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(Commission Secretary)

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I am here today on behalf of my community which is Fairholme Colony of the Hutterian Brethren Church, Schmiedeleut Conference. From the Mennonites, our people learned to farm on the steppes of Russia in the late eighteenth century.

My community makes its living in the farming and livestock industry. We farm 5000 acres of mixed crops and grazing; turkey, hog, chicken and beef production. Raising hogs generates over half of our income.

A farm of this size needs a substantial amount of drinking water for both livestock and human consumption. Our well is situated in the Assiniboine River flat, approximately 100 meters from the river; this is also the drinking water source for our community. Obviously, it is in our best interest to keep our water clean and safe.

It has been over 5 years since we applied manure to the fields in our river flats. It is our choice not to, because we do not need to. We have an underground irrigation system covering over 2500 acres of our land; thus, manure need not be reapplied on the same land for over 7 years. Our manure is injected into the ground by a cultivator or a disc cultivator.

The manure from our turkey operation is stored in composting piles which we use to decompose dead stock. When the manure has sufficiently decomposed into dirt, it is spread over our lightest sand hills and fields to return fiber into the land and enrich the soil.

We practice zero tillage on most of our agricultural land. Currently we are in the process of building a lagoon, because of the recent history of slurry tank failures, although our storage tank passed government inspection.

I voluntarily took a two-year pork production technician course through Assiniboine Community college in Elie and am now a licensed technician in the pork industry. I am aware of the environmental concerns facing the hog industry and wish to be an active member in conserving and building responsibly for the future. With my experience of working in the barn and the technical training I received, I am better prepared, more aware and willing to do what I can to make a difference. My standing here in front of you today, attests to that!

Another way we try to conserve the environment is by the use of phytase in our hog feed to limit the amount of phosphate being excreted by the animals.

Our high school is very involved with environment programs that foster awareness of environmental conservation. For the past 7 years, a team from our school has participated in the Manitoba Envirothon. This is a hands-on environmental education competition for high school students from all over the province. The students have to do an in-depth study of four main categories: forestry, wildlife, aquatics and soils, plus a different subject each year, such as climate change and point source pollution.

In all seven years, our team made it into the top three! As well, our team was the Manitoba champion in the 2005 envirothon, going on to represent Manitoba at the Nationals in Missouri, USA.

In 2005 our community was also awarded the Conservation Family of the Year Award in the LaSalle Redboine Conservation District. These informed students are a significant part of our future, so teaching them in their youth to be good stewards of our environment, will pay off in the long run.

Finally, our community in the summer looks and feels like a forest or park, with houses and buildings nestled right in among giant oak trees many of which are over 75 years old! We believe in conserving our natural heritage. And

**WE PLAN TO LEAVE IT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS TO CHERISH
AND ENJOY.**

Rickey Maendel
Fairholme Colony
14. 3. 2007