



Row PLETT

EXHIBIT NUMBER: ARB-008  
File Name: Hey Review  
Date: MAR 8, 2007  
Received by: [Signature]  
(Commission Secretary)

## Submission to CEC Public Meetings

March, 2007

### Introduction to Manitoba Egg Producers

- The Manitoba commercial egg industry consists of 160 egg farmers that house 2.2 million hens on an annual basis. The average farm size is 15,000 hens, or roughly 120 animal units.
- Pullet growers, who raise chicks to the laying hen stage in specialized facilities, are part of the industry. Many egg farmers grow their own pullets. About 2.3 million chicks are grown annually.
- Many egg and pullet farmers are diversified and include other livestock and cropping enterprises.
- Egg and pullet farmers are well organized under the Manitoba Egg Producers (MEP) umbrella which enables effective communication about important issues, changes and required actions.

### The Importance of Sustainable Agriculture

- MEP strategic plan identifies environmental protection, along with animal care, a priority important to the overall short and long term sustainability of the egg industry.
- MEP supports Manitoba Government initiatives to ensure the long term well being of our water resources and soils
- MEP is well aware of environmental issues and has been providing information about their importance and methods of proper manure management to our producers for a number of years.
- MEP is also aware of the importance of responsible animal care. MEP has undertaken a variety of programs and education initiatives to implement the *Recommended Code of Practice for laying hens and pullets*.
- MEP supports the updated, *Livestock Manure and Mortalities Regulation* and the current draft *Nutrient Management Regulation* under Water Stewardship (as per the most recent suggested amendments delivered under the Keystone Agricultural Producers umbrella). Much research and consultation has gone into these regulations. Enforcement measures are important to obtaining the greatest degree of compliance.

### Manitoba Egg Producers Initiatives

- Some examples of MEP initiatives directed at producers are: Proper Manure Management topic at producer meetings, production of *Manure Management for Laying Hens and Pullets* brochure, promotion and hosting of an Environmental Farm Plan workshop, various informational newsletter articles, support of and involvement in proactive research to improve manure management.
- Most recently MEP has stepped up manure management education initiatives (in the light of the new phosphorous limits, the Red River valley winter spreading ban, and the new setbacks) to ensure producers are well informed about their responsibilities, to stress the importance of soil analysis on manure applied fields and to address

Manitoba Agriculture, Food, and Rural Initiatives (MAFRI) manure/mortalities composting project has been ongoing since 2005.

In 2007 MEP plans to hold a series of “better manure management” producer information meetings. In conjunction with MAFRI and the University of Manitoba, research projects to better predict the nitrogen and phosphorous content in liquid and dry manure and reduce nitrogen and phosphorous in manure will begin in 2007.

- Many producers have retooled or are in the process of retooling older facilities which includes improved manure storage and handling. There is a trend away from liquid manure systems to dry manure. A typical liquid manure system utilizes a concrete, below ground covered storage tank with capacity for a few months of manure production. Dry manure is stored in an enclosed above ground building situated on a concrete pad. Dry systems provide for more secure storage, ease of management and less volume of manure.
- Producers are also retooling to meet the cage requirements (space per hen, water, feed) for laying hens and pullets outlined in the 2003 *Recommended Code of Practice for laying hens and pullets*. Also, some producers have responded to the small but growing demand for specialty eggs which includes cage free (free run) alternatives.
- Manure is a valuable fertilizer and soil conditioner. It is utilized by the many egg and pullet producers who also grow crops or is transferred to adjacent farmers who grow crops. Disease transmission is of little concern when manure is stored and handled appropriately.

### **Our Recommendations**

- Agriculture’s contribution to environmental sustainability, in particular livestock agriculture, is only part of the picture. MEP wants to draw attention to the importance of addressing the other sectors that share in the responsibility. All sectors need to do their part and should be required to make meaningful improvements to protect land and water resources. Addressing the impact of urban and recreational activities (some specific examples include direct discharge of urban waste, winter spreading of municipal and city human waste in the Red River Valley, cottage development and waste management) is equally important.
- Land use planning should assist the sustainable growth of the livestock industry with defined zones and parameters for development. Good planning will allow for the environmentally sustainable growth of the industry while avoiding indecision and confrontation over the location and size of new or expanding livestock operations.
- Manitoba is a unique province, geographically, socially and economically which requires solutions and planning in accordance with this distinctiveness. Therefore, approaches taken in other jurisdictions should be referenced judiciously. Recent regulatory changes to the *Livestock Manure and Mortalities Regulation* and the proposed *Nutrient Management Regulation* limits reflect this.
- Finally, we also believe there needs to be improved data and analysis to give us better information about the relative contributions of excessive nutrients from the various sources, as well as to monitor of the affect of nutrient management improvements on the landscape.