

EX-100
File
Date
Received

DAU-009
Daphin
March 20/07
(Secretary)

Kate Storey
RR 1
Grandview, MB, R0L 0Y0
204-546-2099
March 20, 2007

Manitoba Clean Environment Commission
305-155 Carlton St. Wpg, MB,
R3C 3H8

Re: the Review of the Hog Industry in Manitoba

I am a hog farmer. I considered bringing along a piglet today to prove that, but I thought you would pay more attention to the pig than to what I am about to say.

I am a hog farmer. But I don't run a factory farm. We raise pigs in shelters filled with straw. They are healthy because they spend lots of time outside playing pig games like rooting up sod, wallowing in the mud or digging under straw piles. We sell weanlings, hogs and pork and make about \$10,000 a year doing it. This is a welcome addition to a diversified farm income.

The Moratorium on the Hog industry expansion does not affect operations like mine. The moratorium only applies to barns that are big enough to threaten the health and welfare of the surrounding community. Farmers can still raise pigs, or expand their farms or start new operations, as long as stay below 300 animal units in size.

300 AU is a lot of pigs. It could be 300 sows or 2000 hogs.
2000 hogs at an average price of \$150 gives a farmer a gross income of \$300,000. ¼ million dollars! That should give the farmer a great income, right?.....Wrong!
Factory farming is so inefficient that the farmer ends up with only \$20,000 in his pocket in a good year. And that is with high prices for hogs and low prices for grain, only if the American dollar is high, and if interest rates stay low. That is a lot to ask. Most years \$10,000 could be expected and sometimes \$5000, or even less for a years work.

Last year it cost my neighbor about \$70 to feed a hog to slaughter weight in an expensive, temperature controlled factory barn. Due to the crowding and lack of sunlight, a variety of antibiotics and vitamins must be bought. There is the bill for power and all that water to keep the manure flowing. And also the interest payments on that state-of-the-art barn. I would invite you to get up-to-date costs from one of the intensive barn owners that will be appearing before this commission.

That 300 animal unit operation with a ¾ million dollar mortgage and a leaking manure lagoon averages \$5 to \$10 profit per hog. I have heard that 2006 was a good year and profits were up to \$11 a hog on average. That was last year and pork prices are falling rapidly today.

In contrast, a straw based operation like mine spends more on feed costs. My pigs are more active and spend at least part of each day outside so they eat more. I estimate that we use \$100 of grain to feed a hog to slaughter weight. But that is almost all that we spend. No antibiotics, no vitamins. Maybe a dollar per pig for straw to fill an old shelter that we got free. A bit more for an old building and heat-lamps to shelter winter born piglets. And no loan payments or shareholders to pay. At most we spend \$120 to raise a hog. And the meat is worth more. A naturally raised hog gets a \$50 to \$100 premium over factory fed pork. What this means is that only 100 to 200 naturally raised hogs are needed to make profits comparable to the 2000 hog barn.

So, it confuses me when I hear factory farm operators complaining that that the moratorium will put them out of the pig business. It also confuses me to hear them say that they must constantly expand in order to break even. Why do they want to increase investment in an industry that is putting itself out of business?

And why should our society sacrifice water quality just to expand an inefficient industrial hog industry?

The environmental impacts of concentrated hog manure are well known. Many people are arguing about the source of the contamination of Lake Winnipeg. It is impossible to be sure how much comes from human sewage and how much comes from hog manure. However, the hog industry is the only nutrient source that has expanded.

Manitoba's human population is certainly not growing. There is almost the same 1.2 million people today, and the same amount of toilet use, as there was a decade ago. There are a lot more pigs though. 7 million more pigs today than there was in the 90's. And four or five times as much hog manure leaching into the water. Is it strange that the increase of hog numbers parallels the increase in phosphate concentrations in Lake Winnipeg?

Manure can be a valuable asset when mixed with straw on my farm, but it becomes a toxic liability when too much liquid manure is spread on too little land. There are many who will present evidence of the damage caused by too much manure. They will also speak about contaminated wells, rising asthma rates, declining property values, terrible working conditions and of course about algae in Lake Winnipeg.

The municipal councils will try to counter all this with stories of all the taxes that can be made on these barns. But of what value are higher tax revenues if they come at the expense of people's health? What good are higher taxes during an outbreak of E. Coli from contaminated wells? What good are higher taxes if Lake Winnipeg is too contaminated for drinking or swimming or fishing?

It doesn't have to be this way. Farmers can make a living raising pigs without keeping them in Industrial factory barns.

I would like you to consider the whole picture when examining the Hog industry in Manitoba. What is the future for factory farming? There are lots of indications that the hog industry is in for a rough time for the next decade and even longer.

Grain prices are rising. This is not one of the usual market fluctuations, but a reaction to a whole new demand for feed grains. Ethanol production is using up a lot of pig feed and promises to make hog farming unprofitable for the foreseeable future. Why would a hog farmer want to take on more debt when profits are dropping?

And that is not all. Many pigs are sold to the US. The falling American dollar makes Manitoba pigs increasingly difficult to sell. It also drives up the interest rates on those state-of-the-art hog barn loans.

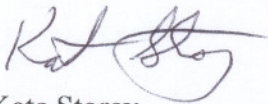
As well, industrial farming, including hog factories, are highly dependant on fossil fuels. As the US loses control of Middle East oil supplies, our fuel prices have nowhere to go but up, putting still more pressure hog production.

Any hog barn that starts up under these negative economic conditions is very likely to fail.

I believe that the hog moritorium is a blessing in disguise to the hog industry. It will stop the industry from over expanding at a time when we are heading toward long term economic challenges. Additional growth would not only increase the risks to health and environment, but it would also weaken the existing industry and the economy of Manitoba.

I believe that the Manitoba provincial Department of Conservation was wise to implement a moratorium on the expansion of the industrial hog industry. I hope that the Manitoba Clean Environment Commission recommends extending it the moratorium indefinitely, for our health, for our environment, and for our economy.

9 million hogs is enough.



Kate Storey
Poplar Glen Farm
Grandview, Manitoba