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Good Morning,

My name is Karen Friesen and my husband Larry & I and our 2 children own & operate a mixed grain & livestock operation in the community of Tourond, near Niverville, Manitoba. First let me thank you for the opportunity to address the panel today. I felt it was important to be here and offer another farm family perspective on how we run our operations and how we are consciously making every effort to be good stewards of the land and to preserve our environment right from the farm gate. My comments today will be based solely on what we are doing on our own farm but I do have confidence that there are many many similar stories from all sorts of farms that understand the importance of environmental protection and whom are also doing their part to preserve our environment. On our farm we currently have 1400 acres of mixed grain, including such crops as corn, soybeans, canola, & wheat. We also have a poultry operation that consists of 18,000 laying hens located on our home quarter. This operation equates to 150 animal units. We also have a hog operation that we built new three years ago that consists of 2 feeder barns or 4,000 hogs or 572 animal units. My husband was born and raised on the family farm. We have been farming together now for 18 years and are already planning for our children to be able to continue on the family farm.

In order to succeed in today's agricultural economy and environment, many complicated issues need to be considered. We believe diversification on the farm is extremely important to the economic sustainability of our farm. Over the years we have tried to continually grow our farm, not only in size but also in how and what we are doing on our farm. Diversification has been instrumental for us as far as spreading the risks such as weather and market prices. We, as grain farmers have all experienced years when it has been difficult if not impossible to either get the crop in the ground in the spring or off the field in the fall. We have also all experienced drought or frost or whatever Mother Nature decides to throw our way. On the grain farm we are all familiar with the stress of living at the grace of the weatherman. You never know what one year to the next will bring, but over the years we have also learned to change with the times and diversify into new crops, etc. This has been in response to changing weather patterns, soil types, new crop varieties, new equipment as well as changes in markets for the products we are producing. In the difficult years on the grain farm it has always been a blessing to have our poultry operation as another means of income and in many years to subsidize the grain farm. Livestock farming does not have the same set of risks that the grain farm may have...but it also has it's own set of risks...for example disease or biosecurity. We do love the fact that our poultry and hog operations are farmed under a roof and weather is not as huge a factor as it is on the grain. We have a controlled environment in which we can strive to manage in a manner that will provide an optimum environment for the livestock we are producing which will in turn provide maximum production and returns to us as producers. We are very much in tune with the internal environment that our chickens and hogs are raised in, as well as the external environment that surrounds us all. We as farmers raising a young family are concerned about the health of not only our family but also the health of our land and our water. We are teaching our children the

importance of these environmental issues not only in the schools but also right here at home on the family farm. We are very aware of the importance of protecting our environment for the future and we operate our farm accordingly.

Over the last few years we have made several changes on our own farm with the environment as a major focus. Let me take a few moments to mention a few. Almost 2 years ago we completely renovated our chicken barn. We ripped out all of the old equipment which included cages, feed and watering system, and the manure handling system which included an under the barn liquid manure pit. We installed state of the art Hellman cages and feed and water system as well as a belt driven dry manure handling system. It is amazing what a difference this has made as far as the internal environment in the barn goes, not only for the birds, but for us and any employees as well. The dry manure handling system has reduced both the odor and ammonia levels in the barn and has resulted in a much cleaner environment which has resulted in increased flock performance. The overall ability to manage manure properly has improved as we are dealing with far less volume when dealing with the dry manure versus liquid manure. We understand the regulations of dry manure handling and are currently following all regulations and are also planning for the future accordingly. Manure from both our poultry and hog operations has been used on our grain farm as valuable fertilizer. This has resulted in major annual cost savings every year on our grain farm and this year will equate to at least \$15,000.00 worth of fertilizer costs moving from our poultry and hog barns to our own fields. We also soil test annually on all our fields to ensure proper utilization of all fertilizer being applied. Recommendations for proper fertilizer and manure spreading and application are adhered to at all times.

We as producers are also very aware of the importance of animal care and of following the code of practice guidelines and the on-farm food safety programs. When we were in the planning stages for our poultry barn reno, we followed and exceeded all code of practice guidelines. For example the recommended space/bird of 67 inches was exceeded in our barn to a space/bird of almost 90 inches. We have been extremely pleased with both of the flock performances in our barn since our renovation,

We also take careful consideration of the HACCP Program and on-farm safety program on our farm. Every year when CEMA comes to inspect and evaluate our barn we strive to achieve high grades and we make any recommended changes as required.

A year ago I attended and completed the Environmental Farm Plan Workshop on behalf of our farm. I found it to be a very worthwhile exercise for our operation. It was an excellent opportunity to sit down and have a close look at our own specific farming operation and the management decisions we have been making with respect to the environment on our own farm. It was a great way to identify specific areas for improvement and also to identify areas that we are already benefiting ourselves and the environment. We have already implemented some of these changes which should have a direct influence on the environment as well as our bottom line. I believe that completing this workshop will continue to influence future decisions on our farm as well.

As egg producers in Manitoba we truly appreciate the guidance and support we receive from CEMA and Manitoba Egg Producers. I believe they are invaluable in representing our industry both domestically and internationally. They have been extremely valuable to us as producers in keeping us informed on important issues, changes in the industry and in the area of strategic planning for the egg industry down the road . We as egg