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**Timothy Hofer, Willowcreek Colony
Presentation to;
Clean Environment Commission (CEC) Scoping
Meetings**

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Good Evening, Ladies and Gentlemen

My name is Tim Hofer I am a member of the Willowcreek Hutterite Colony. I am also the Hog Production Manager for the Colony.

At this time I would like to thank you for the opportunity to present my comments to you.

Willowcreek Colony was begun in 1972 and today is a community of 27 families with a total of 140 residents. Until recently the Colony relied solely on agriculture operations for its income. These operations include grain farming, the production of eggs, milk and beef and the production of hogs. To offset some of the reduction in farm income in recent years, we have branched out into heavy trailer manufacturing.

Agriculture however, as it was for our forefathers is the basis of our existence.

With 27 families relying on agriculture, I think it is safe to say that we are the modern Family Farm.

At this time I would like to tell you some of the efforts Willowcreek Colony goes to regarding environment and manure management.

Our Field Manager looks after the manure management plan. Every year, we hire an agronomist to take soil samples, in order to accurately calculate the soil nutrient requirements for the next years' crop. We do this for every field, every year.

After collecting 12 -16 soil samples per field, the resulting nutrient field calculations are used to control manure application. This is done using the agronomist's maps in conjunction with a GPS location system to control the manure application rate and location. This system allows the precise amount of manure to be placed in the correct position in the field. We therefore get the precise amount of phosphate and other nutrients per application.

We feel so strongly about accomplishing this task properly, that even though we have our own manure injection equipment, we choose to hire an outside expert to do the actual injection. This company is Red Hand Manure Injecting, a company that's a leader in manure application.

Not only does Red Hand do our work, they maintain computerized records and field application maps. This information is available to any interested party.

To further control the nutrient content of the manure, we include in the formula for all our feed rations, a product called phytase. This ingredient helps the livestock utilize the phosphate in the grains. This enables us to significantly reduce the additional phosphate that is normally blended into the rations.

We also spend thousands of dollars a year on a feed additive called Proaid that has no other function than to reduce the odor in manure.

Further, we maintain a barley straw cover on our lagoon to keep the odor down. The particular use of barley straw is a very effective method to minimize odor.

I should also remind you that not only are we concerned about our fields and the environment; we are concerned about water quality. After all, remember that all the water we drink comes from our own wells.

While the decision by the Government of Manitoba to put a moratorium on building of barns appears to have been motivated by environmental issues, it will have an unintended side effect for the Hutterites. This is causing us grave concerns.

Willow Creek's population has grown in the last 35 years to a point where we are starting to plan for a new farm.

Currently we are raising weaned pigs, called isoweans, and sending them south to be finished in USA.

Our long term plan was to build finishing barns on the new farm, and send our isoweans to them. This would allow us to take advantage of the profit to be made from the whole hog production cycle.

The new finishing hog barns, along with other farm operations would generate the income required to sustain the new farm. Unfortunately, as you know cropping operations by themselves are not profitable enough to sustain anything, and the hog barns are needed to ensure the viability of the new farm.

Without the barns, our children have little future, and no guarantee of jobs to keep our communities alive and growing.

For 400 years agriculture has sustained the Hutterite way of life. It is a business our grandfathers and fathers have taught us. We are hoping to pass it on to our children, but it is getting increasingly difficult to sustain this way of life. This could lead to a very bleak future for our descendants.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this presentation.