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(Commission Secretary)

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Good afternoon, my name is Jeff Blixhavn.

Our family built a 5200 head finishing barn in the summer of 2000, as a compliment to our grain farm, and as financial means of keeping my brother and myself on the farm. My brother and I recently bought the barn, a million and a half dollar facility, from our father and uncle, in September of last year.

Playing baseball on the fairgrounds one evening in the summer of 2000, the wind was blowing from the south, bringing smell off of the town lagoon, 1 mile away, when I heard someone comment that the smell was "that damn Blixhavn barn." A barn that is 17 miles southwest, was still under construction, and 2 months away from the first pig arriving.

Since that time, I have had discussions with people from Killarney, Winnipeg, even Toronto about the hog industry, usually defending it against misinformation. I have always been open to any questions people have had about the barn, and have done my best to answer them, in an effort to promote understanding in as many people as I can.

We have had to deal with constant prejudice resulting from misinformation. I came here today to outline the steps we go through each year, in order to continue the operation of our barn, and receive permission to spread manure on our land.

We have 2 wells which supply the barn. These are each tested annually for Nitrates, which would indicate ground water contamination.

Before spreading the manure from our barn each fall, we must submit a Manure Management Plan to Manitoba Conservation, a minimum of 60 days in advance of our expected spread start date. This Plan must be filled out by the owner of the barn, a Professional Agrologist, or a Certified Crop Advisor, who has taken the proper certification course. This Manure Management Plan includes a list of the quarter sections that may be spread on, owners of those quarters, and contact information. Only those quarter sections listed in the Plan may be spread on in that year. The Plan also includes the intended crop for the next year, expected yield, expected spread

volume, the name of the custom application company, if one is used, estimated Nitrogen content of the manure, the number of animal units produced, and soil classification. Soil samples are taken by an impartial 3rd party on all land intended for manure application. These soil samples are then sent to one of the only 2 labs in Manitoba that do soil testing.

When we spread, our custom applicator tests the manure for Nitrogen and Phosphorous while agitating and spreading. He reviews all of the soil test results, which he must have in his possession the entire time he is spreading. He also consults with us as we often get him to cut back from the maximum allowable spread levels. When applying the manure, he constantly adjusts his application rate as the nutrient levels in the manure, and soil, change.

After we have spread the manure, we submit a spread confirmation to Manitoba Conservation. This confirmation informs them of the quarter sections we spread on, with accompanying maps, and soil test results. It tells the nutrient level of the manure, spread volume per field, and a list of all fields submitted on the original Manure Management Plan but not spread on. The volume, nutrient levels, and acres spread on have to match up. Mathematically, they can't be falsified.

This manure is a resource to our farm. It is a valuable fertilizer. It doesn't make any financial sense for us to over apply this fertilizer to our land. We want to adequately fertilize as many acres as we can, with the manure that we have, because every acre we don't get covered is another acre we have to buy chemical fertilizer for. It also doesn't make environmental sense for us to over apply. The members of my family have the 3 closest homes to our barn, 2 of which are downstream from it. We are following every regulation in place, because we know that any possible groundwater contamination would affect us first. I hope this aids in your understanding of the steps we, and all producers, take to properly manage our farms, and the resulting impacts on our communities.

Thank you.