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CEC HEARING – March 14, 2007

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Hi, my name is Real Comte. I own and operate a hog, grain and oilseed farm in Notre Dame. I have 100 sow farrow to finish operation with 800 acres. I am the 4th generation on this centennial farm.

The hog operation started in 1974 with a 300 feeder pig finishing barn and 480 acres. It currently houses 1100 pigs and is a 100 sow farrow to finish operation. There is also 525 cultivated acres and 245 acres of woodland. We aren't a large operation because we expand only when we see there is interest from the next generation. Financially the advantage of having pigs and grain is for diversification and a steady cash flow that it provides. When the price of pigs are up, the price of grain goes down and vice versa. Without these two enterprises, farming would not be a reality for me. This was also the case even for my father back in the seventies.

The water supply for the barn and house is from the same source. It is a 55' deep well which is 30" wide and is made of fiberglass. The water comes from quick sand which is approximately 30' feet beneath the surface. It is hard water so a softener is used for the removal of iron at the house. The water has been sampled yearly for the last 33 years and has remained unchanged. This proves to me, that our farming practices are not polluting the water source in any way.

Manure provides the fertilizer for the grain, which we grow and is then fed back to the pigs. We also add granular fertilizer in the spring only, before seeding, to top off whatever nutrients is missing from the manure. Our soil is sampled every two years to make sure that there is no excessive buildup of nutrients like phosphate and nitrogen. We currently have 130 days of storage in concrete pits beneath the barns. We've always broadcasted our manure ourselves with a liquid manure spreader. By spreading ourselves, we are able to apply manure on the least productive spots of the fields. The manure is always incorporated within 24 hours of spreading with a cultivator. We set realistic targets and yield potential for our crop production. We have noticed, over the years, a big improvement in our soil production output.

The immediate future for the farm along side with the financial support of the Manitoba Stewardship program will see better improvement to our farming practices. Manure will no longer be broadcasted on the soil, but rather incorporated directly into the ground. This will increase the nitrogen level in manure and eliminate nuisance odors. Another improvement will be the use of a GPS and auto steer to the tractor to limit the over applying of fertilizer.

Our farm has 275 acres of woodlands, which remain untouched. There, lives a great deal of wildlife. We, as a family, enjoy the woods for all its nature, beauty and recreational pastime. We have no intention of ever clearing these areas.

The family farm can compete and thrive in the hog industry. We will expand, as the children get old enough and become interested in continuing the tradition. We take great pride in preserving our environment for the sake of future generations as it was taken care of for me. More unnecessary

regulations can jeopardize the future by burdening the process down with red tape. More should be done to get the abusers of the system and not the innocent.

The Manitoba Pork Council is already very active in informing the hog industry of proper management. The CQA program is one of those programs that ensures all pigs are produced humanly and safely.

I would like to thank the CEC for giving us this time to bring forward our concerns regarding these hearings. I hope that we have positively influenced your decisions in this matter.

Real Comte
Hog Farmer