

From: Troy Stozek [troystozek@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, April 25, 2007 3:23 PM
To: Johnson, Cathy (CON)
Cc: Sargeant, Terry (CON)
Subject: CEC Hog industry Citizen Feedback

Hello, I just want to take a few moments to express my thoughts and concerns regarding the future of the hog industry in Manitoba. I am a graduate student at the University of Manitoba, studying the myriad risks that farm families and rural communities face in Manitoba. The industrial, intensive production and processing of hogs, as is currently the status quo in this province needs reassessment and critical evaluation in terms of its long and short term sustainability.

Family farmers used to depend on small numbers of hogs on their farms as a means of diversity. Hogs once contributed to economic, social and ecological resilience at the family farm level. Then single desk selling of hogs was taken from farmers since then, market power was lost, and concentration and intensification throughout the industry ensued, rendering small scale hog production nearly impossible at the family farm level. In these times, when family farms are quickly being swallowed up by an increasingly concentrated, oligopolized marketplace, we need to look to alternative growth models.

Agriculture is going the way of the box store, wearing the mask of bigger is better. But will soon be a ghost ship if we continue down this path with policy which supports unsustainable growth in this sector. Profits are indeed being generated, even several new jobs are being created. But for whom, at what cost and at whose expense? Many of the costs we can not know for certain, yet. But many we do. Culturally significant jobs are being lost, as is social and community diversity throughout our rural and urban landscapes. We can look to Quebec and the Carolinas to see the tremendous ecological toll the industrial hog industry can create - destroying watersheds, contaminating groundwater, along with all the spillover socio- economic impacts.

Manitobans do not want to go down this road. We do not want to sacrifice the future integrity of our environment for short term economic gains of increasingly few people (ie. Oliwest and the handful of additional hog barns that will be created if this processing plant gets built). We want precautionary measures to be taken and proactive ways of preserving and enhancing our farming, rural and urban communities to be discovered and honed. And we need continued public involvement, for we are all stakeholders in this thing.

Sincerely,

Troy Stozek
M.Env. Candidate
Environmental Conservation Lab
Dept. of Environment and Geography

University of Manitoba
474-7949