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Hello, My name is Matt Adema. I am 26 years old and I am a hog farmer. I manage a 270sow farrow to finish operation by St Eustache. I was born and raised on a hog farm in southern Ontario. I have wanted to be a farmer my entire life. Ever since I was old enough to walk I was in the barn. Some of my earliest childhood memories are of the good times had playing around the barn with my sisters or helping my Dad in the barn. My mom says I learned to count by helping Dad count piglets on the sows. My first paying job was taking care of a neighbours hog operation while they went away on holidays. I started a steady part-time job at about the age of 16 feeding pigs in a quarantine barn before they were shipped to international destinations. At the age of 18, I worked with my Dad for two weeks while the Ontario High School teachers went on strike. I still remember the good times I had with Dad for those two short weeks. Later that year I began working for another neighbour in his finishing barn. I would take care of the pigs in his barn everyday and worked fulltime every Saturday. The summer between first and second year of college I worked for him fulltime and began working for him fulltime right after graduation. I worked there until the summer of 2003.

In July of 2003, me my wife and our six-month-old daughter moved out to St Eustache to pursue my dream of owning my own farm. We knew no one out here in Manitoba and had only spent a total of 7 days in the province before moving here. I entered into a long-term contract with the owners of the farm I manage to earn an equity position to hopefully be able to purchase them out at some time in the near future. I want my kids to have the same kinds of experiences as I did growing up. I want them to learn the value of hard work. I want them to learn what it means to care for animals, to watch the miracle of birth, to see that animal grow under their care, and to feel the satisfaction of knowing they helped make it all possible.

I tell you all this because I am scared my children will not get the same opportunity to have those valuable and life changing experiences as I did It is becoming harder and harder to start farming these days. There are not many young people like myself willing to start farming. The cost of farms makes it next to impossible for the average person to start a new operation. Many are turned off by what they see as ever-increasing government bureaucracy limiting their ability to farm. I would like to present some solutions to see the hog industry continue to in an environmentally sustainable manner.

Manitoba farmers face some of the toughest environmental laws anywhere in North America. Livestock operations over 300 Animal units are required to file Manure Management Plans detailing how there manure will be applied and what crops will grown to utilize the manure. There are new regulations in place limiting the amount of phosphorus that can be applied to the soil and preventing phosphorus from being spread

where levels are already high. I would encourage the CEC to recommend to the Government of Manitoba to increase the funding for research in manure management. In the last 30 years advancements have been made in our understanding of manure and how it interacts with the soil. New products have emerged helping to reduce the amount of phosphorus in manure. Better understanding of plant development and nutrient needs have given agronomists better understanding of what a crop actually needs to grow. Advancements in agricultural equipment have also lead to better manure spreading equipment. New technologies are able to convert liquid manure into electricity. If our government was willing to commit to spending more money in this area I think we would continue to see new technologies be developed to lessen the environmental impact of manure. Nutrient requirements for pigs have also come a long way in last 30 years. Today producers have a better understanding of what the pig requires for optimal growth. Additives can be included in diets to help reduce the total nutrient load in the manure. Phase feeding diets help to ensure the pigs receive only the proper level of nutrients for their stage of growth. On our operation we are continually conducting feed tests to make sure our pigs are growing the best they can. It not only makes environmental sense it makes economic sense too. Why pay to include nutrients the pig does not need and will only excrete in their manure?

Research by itself is great but it is only part of the picture. The other key component is education. Advancements in science and technology are useless unless people are trained how to use them properly. Farmers as a whole want to do what is right. We are no different than the rest of society. The farms where fertilizer is spread is where we make our homes and raise our children. It does us no good to destroy the very land we depend on for our livelihood through mismanagement of fertilizer. I say fertilizer, as I see no difference between manure and synthetic chemicals. Phosphorus is phosphorus. Nitrogen is nitrogen. It does not matter where it comes from. If it is used properly it can be an invaluable asset in crop production. In my mind manure management is all about simple economics. Crops require certain levels of nutrients to produce optimal yields. Manure is nothing more than nutrients. If you apply too little manure to the land the crop grown the following year will not perform up too its maximum potential. Apply too much manure and not only do you risk contaminating the environment, you also have to purchase more synthetic fertilizer than would have been necessary had the manure been applied properly. This is the whole basis for the Manure Management Plan program. If all farmers could be shown the economic value of manure and how applying the manure properly could save them thousands of dollars a year in reduced fertilizer bills or give them increased crop yields manure would be looked at as an asset and not as a waste product. Since farming economics is all about producing the most amount of product with least amount of cost, producers would be quick to adopt new environmentally sound procedures.

If the government was to hold workshops around the province showing farmers simple, practical steps, they can take to reduce the amount of nitrogen and phosphorus leaking into the environment, I believe it would have a greater impact than any new law every would. Encourage people to take practical steps, show them how to take them and proving the economic impact of make these simple changes will be easier than enforcing

new regulations. Teach farmers what are the best plants to grow along the edges of fields to help capture any runoff. What are the benefits of shelterbelts in capturing runoff? Are there certain grasses that are better at soaking nutrients that could be seeding into ditch banks to help prevent any leakage into the water system? Simple solutions will be adopted and enhanced by farmers faster than any law.

Technological advancements have been made in many areas other than farming over the last 30 years as well. In 1977 if I said the word INTERNET most people would not have had a clue what I was talking about. Today, I was able to talk to a relative over in the Netherlands via our web cam in the basement. It cost me more in gas to get here than to have a video conversation with some one on the other side of the world. GPS technology has also taken off in the last few years. Now tractors are able to map out a field and follow signals from a satellite to make sure they do not overlap while working in the field. What other new technologies are out there just waiting to be discovered to show producers how they can save money and reduce their impact on the environment? I don't know, but I do know research and education will help speed their use on Manitoba farms.

On our farm we installed heat pads in our farrowing rooms to supply supplemental heat to the newborn piglets. We were previously using heat lamps to supply the heat. We have been able to reduce our hydro consumption by about $5000 a year since we installed the heat pads. This has reduced the size of our environmental footprint. Not only did installing heat pads help to reduce our environmental footprint it has also lowered our pre-weaning mortality and increased our weaning weights. We installed the heat pads only a few weeks after being educated about the impact they would have on our operation. Once we were shown how practical they are it made total sense to switch. No law required, just education.

The biggest problem facing farmers today is that we are price takers and not price setters. Any new laws requiring paper work, detailed soil testing, manure testing, facility upgrades which are all paid for by the producer. We have no way of being able to pass those costs on to the end consumer. If the government were to pass new regulations that increased the cost of production the producer sees a lower return. This in turn makes it harder for producers to continue farming and many will exit the industry. As well some may leave for other parts of the country or even move to a new country where the environmental laws are more relaxed and cost of production lower. This will have a very negative impact on the provincial economy. Manitoba hog farms alone contribute 1 billion dollars to the provincial economy and employ 15,000 workers.

Consumers always vote with their wallet. They want a steady supply of high quality food and they want it cheap. The government of Manitoba is now telling us the consumer also wants the food to be produced in an environmentally sustainable manner. I propose the Manitoba government adopt a similar system to what the United States is proposing. The Americans are considering Country of Origin Labelling or COOL for short. It is designed to let the consumer know where the food product they are purchasing came from. If it was a Manitoba born pig, raised and processed in the US, the

product would be labelled as such. I propose Manitoba adopt Environment of Origin Labelling. This way the consumer would be able to tell at the grocery store where the product was produced and if it was produced at or below standards acceptable here in Manitoba. I also propose all food produced at a lower standard than here in Manitoba be given an environmental levy similar to the one currently on plastic pop bottles. The consumer should be forced to pay for a product that carries a higher level of environmental risk. The levy could be used to fund government research and education programs as well as funding projects by producers to decrease their environmental impact.

This would have a profound effect on the food production industry in Manitoba. If the consumer chose to purchase products produced at a lower standard of environmental regulations the levy fund would grow large enough to fund projects across the province to help reduce the impact Manitoba producers have on the environment. But if the consumer choose instead to purchase Manitoba products only, it would drive up demand for locally produced food. Not only would the consumer be purchasing a product with a smaller environmental footprint they would also be helping to support the local agriculture industry. According to the Lake Winnipeg Stewardship Board Final Report in December of 2006, it was estimated 35% of the nutrient loading in Lake Winnipeg came from the US and 18% from other provinces. If the Manitoba consumer stopped buying food products from these places to avoid paying an environmental levy the demand for their products would drop. If the producers in those locations knew all they had to do was improve their environmental practises and the levy would be removed, I don't think it would take them long to start pressuring their governments to make changes. It will be much easier for the Manitoba consumer to change their government's minds by not buying their products than it will be for our politicians to change their politicians' minds. Politicians want to get re-elected and if they think their constituents want change they will campaign for change. But if they think the constituents are happy with the status quo nothing will ever happen. If the Manitoba consumer is not willing to pay a price for environmentally responsible food then we are falling into the Not in My Back Yard trap. It is ok to ruin the environment so I can have cheap food, but just don't do it in this province. That kind of attitude does not sit well with me.

Normally I wouldn't be advocating for trade levies with our neighbours but it seems more and more environmental issues are at the top of peoples priority list. Most nights the evening news has story on climate change or global warming and what we can do to be better stewards of the environment. If the government of Manitoba wants to take the lead and develop some of the toughest regulations for food production why not continue to take the lead and demand all food sold in the province be produced according to our standards? Some of the countries we export food to do not want genetically modified food products, so why can't we say we don't want food products produced below our environmental standards. The government had no problem implementing a province wide smoking ban to help protect the health of all Manitobans, why not do the same to protect our environment? After all if our neighbours account for 53% of the nutrient loading in Lake Winnipeg and they don't increase their environmental standards

by how much will this amount increase? But if they came inline with our environmental standards, how much could we reduce the total nutrient load in our lakes and streams?

In closing I would like to say I believe hog production in Manitoba is a being done under some of the toughest rules and regulations anywhere in North America. Research, education, innovation and adaptability will go a low way in continuing to reduce the environmental impact of food production in Manitoba. A government willing to make tough environmental rules should also be willing to take measures against those who also contribute to the nutrient loading of our lakes and rivers. By working together, consumer and producer we can make a difference.