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Manure Management

Hi my name is Edward Hofer from James Valley Colony. Thanks for letting me say a littlesomething today.

My Job at the Colony has been Water Plant Operator for the last 10 years. I've had my Class 1 Certification since 2005.

Since 1998 I have also been looking after our manure storage, handling, pump-out and injection, which we do ourselves with our own equipment.

I remember 16 years ago when I had the job of hauling out the manure from our Barns. Back then we had underground pits which had to be emptied every 3 – 6 weeks, depending on which barn it was. We just spread it out, winter or Summer, rain or shine.

Well folks, I am pleased to tell you that we've come a long ways with our manure management program since then. It all started in 1997 when we built a new Earthen storage facility one mile NE of our yard. All the manure from our 600 sow farrow- to- finish operation, over 14'000 layer Chickens and 45 head Dairy Barn is pumped or hauled to this storage facility.

In 1998 we invested in some drag hose, including one mile of drag hose and we built or own injector cultivator. In the fall of '98 we pumped out our Storage for the first time, with no flow meter and we covered about 100 acres.

The next thing I felt was needed to do a better job was a flow meter. That year we increased to about 300 acres. Since then we have continually kept on increasing our applied acres and improving our equipment. In 2000 we put in a underground 8" PVC Line ¾ mile north and west across the #248 highway.

We filed our first manure management plan with the province in the following year, in 2001.

In 2005 we hired a company called Agritrend. They specialize in fertility and manure management. Since then our Agent Mr. Brad Schnell has been a big part of the team. Brad does the soil testing, we plan and submit our plans ~~to him~~ ^{to him together} and it's worked out very well. Brad now manages all our land, not just the land involved with manure.

Just last year we installed another 8" PVC pipe line which runs 2 ¼ miles South West off our yard. This pipeline was engineered and approved by Cochrane Engineering and Manitoba Conservation. We put this pipeline in due to the new phosphate regulations and to increase our land Base. Last year we also reworked our cultivator, made it wider, and put on a good chopper manifold so that it would be easier to cover more ground and inject more evenly.

So we have had to invest a lot of money into our manure management Program. And it would be only fair to say that we pride ourselves in doing a good job, and take

this end of our business very seriously. We have also benefited greatly from these management practices. We are seeing better yielding crops, reduced fertilizer costs and healthier soils. In 2006 the Canola on our manured land yielded 19 Bushels an acre more than the Canola fertilized with commercial fertilizer.

The next thing I want to talk about is the colony's water supply.

Our water supply comes from a series of shallow wells along Scott Drain. 3 of these wells are located right at James Valley and another 4 are located 1 mile west of the yard. As we all know shallow wells are very prone to contamination. Therefore it is very important that we take great care not to over fertilize and mishandle manure.

Who would be the first people affected if our manure was mismanaged? "We" would be. For our children, seniors and livestock all drink this water. Therefore being environmentally conscious is very important and having good management practices in place is crucial.

Are we good stewards of the land? My answer would be "Yes". Of course there's always a little trial and error along the way and some learning curves, but all in all I feel we exercise due diligence wherever possible.

We are a 4th generation farm and if we do a good job and the good Lord allows it, hopefully there will be 4 more generations.