

**Presentation to CEC Hearing on Hog Production  
Dauphin, Manitoba March 20, 2007**

Good afternoon. My name is David Manchur. My two brothers and I are investors and managers of a 4,000 head hog finishing operation called Northview Feeders in the RM of Gilbert Plains. I would like to thank the CEC for coming out to this area to hear comments from the public regarding the sustainability of the hog industry in Manitoba.

Northview Feeders began operations in 1998 and was started by several investors from Gilbert Plains, Grandview and Dauphin, almost all of whom are farmers. As grain producers, we wanted to diversify our operations by going into hog production. Rather than build a dozen small, inefficient hog barns, we pooled our resources and built a larger, more efficient hog production facility. A 4,000 head finishing operation is about the smallest size hog finishing operation that provides the economies of scale that are required to be viable. This size production unit is required to achieve efficiencies in labor, trucking, and other costs. Larger operations are also able to have the finances to meet the extra cost associated with meeting the requirements of government regulations.

There is a popular misconception that smaller operations are a more desirable approach to farming. In fact, larger operations provide greater economic benefits for both owners of the agricultural enterprise and the area in which they are located. Larger operations are better able to comply with increasingly stringent government regulation and actually cause less environmental damage than multiple smaller operations. Larger operations provide for better care and nutrition for animals than smaller operations. Small-scale hog operations, like small-scale cattle and grain operations, cannot provide farm families with the financial security that they require and are thus not sustainable in the long term. My report will summarize the economic benefits of modern hog operations as well as our ability to meet and exceed environmental regulations.

The construction and operation of a hog operation can contribute greatly to the local and provincial economy. The Northview Feeders hog project had capital expenditures of \$1.1 M with many local businesses and trades people participating in its construction, including the supply and installation of concrete, building supplies and equipment. The operation also generates considerable economic activity on an on-going basis. From a direct employment standpoint, two jobs have been created. These employees have steady, secure employment which allows them to raise a family and contribute to our community. Local business and trades people benefit from



thousands of dollars being spent annually for repair and maintenance, propane, supplies and services. Local ratepayers in the RM of Gilbert Plains benefit directly from our barn as over \$7,500 of property tax revenue is generated for the RM. As well, an additional \$4,400 is generated for the school division from the collection of taxes. The federal and provincial income tax base is also enhanced with over \$20,000 of annual income tax payments being budgeted by our operation.

The most significant economic impact generated from our operation relates to the largest item on our budget, which is feed, and the prime component of our feed, which is barley. In the last fiscal year, approximately \$680,000 was spent on feed made in Dauphin at Agassiz Feeds. Over 130,000 bushels of barley was purchased locally, processed locally, and utilized in our barn. Employment was created in the manufacture and delivery of feed as well as providing a local market for deliveries of barley by grain farmers.

The hog industry is highly regulated and environmentally sustainable. In terms of environmental sustainability, hog operations are environmentally friendly and must meet many regulatory requirements. I would like to discuss how our operation is environmentally sustainable.

The operation was constructed according to the requirements in the Livestock Manure and Mortalities Management Regulation (LMMMR). The earthen manure storages required a permit to be issued by Manitoba Conservation prior to construction. A soil investigation and a storage design were done by a professional engineer who supervised construction. Inspections during construction were done by Manitoba Conservation staff and the consulting engineer. The engineer certified that the storages complied with the siting and construction requirements outlined in the Regulation. Although monitoring wells were not required by Manitoba Conservation, Northview Feeders installed monitoring wells (at our own cost) at different locations around the earthen manure storages. Samples are collected and checked by an independent third party on an annual basis. The results of the water samples have shown that there are no problems with seepage from the storages.

Manitoba Conservation requires that livestock operations that use over 25,000 liters per day have a Water Rights License. Northview Feeders has received a license and files actual water consumption volumes on an annual basis. The operation also submits an annual water analysis report of water from the operations drinking water source, which is a drilled well located 2,000 feet from the barn site. The reports have shown no indication of any contamination of the water.



Northview Feeders is required to and has always filed an annual manure management plan (MMP). This involves the soil testing of all application fields, testing of the manure for nutrient analysis, and then applying the correct amount of manure to meet the crop requirements for the following year. The manure is applied in the fall to fields as a fertilizer and eliminates the need for commercial fertilizers. This is a very sustainable practice. The LMMMR has nitrogen and phosphorus limits that ensure that nitrogen does not leach into groundwater and phosphorus does not affect surface water.

There have been some concerns that the Regulations are not being enforced. Although understaffed, I believe Manitoba Conservation does do sufficient audits to ensure the Regulations are being adhered to. Northview Feeders has been audited by Manitoba Conservation who did soil tests of spread fields near the barn to determine nitrogen levels. The results showed that the levels were well below the legal limits specified in the Regulation. Also, soil test results taken for the annual MMP have shown that phosphorus levels are not a concern and are below limits where application rates would have to be phosphorus based. There was actually one spread field that had a crop of wheat grown last year that showed a phosphorous **deficiency** in the tissue analysis of the wheat! Northview Feeders uses phytase in its rations, which reduces phosphorus excretion by the pigs. This, along with ample spread acres, prevents phosphorus buildup in the soil. The density of hog operations in our area, as well as most areas of the province is such that there is room for considerable expansion of the hog industry. The province has regulations in place now that would ensure expansion of the industry in a sustainable manner.

Our operation is also concerned about odors and the impact on neighbors. When selecting a location, a site was selected such that the closest neighbor was almost 1 mile from the barn. I live approximately ¼ mile away. Since the greatest source of odors is generally considered to be from the earthen manure storages, the storages are covered with approximately 8-10 inches of barley straw every spring. This ensures the surfaces are covered and minimal odors are released from the storages until being emptied in the fall. Manure application is done by custom applicators that inject the manure below the surface of the soil. To ensure complete coverage of the manure and to further reduce odors due to manure application, a tillage operation is done with 24-48 hours after the manure injection. A treed shelterbelt was also planted around the site to help diffuse odors, which may leave the site. A clean, well-managed barn also helps reduce odor generation.



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The LMMM Regulation requires that mortalities be disposed of by burial, incineration, composting, or delivery to a rendering plant. It also states that the mortalities must be secure and continuously frozen or refrigerated if not disposed of within 48 hours of death. Northview Feeders has a refrigerated storage shed for mortalities, which are picked up by Rothsay Rendering on a regular basis.

**In conclusion,**

New livestock proposals have to go through many regulatory hoops to ensure they are properly sited and are environmentally sound.

The Planning Act requires that operations over 300 animal units have a technical review conducted by a Technical Review Committee to obtain a condition use permit. A public hearing is held to hear any concerns residents may have. Even if all the required permits and siting criteria is met, the RM Council can still turn down the conditional permit request. The Act also stipulates that RM's have a livestock operations policy, which states where livestock operations may or may not locate within the municipality.

The LMMMR ensures that the hog proposal does not cause any environmental concerns. Manure storages must be permitted, designed and certified by a consulting engineer, and monitored for seepage. Annual manure management plans must be filed to ensure manure is applied at agronomic rates which do not exceed nitrogen and phosphorus limits that could cause groundwater and surface water quality concerns. Winter spreading of manure is not allowed. Mortalities must be disposed of properly. Producers are required to submit annually the results from samples of drinking water provided to their livestock.

The Farm Practices Act is in place to protect neighbors against nuisance issues such as odors caused by unacceptable farm practices.

A Water Rights License is required whenever a livestock operation draws more than 25,000 liters per day. Actual water consumption volumes must be submitted annually.

I believe the hog industry is very sustainable in Manitoba. What can be more sustainable than growing crops (barley, canola, wheat), feeding them to hogs, thus adding value to the crops and providing a high protein feed source for human consumption, taking the manure from the hogs and applying it back to fields at environmentally friendly rates, and growing more crops?

Approximately 15 years ago, the federal government eliminated the freight subsidy on grain known as the Crow rate and encouraged farmers to diversify. There has been considerable consolidation in all agricultural sectors since then and yet hog production is the only enterprise that is



currently faced with a moratorium. Myself, my partners, and my fellow producers in the hog business feel that this is unjustified and in light of the facts presented in my report, it is my hope that the CEC will come to the same conclusion.

Thank you.