

MARCH 12/07 MORDEN CEC HEARING PRESENTATION

MORDEN

INTRO: Good evening. Thank-you for the opportunity to present here this evening. My name is Wendy Friesen, and I would like to give you an outline of our family farm. We have a small farm by today's standards. We raise hogs, cereal grains and oilseeds. Our farm has been in the family for generations, and has changed over time. We pride ourselves on hard work, family involvement, and in continuing to support our family on the farm. Farming has been a good way of life for our children and us. We care about the future of our hog farm and land, just as our forefathers did. They saw livestock and land as a necessary way of life with the land providing food for the animals, and the animals replenishing the land with valuable natural fertilizer and nutrients, which the crop removed. This was a NATURAL CYCLE in the past, and still is today.

IMPROVEMENTS: Today we continue with the belief that livestock and land go hand in hand, giving and taking from each other. We have come a long way in manure application techniques from 100 years ago, and even from 10 years ago, but we should keep in mind that the past methods worked well too. We, in our generation, have gone from using a vacuum wagon to spread manure, to a modern injection method. The manure is tested, the land is tested, and then the appropriate amount of manure is injected into the land. The cereal crops that are grown are fed back to the hogs. We have a clay-lined lagoon, which is bottom fed, using an underground line, which extends from the manure pump-out pit, to a concrete pit beside the lagoon. When the manure is pumped, it is lowered down to enter the lagoon well below the surface. This system was very expensive to install, but it works very well and reduces odour substantially. This bottom fed system also allows for a crust to form on the top of the manure in the lagoon, which also reduces odour. My family and I spend many hours in the summer walking on our roadway and seldom notice the lagoon's presence. Our lagoon is inspected yearly to ensure that the banks are mowed, right down to the level of the manure, and that the banks of the lagoon are not showing signs of rodent problems. Each year, we receive a letter to confirm that we are doing a good job. We have a large dike surrounding our yard, which includes our lagoon and pond. This protects the water supply from being flooded. The lagoon has its own dike to keep the flood waters out. We had to construct the yard dike to keep our barn system dry from overland flooding, which was becoming a problem due to man-made draining problems in our area. This dike was an expensive safety

measure, but worth the peace of mind. We are continually mindful of any possible rodent problems and take precautionary measures to ensure that the barns remain rodent free. We have crushed rock around the perimeter of the barns, and place rodent feed stations in appropriate, vet approved, places surrounding the barn and in the attic. We keep the grass cut short around the barns to deter any rodents.

FEED QUALITY: All our feed recipes are designed by nutritionists and are tweaked to provide the best possible feed quality for our particular stock. Feed is milled on farm using home grown grains, when ever possible, with necessary supplements of vitamins, minerals and proteins to ensure digestibility. We add soybean oil to our rations to raise the energy level in the feed, to prevent the finished feed ration from separating during augering, and to reduce the dust level in the barns. Our proof of success can be measured by clean, energetic animals, which make their way to market within our targeted time frame. Our rations are customized for hogs at all stages, again to give the animals the best possible digestion, and this in turn, reduces the amount of nitrogen and phosphates in the manure, and ultimately on the land.

WATER: For the last 15 years or so, we have gone from an ozone water cleaning system to a chlorination system. We have spent a lot of money having a pond dug, and a water line dug to the house and back to the barns. Our reason for this method is to give us control of the amount of chlorine being added to the water to produce potable water, good enough for humans to drink, and for animals as well. This chlorine system filters out debris and sediment from the water and then removes the chlorine through a large carbon filter. It is then pumped out to the barns. With the pumps in our house, we can easily hear if there is a sudden increase in water usage because of a water break in the barn, and tend to the problem day or night. We have also had a water line dug in recently, from the RM, to use as a backup when the hydro is down, because we need hydro to run our water pumps and cleaning filters. We can switch over to RM water quite easily, but this safety is yet another large cost for the comfort and welfare of the animals.

ANIMAL TRANSPORTATION: We transport our own animals to market using a stock trailer. The trailer is designed so that it can be easily adjusted to increase or decrease airflow through the hogs, depending on outside air temperature and humidity. We aim for zero frostbite in winter by having our trailer lined with plywood and bedded with straw on a wood floor.

We bale all our own straw, and have control over the quality. We follow the recommended loading densities, which are based on several factors, including temperature, humidity, etc. We scale every hog before it leaves the farm, to ensure that it is the correct shipping weight. All our animals are tattooed on farm, and this serves as proof that the hogs are ours, in transport, and also leaves a paper trail for where the hogs have been, in case of a disease outbreak. This information would be very valuable in tracking the source of any potential diseased animal and the farm on which it was raised. In the summer, we can open vents for increased airflow, wet down the straw before loading animals, and spray the animals before leaving home, to help keep the animals from overheating. We aim for a quiet loading and unloading of the animals, so that there is minimal stress, and try to haul on cooler days or the coolest part of the day.

VETERINARIAN: We have a good relationship with our vet. Programs such as CQA provide us with a guide for opening up dialect with our vet, and this regular contact acts as the public's assurance that we are treating our animals well. We use only accepted, safe medications, and only when there is a clear need for them. We have our animal health in check and test regularly for any diseases. We follow strict disease protocol and don't allow anyone into our barns, unless they need to be there, and can prove they are clean. We must keep records of all injections, and feed or water medications that are used, and why we used them. We need prescriptions from the vet for most medications. The abattoirs need to know that the animals being marketed are drug residue free, and we also believe this is essential, since we eat pork too! Having routine vet checkups is like going to your doctor for a yearly check-up, not necessarily because you are sick, but because you may be at risk for illness and could prevent some illnesses by modifying diet and/or medication. The same is true for animals. Animals communicate illness in different ways such as feed rejection, water rejection, a desire to lay down constantly, an internal fever, hair loss, sores, rashes, etc. and our contact with our vet gives us a heads up on these things, and how we can vaccinate or alter diets to improve the health of the animals. Another technique we practice is cross-fostering piglets from the birth mother to a surrogate mother, in an effort to reduce stress on both the mother and the piglets. This allows the birth mother to feel more relaxed with only having to feed as many piglets and her body is geared to. This practice also allows us to support the piglets, which would die, due to mal-nutrition, and gives them a fighting chance at survival with the new mom.

AIR QUALITY: We designed our barn with ventilation being a key concern. We have a heated hallway where cold air enters in the cold season, and the air is heated with electric heat, as well as floor heat, before entering areas where animals are kept. The smallest animals have heat lamps and mats, as well. The weaner room temperature is controlled with pre-heated air entering from the heated hallway. We reduce draughts on the weaner pigs by covering the front third of the pen with a plywood lid, and hanging a heat lamp down through the middle of it. The grower area has floor heat loops in the front area of the room. The feeder barn has floor heat at the front of the pens. Outside doors are sealed to prevent draughts, and ducting and inlets are strategically placed where there is the least amount of draught in cold times, and also the most quality airflow when it is hot. These air inlets can be adjusted at any time, to accommodate the best ventilation control. Each room has its own air exhaust, and most rooms have more than one exhaust fan, so that we have flexibility in the amount of air flow that we allow through for minimum and maximum ventilation

In conclusion, I wanted to summarize by saying we are environmentally friendly. Our hog barns are sustainable. Our animals are well cared for, and farming is a good way of life that should continue. Hog farmers need the ability to expand and modernize their barns, as the economy changes, in order to be able to stay competitive and profitable. We are farming in times when farming operations of all kinds are striving to produce quality food, for the country as well as other parts of the world. To continue with the pause on hog barns prevents even small farms, like us, from growing and expanding to allow for the next generation of farmers to get into farming. We have less and less young farmers in our area each year because the cost of building is steep, the paperwork is endless, the codes of production are stringent, and young people need an avenue to get into hog production. They need to know that there is long-term policy in place, which will assure them that they will be able to make economic advances on the farm as well, without the exact uncertainty that we are farming under now. We need to regain the right to get on with the business of running our hog barns to feed the increasing population.

Leonard & Wendy Friesen

Thank You.