

EXHIBIT NUMBER: K14-003
File Name: Killarney

Date: MARCH 13/07
Received by: _____
(Commission Secretary)

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen and members of the Clean Environment Commission, My name is Gerry Blixhavn

I am here today to represent a family farm operation that includes Blixhavn Farms and South Pork Feeders. We produce cereals, oil seeds, 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 Jeffery.

My hope today is that the Clean Environment Commission will be focused on the 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 ground water. It has always been in the best interested 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 environment 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 exceeded any standards in any other jurisdiction in North America. I believe these standards serve the Manitoba 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 odor control, we as producers in the RM of Killarney-Turtle Mountain are required by conditional use to provide straw cover on 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 from the hog barn. Odor is an issue for many people and can be minimized if covers are in place. Industry research is looking for new uses of manure such as the production of Bio-gas which in turn will reduce odor and also 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 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 fact. It would appear that the present government is unfairly targeting hog producers to support their environmental policy.

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 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 the family farm.

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