us, with a reasonable return on the investment and the fertilizer benefit has been phenomenal.

When we built these barns, we followed the Farm Practice Guidelines for hog producers in Manitoba. The lagoons were built to specifications, and Manitoba Conservation was there to inspect the clay-packed lagoons as they were being built. There are monitoring wells on all four sides of the lagoon. This was a great
idea. We sample the water from these monitoring wells every year to check for any signs of seepage.

I am happy to say that there is no sign of any seepage or pollution to the water. Everything is working the way it was meant to. The rules and regulations that we have in place we can live with. So far, there has been common sense used. I am concerned, though, with what will happen after these hearings. Hopefully any rules and regulations will be based on common sense, and we will be able to continue to build the industry.

Before we spread the manure, we complete a Manure Management Plan and take soil samples. We then submit the completed plan to the Conservation Department. We must follow the recommendations and make sure that we do not over-fertilize. Farmers do not want to waste the nutrients, as it is costly to do that. You only put the nutrients into the soil that the plants can use. We use the airway injecting system to inject the fertilizer to eliminate run-off. This is a very good system, and one of the best ways to do the job.
We, as farmers, are always trying to look at ways to maintain the land and improve it for the next generation. On our farm, we have been zero tilling for approximately 20 years. Zero tilling stops erosion caused by washing most of the runways and stops wind erosion on our soil. By adding zero till and hog manure to our land, we are seeing the organic manner of the soil improving and the benefits are showing up more every year.

The special nutrients in hog manure eliminate the need for commercial fertilizer on our fields. With our two barns and the cost of fertilizer at $800 a tonne this spring, the cost savings are approximately $60,000 a year. If you add the organic manner increase in the soil, and the cost savings, it adds significantly to the profitability of our farm.

Odour can be an issue, no doubt. To help minimize odour, we cover the lagoons in the spring and patch up again in June and July with barley straw. This definitely helps. High humidity mornings or hot humid days seem to be the worst. I would say that we have approximately 25 or 30 days out of 365 in a year where the odour is
notable or a problem.

The good thing is that there is thousands of dollars being spent on research every year to come up with affordable solutions to these odour concerns. I am convinced that they will come up with something in the next few years.

Plastic covers are cost prohibitive, and they only last five to eight years, so the economics of that don't pencil out. The one thing we must remember is that hog odour is not the only odour out there. Cattle feedlots have odour, as do chicken barns, town lagoons, sprays, as well as pulp and paper mills, just to mention a few. So why the fuss about all of the hog barns? Pigs are like any animal, including humans, they have waste products, too.

The one thing I want to emphasize is farmers are probably the best stewards of the land that there is. We grew up on the land. You work and you live on that farm for 365 days a year. You learn, as you go, how to keep your soil healthy and to work to make it produce. I am not convinced that farmers are the real culprits in the nutrient loading of Lake Winnipeg or other lakes. There is science out there that tells that
you say we are a very small part of the problem. There are a lot worse polluters out there than farmers. Big factories and cities are dumping their wastes right into those water systems. I think because we are such a -- I think they are targeting us because we are such a small minority and an easy target. We, as farmers, are doing everything we can, and keep our eyes and ears open, to see what else we can do. If anything does present itself, we are the first to deal with it. Let's face it, we all want clean water, and that's a given.

The one last thing I wanted to mention, and you've probably already heard this, or will hear it, and you have, is the benefit that it has provided to our community. We have got down here between 100 to 200 young families living here in Killarney because of the hog industry. But I think I am taking in a little bigger circle than what maybe Marvin is. These people would be in Alberta, Winnipeg or Brandon, or somewhere else, other than here. Rural Manitoba needs these young people, too. We can't all live in the cities. After all, someone has to be in these rural communities working on our farms to derive
the cheap food that us farmers are used to providing. Thank you for your time and attention to this presentation.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Nichol. Can we get a copy of your written notes, please?

Did you say you had 4,800 head hog operation?

MR. NICHOL: No. We have a 5,200 head finisher barn.

THE CHAIRMAN: It's just a finisher barn?

MR. NICHOL: Right.

THE CHAIRMAN: And it's Maple Leaf Pork that you mentioned?

MR. NICHOL: Cloverleaf Pork.

THE CHAIRMAN: See, that's what happens.

MR. NICHOL: Cloverleaf Pork.

THE CHAIRMAN: I had the middle part of it right.

MR. NICHOL: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: And is that in this area?

MR. NICHOL: Yeah. We are a 40 percent shareholder. But it is very close to us.
THE CHAIRMAN: And what kind of an operation is Cloverleaf?
MR. NICHOL: It's the same, a finisher.
THE CHAIRMAN: A finisher as well?
MR. NICHOL: Yes.
THE CHAIRMAN: Okay, thank you. Wayne?
MR. NICHOL: There are some typing errors in there. I am not a very good typer.
MR. MOTHERAL: I will call you Mr. Nichol now. I will call you something different at coffee time.
THE CHAIRMAN: I hope it's respectful.
MR. NICHOL: So do I.
MR. MOTHERAL: Just a question, do you still have your 140 cow/calf?
MR. NICHOL: 130, yes, we do.
MR. MOTHERAL: 130 cow/calf. When you submit a Manure Management Plan, do you have to submit one for that, too?
MR. NICHOL: No.
MR. MOTHERAL: Not yet?
MR. NICHOL: Not yet.
MR. MOTHERAL: So your animal units
are under on the cattle?

MR. NICHOL: Pardon me?

MR. MOTHERAL: You don't have to do that with your cattle operation?

MR. NICHOL: No.

MR. MOTHERAL: Okay. When you said also your organic manner, you were talking about the value of your manure fertilizer? Organic manner, I am just guessing, would be attributed to the zero till or not to the hog manure?

MR. NICHOL: Well, I think a combination of both, yeah.

MR. MOTHERAL: A combination of both.

MR. NICHOL: Yes.

MR. MOTHERAL: That's about all I had down. I might have had more if I had had this presentation for an outline.

MR. NICHOL: I should have given you that first, sorry.

THE CHAIRMAN: When did you build your barns?

MR. NICHOL: About five years ago and then six for the first one.

THE CHAIRMAN: Edwin?

MR. YEE: I think I just have one
question, Mr. Nichol. In terms of -- you mentioned in terms of the regulatory framework right now it's acceptable. And we have heard that from other presenters. But you are concerned about changes in the future. I just wondered, in terms of the regulations, the new amendments in the phosphorus regs, is that going to affect you, or do you see that as a negative for the hog industry?

MR. NICHOL: I don't see it affecting us. Because we have enough acres around us, so if we need to go out farther, we can. This industry up here is fairly new. And there is a lot of area between all of these barns up here. So I don't think that will be an issue here, not in this municipality.

MR. YEE: Thank you.

MR. MOTHERAL: One more comment. We have been hearing this several times, and we realize that the industry is heavily regulated. If, for some chance, there are any new regulations, we have heard the report from some people that they say that they could probably put up with them, if there is a clause in there that the public would help them pay. Because every
time there is a regulation, it costs the
individual hog farmer, beef farmer, whatever. And
I am just wondering what your thoughts are on
that? Because if there are any continued
regulations, should they be at the expense of the
farmer themselves?

MR. NICHOL: Well, I guess that
goes -- I could answer that by saying that it
depends on how far they go with these regulations.
If the public wants all of this clean water, which
we do, I don't think the farmers should be the
only ones shouldering the cost of that. Like I
say, it depends how far they are going to go.
There is not a lot of profit. And there a lot of
things that we are doing in the agriculture
industry out there, and I think you know that.
So if it gets much more costly than it already is,
then, yes, I think the public should help pay for
that.

THE CHAIRMAN: Do you have any idea, I
guess it would just be a guesstimate at this
point, as to how much the new phosphorus
regulation might add to your costs?

MR. NICHOL: No, I wouldn't. I would
have to probably guess at 15 percent or 20
And we will probably have to wait a year or two or three to figure that out?

What they come up as, yes.

Thank you very much, Mr. Nichol. Thank you for coming out this afternoon.

Thank you. Thank you.

Jeff Blixhavn. Please state your name for the record?

Jeff Blixhavn.

Jeff Blixhavn, having been sworn, presents as follows:

Thank you. And you may proceed.

Good afternoon. As I said, my name is Jeff Blixhavn. Our family built a 5,200 head finishing barn in the summer of 2000, as a complement to our grain farm, and as a financial means of keeping my brother and myself on the farm. My brother and I recently bought the barn, a million and a half dollar facility, from my father and uncle in September of last year.
Playing baseball in the fairgrounds one evening in the summer of 2000, the wind was blowing from the south, bringing smell off the town lagoon, which is a mile away. And I heard someone comment that: That smell was that damn Blixhavn barn. A barn that's 17 miles southwest, that was still under construction, and two months away from the first pig arrival.

Since that time, I have had discussions with people from Killarney, Winnipeg and even Toronto about the hog industry, usually defending it against misinformation. I have always been open to any questions people have had about the barn and have done my best to answer them in an effort to promote understanding in as many people as I can.

We have had to deal with constant prejudice resulting from misinformation. I came here today to outline the steps we go through each year in order to continue the operation of our barn and receive permission to spread manure on our land.

We have two wells which supply the barn. These are each tested annually for nitrates, which could indicate groundwater
Before spreading the manure from the barn each fall, we must submit a Manure Management Plan to Manitoba Conservation a minimum of 60 days in advance of our expected spread start date. This Plan must be filled out by the owner of the barn, a professional agrologist, or a Certified Crop Advisor, who has taken the proper manure course. This Manure Management Plan includes a list of the quarter sections that may be spread on, owners of those quarters, and contact information. Only those quarter sections listed in the Plan may be spread on in that year. The Plan also includes the intended crop for the next year, expected yield, expected spread volume, the name of the custom application company, if one is used, estimated nitrogen content of the manure, the number of animal units produced, and soil classification. Soil samples are taken by an impartial third party on all land intended for manure application. These soil samples are then sent to one of the only two labs in Manitoba that do soil testing.

When we spread, our custom applicator tests the manure for nitrogen and phosphorus while
agitating and spreading. He reviews all of the
soil test results, which he must have in his
possession the entire time he is spreading. He
also consults with us, as we often have him cut
back from the maximum allowable spread levels.
When applying the manure, he constantly adjusts
his application rate as the nutrient levels in the
manure, and soil, change.

After we have spread the manure, we
submit a spread confirmation to Manitoba
Conservation. This confirmation informs them of
the core sections we have spread on, with
accompanying maps, and soil test results. It
tells the nutrient level of the manure, spread
volume per field, and a list of all fields
submitted on the original plan but not spread on.
The volume, nutrient levels, and acres spread on
have to match up. Mathematically, they can't be
falsified.

This manure is a resource to our farm.
It is a valuable fertilizer. It doesn't make any
financial sense for us to over-apply this
fertilizer to our land. We want to adequately
fertilize as many acres as we can, with the manure
that we have, because every acre we don't get
covered is another acre we have to buy chemical fertilizer for.

It also doesn't make environmental sense for us to over-apply. The members of my family have the three closest homes to our barn, two of which are downstream from it. We are following every regulation in place because we know that any possible groundwater contamination would affect us first. I hope this aids in the understanding of the steps we, and all producers, take to properly manage our farms, and the resulting impacts on our communities.

Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Blixhavn. How big is your grain farm?

MR. BLIXHAVN: It's 2,300-acres.

THE CHAIRMAN: 2,300. How many of you does it take to operate both the finishing farm and your grain farm?

MR. BLIXHAVN: There is four of us.

And we have a seasonal part-time, or a hired man, just in the spring and fall.

THE CHAIRMAN: So four of you take care of all of this operation, plus the one?

MR. BLIXHAVN: The barn, yeah, and the
2,300-acres and 200-acres of hay.

THE CHAIRMAN: Were you and your brother, did you go straight to the farm, or did you work elsewhere in between or --

MR. BLIXHAVN: We both worked elsewhere. My brother worked away from home for probably five years. I went to university and got my degree. And when I came back, I worked in a couple of places in town here, but then was back home. I worked at the company that we originally had our barn with for two years managing finishing, ten finishing sites. And then I returned home to take over the barn with my brother.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay, thank you. Wayne?

MR. MOTHERAL: Yes. I'm interested in the custom applicator. Obviously, that would be part of the economic development in the area. Like is it a custom applicator of the fertilizer, of the manure?

MR. BLIXHAVN: Of the manure, yeah.

MR. MOTHERAL: Would that -- is there more than one in the area or can one do all of the barns in this area?
MR. BLIXHAVN: There is more than one. There is one based in Boissevain, and he comes into our area. Actually, the guy we hire lives in Crystal City. And he comes and does 10 or 12 sites probably in the area.

MR. MOTHERAL: Would that be considered full-time employment for that applicator? I mean, obviously, you don't do it in the winter time, but in the summertime?

MR. BLIXHAVN: No. He has got a window that he can spread in. In the spring when it thaws until guys are seeding, which is, you know, starts the last week of April, the last couple of weeks.

MR. MOTHERAL: And so you have about a month and a half window, something like that?

MR. BLIXHAVN: And then you have a month and a half in the fall. So he is very seasonal. He has four or five employees, I think. He keeps them busy in the summertime with other things. But in the winter time, he is slow and he can't do anything.

MR. MOTHERAL: You fill out your own Manure Management Plan?

MR. BLIXHAVN: Yes.
MR. MOTHERAL: And the owner is certified to do that?

MR. BLIXHAVN: Yes.

MR. MOTHERAL: And just at the ending here, I would like to add that when somebody said: There is that damn smell from the Blixhavn barn, does it make you grip the bat any better?

MR. BLIXHAVN: No.

MR. MOTHERAL: Okay, that's all.

MR. YEE: Okay. Mr. Blixhavn, I noticed that you mentioned in your presentation that soil samples would be taken by an impartial third party. Like, is it a consultant, or would that be --

MR. BLIXHAVN: It is any one of the local crop input companies. We use Patterson. And then they come and take your plugs and tests and then send them to the lab.

MR. YEE: Okay, thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for coming out here this afternoon, Mr. Blixhavn.

MR. BLIXHAVN: Thanks.

THE CHAIRMAN: That brings us to the end of the list of those who requested to speak this afternoon. Is there anybody else in the
audience now who would like to speak, or anybody
who has signed up for this evening who would
rather go this afternoon? Well, if not, we will
take a break now. We will be here until 5:00,
which is our advertised time. And if anybody
shows up and wishes to make a presentation, or if
any of you change your minds and wish to make a
presentation, just let us know and we will
reconvene the panel. There is coffee and cookies
up here. I'm told the cookies are very good, so
come and enjoy them.

(PROCEEDINGS RECESSED AT 2:31 P.M.

AND RECONVENCED AT 7:00 P.M.)

THE CHAIRMAN: Good evening, ladies
and gentlemen. Welcome back. We will start our
evening proceedings. We have about five or six
people who have indicated an interest in making a
presentation to us this evening. The first person
who was scheduled to make a presentation today is
Carol Ketner. She is here, but unable to make her
presentation, because she is totally without
voice. She has submitted a written presentation,
which we will accept as a written presentation.
There are a few copies of her presentation
available tonight. Otherwise, it will be posted
on our website probably next week, and you can
read it there.

Without putting words in her mouth, I
think it's fair to say that she takes a different
position than what we have heard this afternoon.
So thank you, Mrs. Ketner, for submitting a
written submission. And we wish you well, and
hope you get your voice back quickly.

Next on the agenda, then, is Mr. Bryon
Johnson. Come to the table up front, please,
Mr. Johnson. Would you please state your name for
the record?

MR. JOHNSON: Bryon Johnson.

BYRON JOHNSON, having been sworn, presents as
follows:

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. You may
proceed.

MR. JOHNSON: Good evening,
Mr. Chairman, panel members, and ladies and
gentlemen. My name is Bryon Johnson. And I
wanted to speak about a few of the things that the
hog industry is doing to protect our soil, our
water and the environment. Roberta and I own a
family farm between Killarney and Boissevain. We
raise cattle, grain and, for the last eight years,
we have been feeding hogs under contract with Elite Swine, Inc. B & R Feeders had the privilege of delivering the first 50 hogs to the new Maple Leaf plant in Brandon for their opening in August of 1999. And since then, we have shipped over a quarter of a million hogs to that same plant.

There were a few scoping meetings held before the regular public meetings, and I would like to comment on some of the issues resulting from those meetings.

Each year, all of our grain land is soil tested with a G.P.S. system for more consistent results. By using this system, the samples are taken from almost exactly the same spot on the field each year. All of the manure that we apply is based on these 6 and 24-inch soil tests. If the nutrient levels are too high in any given field, we can't apply on that field. Each year, we submit a Manure Management Plan to Conservation. And out of eight years that we have been applying manure, we have been audited three times. As long as a producer follows the guidelines set out, nutrient levels usually stay the same as if we were using commercial
fertilizer.

We have two wells that provide water for our house, our cattle, and we pipe the same water half a mile to our hog barns. When we found this water supply, the driller said that we could irrigate with the volume of water that we have. At the barns, we have a 35,000-gallon cistern and a back-up generator so that the livestock won't be out of water or power for any long period of time. The generator fires up automatically if we lose power for more than 15 seconds. So it doesn't matter what the weather is doing outside, the inside temperature never varies more than 10-degree.

Our water consumption is metered and sent in to the Water Stewardship each month. Morton Council had us install four monitoring wells at our lagoon, and samples are taken annually to check for seepage from the lagoon. In eight years, there has been nothing that has shown up in our monitoring wells.

All hog producers have to be validated with the Quality Assurance Plan, which is a program governed by the hog industry to assure high quality pork is going to the market. Water
tests, feed tests, medication withdrawal times, and protocol for broken needles are a few of the things covered in this program. This program also works with the producers to have traceability and country of origin systems in place.

Killarney is a success story because of the number of jobs created by the hog industry. Between the three inland terminals, the feed-max mill, which is running 24/7, the farrowing barns, the nursery barns and the feeder barns, there have been over 200 new families that have found employment in the hog and grain industry in the last eight years. Because of this new growth, Co-op has built a modern new grocery store that also employs close to 50 people. Killarney is one of the few bright spots in rural Manitoba that has seen major growth in the last ten years.

Even though our barns are in Morton Municipality, we use a by-law put in place by the Turtle Mountain Council, which was proactive in odour control. Each year, Redhand Ltd. blows at least six inches of barley straw on our lagoon after our spring clean-out. They come back and do touch-ups at least once in the summer to cover areas opened up by high winds. Good managers are
able to keep the barns set up so they are clean and dry, even in changeable weather. This reduces the amount of odour being pushed out of the ventilation system. We also constructed a refrigerated shed for handling dead stock in the hot summer months.

If all industries in Manitoba were as proactive with water, odour and soils as the hog industry, this province's environment would be in very good hands. For one thing, we aren't allowed, nor would we want, to build a hog barn next to a river. Barn location is a big part of being good neighbours and being environmentally friendly.

I have been at several meetings where opponents to the hog industry have accused producers of contaminating wells, of causing health problems, and of lowering land values. If any of these things have actually happened, I would challenge that person to produce a list because, in most cases, there is no list. Why would any livestock producer knowingly contaminate his water supply and his soil, when clean water and fertile soils are his livelihood.

So why are we here today? The hog
industry has been accused of putting one percent of the nutrients into the Red River drainage basin. Our site is over 160 miles away from the Red River, and more than 200 miles away from Lake Winnipeg. Because of this, we are having 17 meetings all over Manitoba.

The NDP caucus members have also decided to put a pause on a billion dollar industry that they, obviously, know next to nothing about. This pause has already chased away millions of dollars of investment and thousands of jobs because of uncertainty in the industry. This moratorium just fell out of the sky, with no time limitations or prior consultation with the industry. The Members of Parliament that called for this pause are at least three generations removed from having any ties to agriculture. And, unfortunately, the moratorium has more to do with politics than any amount of science or common sense.

Watching David Suzuki reruns and taking advice from the Farmer's Union and the Winnipeg Humane Society doesn't really justify putting a pause on a billion dollar industry. Industry groups can make a lot of noise at these
meetings for their own reasons, but the people
that work at ground level are your best sources of
information. If the Conservation Department fails
to use advice from people in the industry, like
they did with the hog pause, this industry will
get bogged down with poor regulations that don't
help the environment or the industry.

I think that this whole review has
been brought on by a real bad case of human
denial. It's human nature not to want to take any
responsibility when it comes to polluting our
rivers and lakes. The hog industry is an easy
target. And if I wasn't involved in it, like I
am, it would be really easy to point a finger at
this industry and ignore the real problem. There
are between 1.2 and 1.5 million people that live
within 15 miles of the Red River, upstream from
Lake Winnipeg, and several thousand cottages on
that lake. There isn't an intensive livestock
operation in the world that produces even one
percent of the amount of waste produced by that
number of people.

On top of human waste, there are
thousands of industries, some clean and some very
dirty. I have no idea how many livestock
operations there are on either side of the
Canada/U.S. border that are near the Red River,
but I'm guessing that livestock are out-numbered
by people by at least 5,000 to one. Livestock
waste isn't channeled into the river, whereas
human waste can be piped from at least 15 miles on
each side of the river.

If we have the capability of detecting
one percent of hog waste, why don't we have the
percentage of human waste on the same slide, and
why do we have agriculture and hog waste in a
different category? Common sense would tell me
that human waste is responsible for between 80 and
90 percent of the nutrients that end up in Lake
Winnipeg.

Today we are putting one percent of
the problem under a magnifying glass, as we sit
here and watch the other 99 percent slowly kill
Lake Winnipeg. A smart businessman would start at
the top of the list with the biggest polluters and
work down.

Our Provincial Government has put on
this inquiry, for the benefit of a few interest
groups, while over 34,000 desperate Crocus Fund
investors are left in the dark, begging for an
I told myself that I would try to keep this presentation positive. But as I wrote this presentation, I realized that I really don't agree with any of the ag policy that has been put in place since this government came to power. The pause in the hog industry was implemented by a group of caucus members that have never been close to a hog barn and have no idea that life actually does exist outside of the perimeter. Everything that I said in this presentation was probably already said by Manitoba Pork Council when they announced these meetings in -- when they opened these meetings in Winnipeg with a two-hour presentation. Having between 400 and 500 hours of meetings all over rural Manitoba is similar to Manitoba's CWB vote, another waste of taxpayers' money. If the City of Winnipeg is responsible for over ten times as many nutrients as the hog industry, is this Provincial Government going to have 4,000 hours of meetings in the city, or might that offend some other potential voters? This Provincial Government has managed to butcher everything that it touches that relates to agriculture. Strong councils and strong
governments stand up for agriculture, and don't waste a lot of time and money on meaningless inquiries. I consider this whole exercise a complete waste of my time and yours.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Johnson.

MR. MOTHERAL: Yes, Mr. Johnson, as you went on and on, you got a little bit more and more and more -- it is a presentation. Obviously, you are not pleased with what the government is doing, but we are not part of that.

MR. JOHNSON: Yes.

MR. MOTHERAL: We were asked to do this review. So when you mention that the producer follows the guidelines typed out and nutrient levels, et cetera, et cetera. Do you think those are too onerous to the hog industry, some of the regulations that are in place? And if there were more, now I'm asking you a question, do you think the industry can absorb any more regulations, or do you think that if they have to absorb any more, should they be financially helped by the government? Did you understand my question? I maybe didn't say it very well.

MR. JOHNSON: Not really.

MR. MOTHERAL: Not really. If there
were any more regulations, putting a hypothetical, if there were more regulations, on top of the many that there already are in the hog industry, we have heard from other areas that they can't afford it, because regulations cost us money, it costs the industry money, the individual enterprises. Do you feel as though there should be government assistance if there is any more regulations, financial assistance?

MR. JOHNSON: Well, there are some regulations that just won't make any fiscal common sense or, like, technology is wonderful if you can afford it. It's just like anything else in agriculture, sometimes new technology is out of the reach. It might be there, it might be good technology, but it doesn't make any sense financially.

MR. MOTHERAL: Okay. Another question, is the operation is in the R.M. of Morton, right, did you say?

MR. JOHNSON: Yes.

MR. MOTHERAL: Now, with the two municipalities, are they quite compatible in their development plans, as far as the livestock industry?
MR. JOHNSON: Yes. There is a few of them here tonight. And I think their regulations are very similar. Turtle Mountain has got more barns than Morden. But I think there are -- there are some areas, like, if you don't want to put barns up close to parks, and things like that, and the location of barns is a big part of being friendly with your neighbours, I guess.

MR. MOTHERAL: I am just saying that because there are many municipalities, of course, in Manitoba, neighbouring municipalities, that are not really that compatible in some of their development plans. And it's probably advantageous in this industry if there are -- if there is compatibility in an area. And, obviously, there is here. Your answer is pretty well, yes, then, I would think.

MR. JOHNSON: Well, I mean Turtle Mountain borders with three other municipalities. And I think we are all working with the same regulations, so it would be pretty hard not to be compatible.

MR. MOTHERAL: Okay, that's it. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Edwin?
MR. YEE: Yes. Mr. Johnson, you've indicated in your presentation that the pause has chased away millions of dollars of investment and thousands of jobs. Whereabouts did you get these statistics?

MR. JOHNSON: Well, I will just give you one example, and that is the Olymel Plant in Winnipeg. This pause has chased away millions of dollars of investment and over 1,000 jobs right there.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, there is no evidence that the pause has caused Olymel to pull out.

MR. JOHNSON: Well, maybe not. But, I mean, if I was an investor, thinking about investing in a plant like that, and I was looking at a pause. Actually, there has been people that have approached us lately, and they are thinking about building a farrowing barn. And if this pause isn't off right away, they are going to be looking at either North Dakota or Saskatchewan. You can't sit and wait for a government to make up its mind.

MR. YEE: Mr. Johnson, just more of a point of clarification. Also in your
presentation, you noted that if the Conservation Department fails to use the advice of people in the industry, like they did with the hog pause, this industry will get bogged down with poor regulations that don't help the environment or the industry. Are you referring to existing regulations?

MR. JOHNSON: No. I'm referring to the fact that the pause was put on, and it just sort of fell out of the sky. There was no consultation with the industry. I mean, I was at a meeting, a review meeting, the afternoon that it came on. And even the people in the technical review had no idea that was coming. It just fell out of the sky.

MR. YEE: Well, I am just trying to understand what you mean by resulting in poor regulations that don't help the environment or industry?

MR. JOHNSON: What?

MR. YEE: Like, I don't understand how the pause will -- are you saying because of the pause, as a result of the pause, there will be poor regulations that aren't going to help the environment or industry?
MR. JOHNSON: Well, like, I think it's going to come down to the point that there is going to be regulations because of this pause, just to justify the fact that we sat and didn't build any barns for a year. And I would be very suspicious if we don't have -- I guess I just have a gut feeling that I don't like what's coming around the corner with this pause. Because when you take a year off from building barns, government is almost going to have to justify what they have done. And there has got to be new regulations. I don't think there is any doubt about that. And I am guessing, from what I have seen of from this government, that they are probably going to be poor regulations.

MR. YEE: Okay, thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Okay.

THE CHAIRMAN: Next, Mr. Tim Hofer.

Please state your name for the record?

MR. T. HOFER: Tim Hofer.

TIM HOFER, having been sworn, presents as follows:

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Hofer, go ahead.

MR. T. HOFER: Good evening, ladies
and gentlemen. My name is Tim Hofer. I am a member of the Willowcreek Hutterite Colony. I am also the hog production manager for the colony. At this time, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to present my comments to you.

Willowcreek Colony was begun in 1972, and today is a community of 27 families, with a total of 140 residents. Until recently, the colony relied solely on agriculture operations for its income. These operations include grain farming, the production of eggs, milk and beef, and the production of hogs. And to offset some of the reduction in farm income in recent years, we have branched out into heavy trailer manufacturing.

Agriculture, however, as it was for our forefathers is the basis of our existence. With 27 families relying on agriculture, I think it is safe to say that we are the modern family farm. At this time, I would like to tell you some of the efforts Willowcreek Colony goes to regarding environment and manure management.
Manure Management Plan. Every year, we hire an agronomist to take soil samples, in order to accurately calculate the soil nutrient requirements for the next year's crop. We do this for every field, every year.

After collecting 12 to 16 soil samples per field, the resulting nutrient field calculations are used to control manure application. And this is done using the agronomist's maps, in conjunction with a GPS location system, to control the manure application rate and location. This system allows the precise amount of manure to be placed in the correct position in the field. We, therefore, get the precise amount of phosphate and other nutrients per application.

We feel so strongly about accomplishing this task properly that, even though we have our own manure injection equipment, we choose to hire an outside expert to do the actual injection. This company is Red Hand Manure Injecting, a company that's a leader in manure application.

Not only does Red Hand do our work, they maintain computerized records and field
application maps. This information is available to any interested party.

To further control the nutrient content of the manure, we include, in the formula for all of our feed rations, a product called phytase. This ingredient helps the livestock utilize the phosphate in the grains. This enables us to significantly reduce the additional phosphate, and is normally blended into the rations.

We also spend thousands of dollars a year on a feed additive called Proaid, that has no other function than to reduce the odour in the manure.

Further, we maintain a barley straw cover on our lagoon to keep the odour down. The particular use of barley straw is a very efficient method to minimize odour.

I should also remind you that not only are we concerned about our fields and the environment, we are concerned about water quality. After all, remember that all of the water we drink comes from our own wells.

While the decision by the Government of Manitoba to put a moratorium on building of
barns appears to have been motivated by environmental issues, it will have an unintended side effect for the Hutterites. This is causing us grave concerns.

Willowcreek's population has grown in the last 35 years to a point where we are starting to plan for a new farm.

Currently, we are raising weaned pigs, called isoweans, and sending them south to be finished in the U.S.A. Our long-term plan was to build finishing barns on the new farm, and send our isoweans to them. This would allow us to take advantage of the profit to be made from the whole hog production cycle.

The new finishing hog barns, along with the other farm operations, would generate an income required to sustain the new farm. Unfortunately, as you know, cropping operations, by themselves, are not profitable enough to sustain anything. The hog barns are needed to ensure the viability of the new farm.

Without the barns, our children have little future, and no guarantee of jobs to keep our communities alive and growing.

For 400 years, agriculture has
sustained the Hutterite way of life. It is a
business our grandfathers and fathers have taught
us. We are hoping to pass it on to our children,
but it is getting increasingly difficult to
sustain this way of life. This could lead to a
very bleak future for our descendants.

Thank you for the opportunity to make
this presentation.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Hofer.

How large is your farm?

MR. T. HOFER: Acre-wise?

THE CHAIRMAN: Acre-wise, hog-wise?

MR. T. HOFER: 4,500-acres, 2,400 sow
isowean, 6,000 chickens.

THE CHAIRMAN: 2,400?

MR. T. HOFER: 2,400 sow isowean.

THE CHAIRMAN: Willowcreek Colony is
in this area?

MR. T. HOFER: It is in Roblin
Municipality, right beside Turtle Mountain
Municipality.

THE CHAIRMAN: All right. And how
soon were you planning or hoping to start the new
farm?

MR. T. HOFER: Probably in the next
five years, if all goes well.

THE CHAIRMAN: Have you identified an area for it?

MR. T. HOFER: Not yet.

THE CHAIRMAN: So it's definitely in the plans, but it's not --

MR. T. HOFER: We have invested the money in the hogs in the sow barns for this already.

THE CHAIRMAN: Wayne?

MR. MOTHERAL: Yes, thank you.

Mr. Hofer, you have mentioned here in your presentation that you do have your own actual injection equipment, although you do hire somebody else to do it. Does that mean in the past you did do it yourselves?

MR. T. HOFER: We did. We did at one time.

MR. MOTHERAL: Yes. We have heard, previous to today, that there are some excellent people here that do injections.

MR. T. HOFER: Yes.

MR. MOTHERAL: That do make a business of it. Has this been -- is this a requirement of the municipality? I know that they don't -- I
don't think they have that in the new Planning Act.

MR. T. HOFER: To inject or to hire somebody, you mean?

MR. MOTHERAL: Yes, okay.

MR. T. HOFER: It is not a requirement to hire somebody. But we did it because of the records. And it's so much easier running a Manure Management Plan. And it is done way better to protect our fields.

MR. MOTHERAL: And do you think that is probably -- well, in the future, that most operations should be using, more or less, a certified injector?

MR. T. HOFER: Not necessarily, but for us it works.

MR. MOTHERAL: Okay, that's all I have.

THE CHAIRMAN: Just to follow up on that, what are the economies of scale? How big an operation does one have to have to be able to reasonably afford to hire somebody to do this spreading?

MR. T. HOFER: I guess that's a good question. It depends.
THE CHAIRMAN: I guess that a small operation probably couldn't afford that?

MR. T. HOFER: A small operation couldn't afford it. Well, it is cheaper to hire somebody if you're small.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Than to have your own equipment, of course, yes. Thank you.

Edwin?

MR. YEE: Oh, just one question.

Mr. Hofer, in terms of your spread fields, are they all owned by the colony or do you spread on other fields?

MR. T. HOFER: It is all owned by us. But some people have bought manure from us as fertilizer, our neighbours.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Hofer, for coming out this evening.

MR. T. HOFER: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Next is Andy Gross.

Please state your name for the record?

MR. GROSS: Andy Gross.

ANDY GROSS, having been sworn, presents as follows:

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Go ahead.

MR. GROSS: Good evening, ladies and
gentlemen. I would just like to make a few
comments regarding this moratorium on behalf of
Mayfair Colony. I'm the hog manager at Mayfair
Colony, and I'm honoured to present this for our
colony tonight.

This moratorium on hog barns is being
examined because the general public feels that hog
barns are responsible for the pollution in Lake
Winnipeg, and the general destruction of our
environment. Some people feel that this type of
production is not sustainable and that all hog
production facilities should be closed down.

I think that ignorance breeds fear.

Many citizens of Manitoba are no longer in touch
with agriculture and primary food production.
They have been misinformed by extreme groups who
have a different agenda. It is no surprise to us
that agriculture no longer has the respect from
locals due to world trade and cheap food policies.
The average family living in the city has no idea
where their food comes from or what sort of
agriculture practices were used to produce that
food.

Tonight, I want to share some of our
practices and illustrate how we are taking
responsibility for our farms and being good stewards of the land. I hope that we can pass this information along to those less fortunate, who do not have a direct link to the agriculture industry, and who learn only by listening to activists on the radio.

In our barns, we run state of the art ventilation systems. This includes sprinklers in farrowing rooms to cool sows in summer. A coal-fired stocker is used for extra heating in cold months to enable maximum ventilation with fresh air. As for our hog water supplies, we include water bowls to reduce water wastage. Standard water nipples waste 30 to 60 percent of water, as determined by Prairie Swine Center in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

As for feed and nutrition purposes, Mayfair uses an enzyme in the feed called phytase. This enzyme increases the availability of phosphorus in the ingredients, grains and proteins of plant origin in the diet, so that the pigs can utilize more of this natural source of phosphorus. This means there is less synthetic phosphorus, mono-dicalcium phosphate, that needs to be added to the diet. It also means that there is less
phosphorus that is excreted into the manure and
into the environment. And the phytase also
increases utilization of other minerals, such as
calcium.

Mayfair uses organic trace minerals.

These minerals are more available to the pig,
compared to using standard inorganic minerals.
Because of this increase in utilization, there are
less minerals excreted in the manure and,
therefore, into the environment.

Mayfair uses diets that are "balanced"
for the pig. This means that all of the key
nutrients are in the right form, and in the right
amount, so that the pigs can be as efficient as
possible in utilizing the ingredients that are
available for consumption. In other words, this
method of feed formulation, feed efficiency,
reducing the waste of nutrients that get passed
through into the environment. An example of this
is making sure the diets are balanced, not only
for protein, but also for individual amino acids
necessary for protein deposition.

Mayfair uses by-products as
ingredients. Example of this are wheat midds,
which come from the flower industry, and soybean
meal and canola meal, which come from the oilseed industry, where these crops are crushed for the oil content.

Mayfair uses a professional nutritionist on a regular basis to ensure that their diets are properly balanced and formulated to meet the daily needs of our pigs.

As for biosecurity into our barns, we go to great lengths to ensure good biosecurity in our barns. This isn't just so that consumers get drug-free meat, but also because we don't want sickly pigs. We keep our pigs healthy by reducing the amount of disease that could infect them. Every time we enter the barn, we must shower in and change our clothes. No dogs, cats or birds are allowed in the barns.

Rooms are constantly washed and disinfected, and all feed spills are cleaned up. Reducing the use of antibiotics costs is good for us, and also good for the meat industry.

As for staff and training, we make every effort to keep our barn staff well trained. Manitoba is a leader in training in the pork industry. And the pork industry offers more training than any area of primary production in
Every worker in our barn is a certified swine technician, as issued by Assiniboine Community College. Staff also has been trained in H2S awareness, as well as CPR.

We use gas monitors throughout the barns to detect harmful gas levels. This helps us show that our good husbandry practices do result in clean air for staff and livestock. Our truck drivers have been trained and certified on the Code of Practice for handling and transporting pigs.

On our manure handling, soil tests are annually done by our local agronomist. Based on soil results, a Manure Management Plan is filled out and filed with Manitoba Conservation. We have invested heavily into equipment used to apply manure appropriately. This involves an injection system using a GPS system, so there is no overlap, and manure is not overapplied. Manure is tested throughout the application period using a Nova meter.

Currently, we are covering the lagoon with straw, but are seriously considering putting a cover on it. This can lead to the option of
producing a renewable form of energy. In other provinces, this type of energy is being bought from the farmers. That is good for us and our neighbours.

There is a natural process in nature known as the circle of life. Anyone growing up on a farm will be familiar with this process. Basically, every species has its place in nature, and if that balance gets disrupted, the entire ecosystem is out of balance. Agriculture follows the same principles. As good stewards of the land, in the business of primary food production, we must also be careful not to disrupt this balance, or we will suffer losses.

We grow grain. Some is used for bread-making, some for beer production or oil production. Some grain is considered value-added, as it is used in meat production. The by-products from these industries need to be returned to the land to act as fertilizers, increasing the organic matter.

Pigs are the link in this process. Pigs are an essential part to our circle of life.

Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Gross.
Can you tell me a little bit about your colony, just where is it?

MR. GROSS: It is seven miles straight west of Lena, Manitoba. We farm 10,000-acres. And we just have a few milk cows and chickens for our own use. Our main source of livelihood is hogs and farming.

THE CHAIRMAN: How big is your hog operation?

MR. GROSS: We have 1,200 sows, farrow to finish, and we are breeding stock producers.

THE CHAIRMAN: I was interested in your comment, on the second last page, about the option to produce a renewable form of energy. You say you are:

"...seriously considering putting a cover on it. This can lead to the option of producing a renewable form of energy."

Can you just tell us a little bit about what that is?

MR. GROSS: There is a new form of energy, which needs some work done on it yet, which is in the form of biogas. And out in Alberta, that's starting to take off.
THE CHAIRMAN: And what do you produce
the biogas from, from the manure?

MR. GROSS: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: From the dried part, or
the liquid part, or just the mix of it?

MR. GROSS: It's the liquid part of
it. And you have to have a better coverage than
straw.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. And then does it
require some machinery to create the biogas?

MR. GROSS: Yes, which can be used as
a heat source.

THE CHAIRMAN: And this is still in
the early stages of being developed?

MR. GROSS: We know of a few farms who
have it. But, basically, there is more
development work to it yet.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay, thank you.
Wayne?

MR. MOTHERAL: Thank you,
Mr. Chairman. When you mention how the link of
agriculture is getting lost, I know exactly what
you're -- what you're speaking of, with the
children not knowing, or the general public not
knowing where food comes from, et cetera. But
this is -- there was an -- and I don't know, maybe
the public here can help me. But there was a
forum a number of years ago, Agriculture in the
Classroom. Does that still happen?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yes.

MR. MOTHERAL: That's still going on, is it? Because there is a concern that it helps
all of agriculture if everybody knows what's going
on. And that's, obviously, in the hog industry
it's the same thing. It's a general education of
the public. Also Keystone Agriculture Producers,
I think, are continually trying to promote that to
people. So there are things going on, on a
positive scale. Keystone are trying to educate
people on where food comes from and why we have
this wonderful food that we take for granted in
the province.

On one issue on your farm, you say you
use alarms, gas monitors, throughout our barns.
This is just out of curiosity, has one ever gone
off? Do you know of any instance where gas
monitors go off?

MR. GROSS: Yes.

MR. MOTHERAL: So the alarms do work.

And when the alarm does that, does that mean get
out of the barn?

MR. GROSS: No. We took this course that taught us quite a lot about draining pigs, et cetera. So we had to change those practices, like do it on a more timely fashion, and be more aware of what can happen, like, how these was gases work. So we just had to change our way of doing it a little bit. But these gases, you can work for three hours in ten parts per million and then at twelve parts per million you can only work, et cetera, or so and so long. And as the gas per parts per million rises, you're required to work less time with it. And at one point, when your alarm goes in high alarm, then you are to exit the building.

MR. MOTHERAL: Okay. It's interesting to know. Because, I mean, I have fire alarms and smoke alarms, and I hope they never go off.

MR. GROSS: Well, these are gas monitor alarms.

MR. MOTHERAL: No, I realize that. That's interesting. That's the first time I've heard that, so that's great. That's all I have, thanks.

THE CHAIRMAN: Just to follow on
Wayne's question, and I don't know if you can answer this, but somebody indicated that this Agriculture in the Schools Program, I mean, somebody indicated it is still going on. But is it going on in rural schools or in city schools where it's really needed? Does anybody know?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: It's the city, I think.

MR. R. HOFER: They presented in Brandon at one of their fairs.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay, thanks. Edwin, any questions for Mr. Gross?

MR. YEE: Oh, yes, I have a couple of questions, Mr. Gross. One of them relating to you state in your presentation that you use state of the art ventilation systems. Does that include biofilters?

MR. GROSS: No, it doesn't.

MR. YEE: Are there any steps that you take in the operation of your barns to control odours?

MR. GROSS: Yes. Actually, I forgot to mention that we are doing -- we are in the experimental stages with that through Banner Farm Supply.
MR. YEE: What specific technologies are you looking at, or what are you trying to do to reduce the odours?

MR. GROSS: There is different -- different companies have different claims on what it does for the odour. So you, basically, pick and choose what areas that you would like to improve on with your manure system. And then you pick that company or their product and work with them.

MR. YEE: And just another question I have, Mr. Gross, is you also mentioned that the rooms are constantly washed and disinfected. I was just wondering what type of disinfectant was used?

MR. GROSS: Well, nothing with formaldehyde in it, or that's dangerous to the humans, to the lungs of the humans and the pigs. Mind you, there is no pigs in there at that time. That's when the rooms are empty and get washed with disinfected and have down-time to prepare for the next batch of sows, pigs, whatever the case may be.

MR. YEE: So it would be a chemical disinfectant?
MR. GROSS: A very user-friendly one, yes, just to help fight potential disease outbreaks.

MR. YEE: Okay, thank you.

MR. MOTHERAL: Just one more question, Mr. Hofer. I'm sorry, Mr. Gross. I think I called you Hofer. In your presentation you say:

"Manure is tested throughout the application period using a Nova meter."

What does that test? Does that test the concentration of the nitrogen or phosphorus that's going in, or the quantity or quality? What does that do?

MR. GROSS: It tests the concentration of your nitrogen.

MR. MOTHERAL: And that's when it's being injected? That's something that's happening all the time?

MR. GROSS: Yes.

MR. MOTHERAL: Okay, thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Gross.

MR. GROSS: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Lloyd Leganchuk. Would
you please state your name for the record?

MR. LEGANCHUK: Actually, Mr. Chairman, my name is David Stead. I am representing the R.M. of Morton, who can't make it.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. And what was your name again?

MR. STEAD: David Stead, S-T-E-A-D.

THE CHAIRMAN: David Stead?

MR. STEAD: Yes.

DAVID STEAD, having been sworn, presents as follows:

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. You may proceed.

MR. STEAD: Thank you. Well, good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for giving me the opportunity, on behalf of my municipality, the R.M. of Morton, to make a presentation to the Commission concerning the Hog Production Industry Review.

I find it ironic that the very industry the Manitoba Government spent considerable dollars promoting in our Province is the very industry that you have placed microscopic lenses on and are doing everything in your power
to destroy it. It was your wish that the Province of Manitoba open its arms to development of this industry.

We have a serious concern and, as a Manitobans, I would say we must deal with it, because our kids expect us to be good stewards of the land and, as such, we have a responsibility that we leave the environment in at least the same state that we entered it.

My friends, you have narrowed the discussion to hogs. This is doing very little in addressing all of the other components that are creating the nutrient and phosphate load on to Lake Manitoba and Lake Winnipeg and other lakes and streams. We must consider the many other pollutants that are creating the problem. We must remember that the people of Winnipeg are responsible for a lot of the nutrient loading that we have seen. What is being done about this? We also know that all of the other components have some effect on the environment. The fertilizer operation that provides the nutrients and phosphate loading on crop land, are they not also contributing to the nutrient and phosphate loading?
THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Stead, can you slow down so that our reporter can keep up?

MR. STEAD: Okay. Do we not have to consider all animal waste units contributing to the problem? So what am I talking about is all of the facets of agriculture.

The agricultural industry has done its share in working to solve their own problems. And I would say, as a result of the year of scrutiny, are further ahead of the cities and cottage developments in controlling nutrient loads that they are generating. The simple fact is that the family will never overload his or her land with nutrients and phosphate because it would mean economic suicide. The land would be useless to him. Is agriculture not the engine that provides the ingredients to economic dollars that allows our cities to blossom? I do think so.

I would like to make four points that I really feel need to be addressed. The Province is telling us that we must complete a new development plan by the end of this year, and so we are trying to do this. However, a component of this plan requires us to address Intensive Livestock Operations. This component, unless
resolved quickly, will not be addressed. The
development plan and related plans will need to be
redone.

The fact is that we currently have an
application before us that involves our
development plan. The application was made
February 2006, and the application cannot proceed
because of the moratorium on hogs right now.

It is a fact that today half of
agricultural land is covered by an environmental
plan. Could somebody show me the environmental
plan that the City of Winnipeg operates under? Do
they not produce any of it? Do they even have a
plan that can demonstrate to me that they are
managing their waste, water and sludge properly?

The hog industry must have this review
resolved as quickly as possible, as it is
imperative that we continue to send out the
message that we are "open for business". Do not
slam the door on this industry because nobody will
invest in our Province in the future. We must
build confidence back into the hog industry, or
any other industry, for that matter.

The hog industry collective is only
one percent of the problem of nutrients and
phosphates loading on Lake Winnipeg. In fact, I would venture to say that the ducks and geese that flourish around the lakes are more of a direct contributor to the problem than that of the hog industry. Remember, the hog industry is already very closely monitored and has to follow strict regulations to operate under.

In conclusion, I would like to point out that, as I was preparing this presentation, I pulled out different reports generated by the Manitoba Clean Environment Commission. The reports are:


I would like these reports to become part of my submission with you concerning the topic we are discussing today. It appears that all of this has been talked about before, and before, and before. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Stead.
Wayne?

MR. MOTHERAL: I have one comment. And I understand, coming from a municipal perspective on the new Planning Act with the opportunity, I guess you could say, for council for a municipality to come up with their own livestock operation policy, operating policy. It must be very frustrating to municipalities, because we've heard that they are reluctant to go ahead with it because things could change because of this review.

MR. STEAD: Yes.

MR. MOTHERAL: And we know that. We have been told that before. And we understand that very much so. So I'm hoping that this can be done in a speedy manner, myself.

MR. STEAD: Yes, I am, too, yeah.

THE CHAIRMAN: Edwin?

MR. YEE: I probably have more of a comment than I do a question for you, Mr. Stead. But in terms of you mentioned this, and I have heard this from other presenters, about the comparison between agriculture, the agricultural industry doing a better job than the City of Winnipeg. But in the context of this, are you
speaking of just using nutrients to fertilize
lawns in the city versus the fertilizer used in
the agricultural industry, or are you saying that
in terms of the city managing all of its sources
of phosphorus into the water, such as car washes
and soaps going into municipal effluence?

MR. STEAD: Well, it all contributes.
I mean, how many cottages around lakes let their
gray water into the lakes? And the shampoos that
they use are more toxic than hog manure. And we
know that that goes on. And I was told by a
Government Minister that that's a tough problem to
solve. Well, it's not. Just give them 12 months
to put a proper tank in there. And if they don't,
just shut them down. They will do it.

These reports I saw today, I only saw
them today. And I haven't had time to read them,
but I looked down the page, and it is in 1980
about the pollutants that go into the river. Now,
I am not familiar with the term BOD. Do you know
what a BOD is?

MR. YEE: Biological oxygen demand.

MR. STEAD: Okay. So is that a bad
thing when that goes into the river?

MR. YEE: Yes, because it takes away
the oxygen from the aquatic environment and the
fish can't survive.

MR. STEAD: Okay. Well, in 1980
Killarney were producing 3,700 kgs of these over
five years. And the City of Winnipeg south end,
that's just the south end, was producing 9,600,000
of them. So even if you compare it on a
person-for-person basis, there are far more BODs
going into that river than was going into the
river in Killarney. And that's what really ticks
farmers off is because they are being blamed for
something they have not really created, which is,
obviously, a political reason that this inquiry is
going on.

MR. YEE: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Stead.
Can we get a copy of your written submission?

MR. STEAD: Yes, certainly you can,
yes. Thank you very much.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

Robert Hofer. Please state your name for the
record?

MR. R. HOFER: Robert Hofer.

ROBERT HOFER, having been sworn, presents as
follows:
THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, and please proceed.

MR. R. HOFER: Good evening, members of the Clean Environment Commission.

Ladies and gentlemen, my name is Robert Hofer, manager of the Wellwood Hutterite Colony, which is located between the communities of Dunrea and Ninette. All three communities reside in the R.M. of Riverside.

Presently, there are 83 members and 18 families in living in our community. Our primary revenue source is generated from several agricultural-based operations.

Land base. Wellwood Colony Farms consists of 11,517-acres, of which 3,600 are rented. The colony crops grown are oilseeds, cereal grains and forages. The products are mostly used for the colony's livestock enterprises. We also have diversified our grain handling system to add value by cleaning barley and oats for the livestock industry. Remember, the crow rate is gone.

At Wellwood Colony, we presently operate a 900 sow, farrow to finish, swine herd. We also market high health swine genetics to other
producers. Remember, the crow rate is gone.

The present moratorium. We also feel
the present moratorium on the hog industry will
affect our revenue, and do us farmers more harm
than good.

We also operate a 260 cow and calf
operation, and a small feed lot where we finish
50 percent of our yearly calf crop. Remember,
ladies and gentlemen, the crow is gone.

Nutrient management. At Wellwood
Colony, environmentally sound agricultural
practices are in place. Larry Penner, certified
agronomist for Agri Trend Agrology Ltd., based out
of Red Deer, Alberta, is under contract to work
with our farm boss, Jack Waldner, and his staff,
to make sure that the entire farm procedures are
done properly.

All soil and manure samples are tested
for plant nutrient content at A & L Laboratory in
Ontario. All of the following equipment that is
used for seeding crops, banding commercial
fertilizers, spraying herbicides, fungicides,
collecting soil samples, injecting liquid hog
manure, are all done with equipment that have GPS
and auto steer technology. The reason we use this
technology is to prevent over-application from overlapping.

Environmental management. We are working with Manitoba Conservation to put in place proper facilities to store bulk fuel. We also collect used oil, oil filters, batteries, tires and empty chemical containers, washed, for recycling. It is picked up or delivered to the proper outlets.

Manure and mortality management. Manure from the hog operation is processed by separating the solids from the liquids. The liquids are stored in an earthen lagoon, and a straw cover is used for odour control. The reason the colony uses a straw cover is because it is environmentally friendly, farm produced and of 100 percent organic matter. Plastic lagoon covers are made from petroleum by-products, and are very costly. And they do not last in our northern environment. For disposal, they would have to be recycled. Solid manure from the separation process are stored and composted in a cement bunker. Hog mortality are composted, along with the composting hog manure.

Wellwood Colony files a Manure
Management Plan once annually with Manitoba Conservation. Liquid and dry hog manure is tested for plant nutrient content before being applied to fields. Liquid manure from the lagoon is injected into soil tested fields by Red Hand Ltd., from Souris, Manitoba, a certified manure applicator. Compost manure is applied to pastures and forage crops annually. Manure from a cattle operation is mostly composted and is applied to cattle pastures only, which have also been soil tested for plant nutrients content.

Diversification of our own natural resources. The importance of exporting processed meat products, instead of cereal grains, is paramount. In exporting grains to other countries, we export plant nutrients and our natural resources to other countries. Plant nutrients provided by proper manure management is second to none. Seedlings have more vigor, crops field more, quality of grain is better, soil is better to work with, and chemical fertilizers are too costly. Where do we get our chemical fertilizers from? Potash we get from Esterhazy, Saskatchewan, and nitrogen we get from Alberta, and phosphates are imported from the USA.
Environmentally sound husbandry

practices. We have all heard rumours of how all of the hogs around us are environmental hazards, and play host to a whole slew of viruses and pathogens that can start mutating, creating a host of other pathogens and viruses that mankind will not have control over.

A question for the panel and Manitobans: How many siblings, relatives and friends of yours have diabetes? Hogs supply the pharmaceutical companies with medical material to produce insulin for the diabetics. How many Canadians have a porcine heart valve transplant, and still have a high quality lifestyle left? That should tell us that the hog's anatomy is close to our own.

Canadian pork is amongst the best in the world. Manitoba Pork producers have a reputation for producing some of the finest pork in all of Canada; thereby, making us amongst the best pork producers in the world.

Regular surface and groundwater quality. The location of Wellwood Colony to the Towns of Dunrea and Ninette make it very important that we be good stewards of land and water. We
presently have four ground wells that we draw
water from for human and animal consumption. Agri
Trend Agrology Ltd. tests our water source twice
yearly. We also have a water licence. We do not
allow any of our cows or calves to have access to
water from Bone Lake or Overend Lake. Water is
supplied to livestock from water troughs only.

Livestock management. Wellwood Colony's hog boss, Peter Hofer, and his staff, are
well known to the hog industry for practicing good
husbandry. And his staying ability, he has spent
55 of his 70 years working and managing the
colony's hog enterprise, and is still in good
health.

We have also won many awards in the
carcass and live hog competition. At Wellwood Colony, we presently have three members that
attend the Assiniboine Community College to obtain
a pork manager certificate. Seven colony members
also hold a "Truck Quality Assurance Certificate."
One colony member has a pesticide applicator's
licence, "structural." Veterinary expertise is
supplied by our local veterinarian, Tom Walsh.
Nutrition is provided by Peter Vise of Precision
Feeds, a standing member of the Transplant Porcine
Heart Valve Society.

Pork is a moving commodity. It is the number one protein consumed by humans in the world today. For the Chinese population, which consists of 1,300,000,000, pork is a lifesaver. If all of the pork was to be replaced by fish and other seafood, our oceans would be empty of marine life today.

Livestock production is a driving force in Manitoba's economy. The Manitoba livestock industry contributed $1.72 billion to the cash receipts of the provincial economy in 2002.

Land use planning and approval. Good old common sense works best. Don't allow homestead residential development within the one mile zone of functional livestock enterprises and sensitive agricultural farming areas or vice versa.

Environmental liabilities. In closing, ladies and gentlemen, and Manitobans, history is repeating itself. When the immigrants came to this country and settled down in hundreds of shanty towns and cities, the Crown had to move them to other areas. And so they implemented the
Homesteaders Act, a quarter section of land per family. There was an exodus from city to country, reaching from Winnipeg to the Rocky Mountains. They mindlessly broke up the prairie soils, and caused the worst natural disaster known to mankind, the dust bowl. Drought, hunger, and sickness drove them back to the cities.

Here we go again, exodus number two.

This time it's our natural resources. Lake Winnipeg is a body of water, and has its veins reaching out thousands of miles to draw in its water, and has done so for thousands of years. Past and present mass civilizations have built, and are building, residential and industrial enterprises beside these important natural resources and veins that bring in the water. Maybe Lake Winnipeg needs to be returned to its original state, the way it was created. The nutrient content of the water flowing into this body of water is being polluted by past and present human activities, so please let's not just blame the livestock industry. Let's work together, find and put in place reasonable, workable and affordable solutions.

Please let's separate the chaff from
the wheat, bake and break the bread and drink the
wine. We can get better by working together.

I'd also like to recommend the
Environmental Commission to read the novel "Atlas
Shrugged" by Ayn Rand, maybe then they will see
that the livestock industry has enough burden to
bear. I personally think that the hog industry
has adequate rules and regulations in place
already.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for
listening.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much,
Mr. Hofer. That was a very comprehensive and
interesting presentation. I was just curious
because I wasn't aware of the link to insulin.
What is it that comes from pigs that goes into the
making of insulin?

MR. R. HOFER: They derive insulin
from the pancreas of the pigs for insulin
manufactured for humans beings.

THE CHAIRMAN: You learn something new
every day.

MR. MOTHERAL: Well, just one
question. You have a separation process. What
kind of a separation process do you have for your
manure?

MR. R. HOFER: We have imported a separator from Germany. It's a high -- it's a very cheap and effective piece of equipment that you separate the solids from the liquids. Therefore, you also get some of the phosphate content from the manure with your solids. And in that process, when you apply the solid, dry compost manure, you can apply it to certain fields that do need phosphate.

Also, in cleaning your lagoon, the solids can be pretty difficult to handle. And pumping long distance is the cheapest way, because of fuel costs, protection to fields from heavy equipment, running around with wagons. And the reason people do that is because it's hard to pump solids, you know.

MR. MOTHERAL: Is it a piece of machinery? Is it like a centrifugal thing? How does it separate it?

MR. R. HOFER: It has got screens in there, and it's a screwdriver. It is driven like a screw, like an auguring.

MR. MOTHERAL: Okay.

MR. R. HOFER: And it pushes the
MR. MOTHERAL: Okay, I've got you.

There was another colony that we have heard that from.

MR. R. HOFER: Yes, several colonies have installed them.

MR. MOTHERAL: That's all I have. I was just going to say, I do hear, when you said: Does anybody have a pig valve in them? Well, yes, I did know one guy. And just on the lighter side, somebody asked him how he was one day and he said, well, snort, snort, just fine.

MR. R. HOFER: Lots of people have them.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Hofer, you said that this equipment was cheap. How expensive is it?

MR. R. HOFER: It probably costs a hog operation, a large hog operation, about $150,000 to set it up. And the technology and the engineers are working on pretty good systems in Manitoba. And that's an advanced technology to be introduced into the hog industry.

THE CHAIRMAN: So there are a number of similar --
MR. R. HOFER: That's the reason why we should have it, if it's affordable. Large operations can only afford them. The average 250, 500 sow operation can't afford it.

THE CHAIRMAN: No. Edwin?

MR. YEE: Yes, just one question. Mr. Hofer, and you will have to excuse my ignorance, because I'm not a farmer. You have mentioned:

"We also market high health swine genetics to other producers."

What are these genetics?


MR. YEE: Oh, purebred livestock, thank you.

MR. R. HOFER: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Hofer.

MR. R. HOFER: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: That brings us to the end of the list of those who have registered to speak tonight. Is there anybody else in the audience who would like to make a presentation
before we adjourn? Yes, sir? Would you please state your name for the record?

MR. POETKER: My name is Bill Poetker.

BILL POETKER, having been sworn, presents as follows:

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. You may proceed.

MR. POETKER: First of all, I want to apologize to the Commission for not having a written report.

I did call the 1-800 number to try to apply to be registered to speak today, and my call was not returned. I had to leave a message. And I'm not sure what happened. But, in any case, I do have a few notes, which I will just add lib off of, and hopefully make a few points.

Compared to the other people that have spoken today, I represent a little more of what you would call a mom and pop hog operation. It's a family-owned, family-operated operation that is considerably smaller than the ones that have spoken today. It began because our son and his family wanted to maintain a rural lifestyle. And there was an option that was there, and that was really the only one that we could see that would
work. It's a contract hog operation with Elite Swine that has already been mentioned today.

And so we began about nine years ago in this operation. We followed immediately soil test recommendations. And, of course, as you know now, they have mandated that we need to do a Manure Management Plan and incorporate according to the soil test recommendations.

We began, as well, almost immediately, incorporating the manure. I guess, not only because it is mandated, but it seemed like an awful waste to apply manure lay on the surface of the soil to evaporate, or whatever. And I guess I was too stingy to let that happen, so we incorporated it.

I want to speak a little bit about water source protection. We do have two wells. They are both approximately 300 feet deep. So we are fairly sure, unless some surface contamination comes into our there, our water supply is going to be good. However, I want to mention that we did build one barn. And then a year and a half, or two years later, we added a second barn. And at that time, we had to provide more manure storage. And our desire was to provide a second cell so
that we would have the two cell lagoons.

We worked with an engineer and did soil samples. And the soil samples showed that there was some sand approximately 30 feet below the surface. And even though the engineer said that it would be accepted probably, he would advise us not to put that second cell there, simply as a precaution. And so we erred on the side of caution and talked with the Environment and Conservation Departments. And the result of that was that we expanded our lagoon, the existing one, in a different direction, which was more viable, where it didn't show the sand in the soil tests. And so we cooperated with Conservation officials.

And I might add, as well, that right from the beginning, when we got into this business, we were aware of the environment and, of course, the stories of some of the horrendous things that had happened in North Carolina and other countries, as well. And not only were the people that opposed hog operations concerned about that, so were we. We did not want that kind of thing happening around us, and so we cooperated with the Conservation officials as much as
possible.

I want to speak, just briefly, about the odour. You have heard several times people talk about the straw cover, which we, as well, apply. We try to do our bests. Sometimes we get very strong winds and it exposes part of the lagoon. We have to get the people to come back and put straw on it. And we, actually, have been made very aware, by one of our neighbours, that his daughter is getting married in an outdoor wedding this July. And he lives a mile and a half north of our hog operation. And he said that he wants to make sure there is no smell at that wedding.

THE CHAIRMAN: Tell him to have a wedding when there is a north wind.

MR. POETKER: Well, there are two things that are going to happen. We are going to make sure that our straw cover is in good shape, and we are going to pray for a strong north wind.

Okay. As I've said, we believe in regulation. And the hog industry is highly regulated, as has been said several times today. But I want to issue a bit of a comment about sustainability. And the hearing, obviously, is
about environmental sustainability. But I want to enter another word into this discussion, and that is economic sustainability. And I don't want to suggest that we compromise the environment for the sake of economics. However, I think that we need to keep reason as part of the approach.

I know that there is synthetic lagoon covers that were mentioned already today. For an operation the size of ours, if we were required to add a synthetic lagoon cover, and all of the equipment to maintain and install it and operate it, it would put us in serious financial difficulty, if not bankrupt us, and so that is a concern.

I've heard that of a couple of applications for hog barns in this area have been approved. However, they are being told that they will have to put a synthetic lagoon cover on. In some cases, this is still in negotiation. But if this, in fact, becomes mandated, these hog operations will not go ahead, simply because it is not economically viable to add a major cost like that.

One other area that is a concern to me, as well, is the area of buffer zones. And I
know, as I've said, that we incorporate our manure because we don't want it running into the streams and water sources at all. However, we sometimes hear stories about 400-foot buffer zones. And if you would take, for example, a quarter section of land that would be isolated, it's the only quarter you own, and there are neighbours around it, if you had to keep that 400-foot buffer zone, your area of soil that you can use for manure spreading is extremely diminished. And it would make a real hardship for a lot of people if that was enforced in some cases.

So I mention those just as areas of concern where I think that reason and reasonable approach must be used in order to allow this industry to continue. We have no problem with reasonable regulations. And we want to keep the clean environment and the water sources as much as anyone else.

Thank you very much.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Poetker.

You said yours was a small operation. Just how small?

MR. POETKER: 4,000 feeder head operation. 4,000 feeder hogs there.
THE CHAIRMAN: And how much land do
you have?

MR. POETKER: Well, we own, at this
point, two quarters of land. We have some other
land that we have a caveat on that we can spread
at our discretion.

MR. MOTHERAL: Yes. One thing I meant
to mention before now, but I will mention it now,
with straw cover, the straw cover, like, how long
does it take to cover it? Like, I don't know, you
chop barley straw and you cover it. Like, how
long does it take to do that on a lagoon?

MR. POETKER: Probably a couple of
hours. You hire a company that has a machine that
will take a big round bale and processes it and
blows it on to the lagoon.

MR. MOTHERAL: And has that straw, in
the past, caused any problems in the removal?
Like when you are removing or pumping that lagoon
out?

MR. POETKER: It does create some
problems.

MR. MOTHERAL: When you are agitating?

MR. POETKER: Yes. It is more solid
material, and it can be a hardship.
MR. MOTHERAL: But one that you can live with?

MR. POETKER: Well, it's a part of the operation, yes.

MR. YEE: Mr. Poetker, where is your operation?

MR. POETKER: It is in Turtle Mountain municipality, eight or nine miles southeast of Killarney.

MR. YEE: Now, you mentioned a 400-foot buffer zone. Is that in relation to spread zones?

MR. POETKER: Well, I think it is put in place with waterways. And I don't have a problem with that. But sometimes you hear about extending it to the property of your neighbour, so that you can't spread too close to your neighbour. So I guess what I am saying is that if that came into effect, it would be a hardship.

MR. YEE: Okay, thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: And I apologize that nobody got back to you, Mr Poetker. We have been on the road for two days. Although we do check our messages, we had an unfortunate incident yesterday where the Commission secretary fell and
is now in hospital with a broken leg. And so
Joyce, at the back of the room, is doing the job
of two people.

MR. POETKER: I called a week ago, actually.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, then, that won't work. That excuse is out the window. I am not quite sure why nobody got back to you.

MR. POETKER: I might have gotten the wrong number.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I am glad that you came out here tonight, anyway. Does anybody else wish to make a presentation this evening? Last chance. Anybody else? Okay, then. Well, we have had a very full evening. And I thank you all very much for coming out this evening. And many of you were here this afternoon, as well. And some of you I've seen at other meetings, as well, in the last few days. So thank you very much. We will be resuming tomorrow afternoon in St. Claude.

Good evening.

(PROCEEDINGS ADJOURNED AT 8:27 P.M.)
CERTIFICATE

I, LISA REID, Court Reporter in the Province of Manitoba, do hereby certify the foregoing 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