

CEC PRESENTATION APRIL 27, 2007

Hello, my name is Louise Hedman.

I am here today to share my story of how the hog industry in Manitoba has affected my life, and to present some of my views on the industry.

What I say is in no way motivated by financial gain. I am a busy mother of two young children and took time off work to be here.

I was introduced to the hog industry on November 23, 2005 when Winnipeg City council voted in favor of the Olywest deal with only nine days notice. It was at that time I was able to see the report dated November 16, 2005 prepared by Olywest and the City. The contents shocked me. The Olywest consortium were proposing to situate a live hog barn which would house 4000 hogs, a 16 hour per day slaughter, rendering and processing schedule, relentless traffic volumes and all this within city limits. It was intended to transport these trucks full of hogs directly in front of existing homes and businesses. It was then I realized just how close they were intending to put this facility to my home and community. The battle began.

The conduct and tactics of the industry was revealed in May of 2006. A rally was planned at City Hall to show city council that the citizens of Winnipeg and surrounding communities did not approve of the deal made to locate a hog barn/slaughterhouse and rendering factory within city limits. The city's own report stated that there would be a need to increase the amount of hog barns within a 100 km range of the city to feed the plant.

Little did we know, Olywest had conspired with city officials well before the day of the rally to allow themselves, their proponents and their paid actors into council chambers over an hour and a half before the scheduled opening. Tax paying citizens of this city, were locked out of the gallery and treated like animals behind bars. The people that filled these seats were almost exclusively from outside Winnipeg even in at least one instance out of Province. It was at that moment I realized these people would stop at nothing to get what they wanted.

Since that day, we have had Olywest people park outside our home and then make a point of telling us they know where we live. I would like to ask anyone in this room if these sound like the actions of the good corporate citizens they proclaim to be?

The hog industry is continually trying to make the point that continued expansion is needed to save existing hog producers from financial ruin. To that I would say, hog producers did ok 10 years ago when the hog population was 2 million. Through government approval and support, by using taxpayer's dollars, the industry has been allowed to grow to 10 million. Karl Kynoch, chairman of the Manitoba Pork council has stated in their newsletter that if Olywest were to be re-located outside of Winnipeg, it would require even more public tax dollars. I must have missed the day when their absolute right to our tax dollars was proclaimed. This has only served to create a great deal of wealth for a select few corporations, while squeezing out small family farms.

The industry claims they are only responsible for 1% of the pollution in Lake Winnipeg. I am not a scientist but as I think about this it seems totally illogical given that there are 10 million hogs in the Province and only 1.5 million people. Hogs produce 4 times as much waste as people. This would equate to dropping 40 million people into a band across Southern Manitoba & spreading the untreated waste on the fields. If field application can miraculously make this huge volume of waste magically disappear the solution to Winnipeg's contribution to Lake Winnipeg would be to stop treating the waste at the treatment plants & simply spread it on the fields. This method unfortunately may limit the areas available for pig waste. Unacceptable of course if you subscribe to the pigs before people concept.

I would like to present the picture from the urban point of view. People who reside here have made probably the biggest investment in their lives with the purchase of their homes. They choose to live in the city for various reasons; they did not choose to live on or near a farm. What gives the corporate pig farmers the right to decide they are going to locate a plant smack dab in the middle of these homes over the rights of the people living in these homes? The government has allowed a conflict to be created by not considering all aspects of the situation, and by only bending over backwards to the Hog representatives. The glossy brochures, newspaper and billboard ads all like to portray hog farmers as young families just starting out in the world, who need the industry to expand in order to survive. The problem is that greed begins to take over and there is always a desire for more. The large corporations start to approach small farmers with offers to expand their operations for them, to use their land to make the barns bigger and bigger. It now becomes a corporate business and is no longer a small family farm.

Olywest's glossy brochure shows a smiling family barbecuing pork. I am not sure what the message here is. Possibly that without this plant in our community people that enjoy pork won't be able to buy it? Or maybe Olywest pork will be better than the pork available now? Or maybe these people are happy to live beside a rendering plant because their property value increased!

Don't laugh this is actually implied in the 1st brochure they mailed out.

There are many of us that have tried to get information about the permits inspections & enforcement of regulations on specific hog operations so that we could make informed presentations to this panel but have been told that due to the volume of requests & limited staff this information will not be provided for a very long time, well after this process has been concluded. Not enough staff? I would say too many pigs is the problem! My opinion is the staff should be increased and the industry should pay.

Respectfully to you the members of the C.E.C., I don't believe any of you would be happy to live beside a hog barn or a rendering plant.

My home is situated within 1 km of where they propose to transport the hogs to the slaughterhouse and rendering factory. Olywest continually tries to downplay the true

distance between the trucks and factory and our homes, schools, daycare & churches. Let's not forget the various types of established business's in the industrial park. The community of Transcona has been there since the early 1900's. Farm houses were everywhere. The industrial park in question was established in the late 1980's, with no intent what so ever to allow heavy industry to operate there.

One of the things that struck me as very odd, as I drove through hog alley in southern MB, was the mass amounts of hog complexes with numerous exhaust fans protruding from the sides, and not a sign of human life. No farm houses, no people, no animals. Just stink. Where is the justice when the hog producer's erect huge confined animal farming operations in closer proximity to innocent non- hog farming people's homes than their own? The owner's of these satellite barns homes are no where in sight.

I have spent thousands of hours educating myself on the corporate hog industry and how it operates. If the public actually knew all of the details how factory meat is raised, the practices the hog industry accept as standard procedure would surely be outlawed.

My story is just one of thousands across North America. I have heard stories from people all over this country who have the same concerns as I do. This Olywest proposal has created a controversy unlike any other. I am asking the CEC to carefully review the presentations put forth throughout these meetings by the ordinary people. The people who are not benefiting financially, the people who are using their own unpaid time to make the effort to present the other side of the story. The people who are trying to protect their homes, businesses, farmsteads, investments, families and most importantly, trying to preserve the air and water quality of this province for our children and grandchildren to enjoy.

Don't be led astray by fancy presentations, advertising or slick talking PR guys. Deep down, people know what is right and wrong, sometimes they just forget. Profit over people's rights appears to be the wave of the future.

Thank you for allowing me to tell my story.

Louise Hedman