CEC PRESENTATION

Environmental Sustainability on our Farm

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Sunnyside Colony

First of all, I would like to thank the CEC for the opportunity to make this presentation today.

Hello. My name is Raymond Kleinsasser. I reside at Sunnyside Colony, a mixed farming operation, roughly twenty miles southeast of here. My responsibilities at the colony include the manure nutrient management, manure application, and ensuring the operation is following all applicable requirements of the various acts and regulations. I am qualified to operate a class 1 water treatment plant as well as a small system wastewater collection and treatment facility. As such I also oversee our domestic sewage and water. We farm around seven thousand acres and have a twelve hundred sow, farrow-to-finish hog operation. Agriculture, both animals and land, have always been and now, are more than ever, the cornerstone of our existence. Our future, and the future of our next generation, hinges on the sustainability of the agriculture industry.

At this point I would like to address some of the issues that the CEC has been mandated to examine. The first issue, being nutrient management, or manure nutrient management. The next issue I will talk about is ground and surface water management. The issue following that will be odor control.

We look at manure as a valuable fertilizer and soil conditioner. Currently we fertilize between a thousand and twelve hundred acres annually. We use a clay-lined earthen-manure-storage for our manure storage. This EMS is an engineered one and is situated a couple miles from our hog operation. We chose this location since our

land lies within close proximity, and to alleviate odor issues.

Our livestock industry, not unlike the rest of Manitoba's, has undergone significant changes, both in size and production methods. In the past, hog operations in general were part of a mixed farming operation. Our operation, like these, has experienced growth in production and significant increases in production unit size and capital intensity. The EMS was designed and built ten years ago with future expansion in mind. There is enough capacity for 1400 sows for 400 days of operation. We choose to direct inject our manure with a drag hose system. This practice allows us to maximize the efficiency and minimize the impact of the operation. There are virtually no losses due to volatization. Less equipment, and therefore less manpower are required. The equipment we use is equipped with the latest in technology. Equipment like GPS guided auto-steer, field mapping capability and accurate flow meters, allow us to precisely place the nutrients where required. It should be noted that this leading edge technology isn't really required by law. The fact is this technology requires considerably more resources than what one can get away with. We choose to follow leading edge technology because we believe it is better to be proactive rather than reactive. But manure nutrient management involves more than storage and injection. We work closely with local agronomists to ensure the crops we plant and crop rotations we use don't allow any unnecessary buildup of nutrients. Manure and soil is sampled and sent for analysis. Field samples of manure are taken for every quarter. On the feed nutrition side, feed additives and enzymes are added to reduce the phosphorus and solid content of the manure.

Education and communication are key components with our manure management team. We try to be aware of and comply with- or better yet- exceed, all legal requirements of our operation. We achieve this with meetings, planning sessions and summary meetings after each cleanout. Communication with local neighbors takes place to inform them of proposed application dates and pipeline road crossings.

Our operation takes into account the huge importance of water quality, both surface and groundwater. Properly managed manure applications, like properly applied commercial fertilizers, pose very little risk of nitrate leaching and groundwater contamination. Not only does this include observing and following setbacks from watercourses during injections, but also how we manage our hog facility. Water is conserved with more efficient drinking systems, better wash-down equipment and leak detection alarms. Another example is the conversion of our poultry facility from liquid manure to dry manure. To help us be aware of the quality of our water, we sample and test our supply water frequently throughout the year.

As with all farms, it's the application and agitation that gets people complaining about odors. In our area, as in many areas of Manitoba, the character of the rural residential population has changed. For various reasons, people have built or bought houses in and around land that had previously been used for agriculture alone. These rural properties represent a major personal investment, and owners are sensitive to any activity that may interfere with their enjoyment of the property or affect the property value. The result of the changes in the livestock industry

and in rural residential development has been the creation of a situation where conflicts may occur.

Unwanted odors are a common cause of conflicts between neighbors. The best opportunity for avoiding potential odor problems occurs during land use planning. Ideally, agriculture land should be protected to ensure a full range of agriculture activities, including modern large-scale livestock production.

However we are continuing to take steps to reduce odors. One step is through nutrition. We are currently experimenting with bacterial feed additives to reduce the solid content of the manure. But there's no standing still. We are always looking for better, more efficient and economical ways to manage our nutrients. We feel there is no silver bullet to manure nutrient management. It's a constant and evolving pursuit.

In conclusion, I would like to encourage the CEC and the Manitoba government to recognize the importance of programs like the Environmental Farm Planning Process. I myself was certified in 2006. Programs like the EFPP challenge farmers to see the importance of best management practices, and offer financial assistance to help achieve them. The government could go one step further and promote those farms that strive to operate their farm in an environmentally sustainable fashion. Government could also provide funding for positive public perception campaigns.

Like I indicated at the beginning of my presentation, agriculture, both animals and land, have always been and

now, are more than ever, the cornerstone of our existence. Our future, and the future of our next generation, hinges on the sustainability of the agriculture industry. Our hearts beat with the land. We breathe the air of the land. Agriculture is our livelihood. Therefore it is vitally important for us to be good stewards of the land. Our children depend on us and we owe it to them to leave the land as good or better than it was left for us.