

EXHIBIT NUMBER: STW-004
File Name: Hog Review
Date: MAR 6, 2007
Rec: Panel and ladies and
(Commissioner)

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Good afternoon members of the Clean Environment Commission Panel and gentlemen of the audience.

My name is Ben Hofer and I am speaking here today as the secretary of Rock Lake Hutterite Colony, Grosse Isle Manitoba. I am also a hog producer, and I represent 44 of the 98 Manitoba colonies. My colleague James Hofer represents the balance; I represent about a million hogs annually.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the panel regarding, Environment Sustainable Agriculture Air and Water Quality.

I am inclined to think that Hutterites in general pride themselves in thinking that they are good Stewards of the land. Water quality is paramount to the quality of life on a Hutterite colony.

So here we are in 2007 wondering. What are we doing right, what are we doing wrong, to our environment?

There is an old saying that hind sight is always better than fore sight.

-nutrients management and manure management.

So let's try a little hindsight. Who could we truthfully say was the first environmentalist and nutrient manager? I would like to quote from the good book Deuteronomy 23:12-13, the following passage, and God said unto his servant Moses, Speak unto the children of Israel, and thou shall have a place without the camp. Thou shalt have a paddle and dig there with and turn back and cover that which comets from you. So you defile not the land.

Here we are about 3500 years later doing the same thing to the pig manure, injecting directly into the soil. I think it's safe to say that practice has the blessing of our creator.

In my earlier presentation I mentioned that phosphorus is an essential element and building body tissues and both humans, animals, and plant tissues. Now if you talk to most soil scientists and soil engineers they will tell you phosphorus is very stable in the soil and pretty much stays where it is placed. Till the next crop will uptake with its roots to produce more plant tissues. The same scientists and soil engineers will tell you that nitrogen is a mover and migrator. I firmly believe that the only way that phosphorus from manure can end up in a water stream or lake, if the manure itself is washed into the stream, river, or lake. This is highly unlikely if the manure is injected directly into the soil.

Proponents of straw base livestock operation will oft times have you believe that a straw based livestock operation is more environmental friendly than a liquid manure based system, but it has no merit. I personally asked Doctor John Gad a hog expert from the U. K. his opinion on that matter, his answer was, "There is absolutely no difference. To produce a 250lb hog, the same amount of excrement comes out the rear end."

More hind sight –when Christopher Columbus discovered America in 1492, I think it's safe to say he found the land in a pristine state and yet these lands were literally covered with roaming herds of millions of buffalo, deer, and antelopes. I would like to quote one of the Nay Sayers to the hog industry. If you took every hog from Manitoba and placed them nose to tail you would have a line from here to Thunder Bay! Well mister Nay Sayers you forgot to do your math. Four million of these hogs leave Manitoba as babies. Your excrement pile would shrink considerable

I think I can assure you that the excrement pile from those millions of buffalos would make your pile look like a power puff. I'm inclined to think that people in general prefer natural fertilizer over chemical fertilizer. As I mentioned in my earlier presentation, if you removed all the hogs from the province of Manitoba not one acre would go unfertilized!

If you placed those buffalo with the deer and antelope nose to tail you would almost circle the globe!

More history – as man kind settled down on the prairies and interfered more and more with the balance of nature. Problems started to arise.

Next stop—Silent Springs, Racheal Carson now here we have a good example of due diligence, good science, and good GOV Interaction. After studying the problem, identifying the problem, action plan D.D.T. off the map! The D.D.T. was getting into the food chain and the egg shells were breaking prematurely, before the hatching was ready to emerge. Problem rectified, Springs no longer silent.

Land use Approval

It appears that as a person gets older and reaches retirement age he or she dreams of this nice quiet place in the country just a short drive from the big city. Close enough so the grandchildren can come out on the weekends. When the land agents showed them the property the wind was blowing from a different direction, the fields were green and the pits didn't need to be pumped. (not yet.)

Harvest time, crops have to come off and lots of trips with the grain truck over dry dusty gravel roads. The wind is blowing towards that retirement home, and all that dust

isn't doing grandmas Asthma any good. The feed lot needs to be cleaned, and the pits pumped.

The grandchildren are out for that weekend, birthday bash. The steaks are in the fridge. "Grandma what's that horrible smell?" Answer- the colony is cleaning out that feed lot and pumping those pits. "Well grandpa can't you do anything about it?" I called the R.M. they told me that the land agent, who sold you the property, should have told you that there is a caveat registered on that property that says it is subject to agriculture odors.

Suggestion to the panel, subdivisions smaller than forty acres should not be allowed.

That age old advise, "If you can't take the heat stay out of the kitchen," advice should still be adhered to.

At this point I would like to advise the panel that Rock Lake Colony is situated one mile from the town of Grosse Isle and our lagoon has a cover on it and we file a Manure Management plan annually with Manitoba Conservation.

Spray drifts- that's another story by itself, but that would make this presentation too lengthy.

Ground Water, Quality, Supply

Here in the Interlake we are sitting on a giant water aquifer. The water is found in the limestone rock. Drill a hole any where in the Interlake area 100 feet deep and you will have a good supply of clean water. There is a catch however, that water is 40 to 44 grain hardness. To use that water for dishwashing and laundry you pretty well have to soften it. How is that done? Our pioneer forefathers used wood ashes and they used ice water. When water freezes it drops most of its minerals. In the Interlake area most everybody uses a Commercial Water Softener. To regenerate a softener, it takes a salt water solution to back wash. In most cases this happens automatically. It is my understanding that potassium chloride will do the same thing and is a little more Environmental Friendly.

It takes way less phosphate laden detergent to do laundry and dishwashing when the hardness is removed by a softener before washing, so in essence a softener does more good to the Environment than harm, just by creating less phosphate usage.

Winnipeg city water consists of approximately 12 grain hardness.

Surface water Quality

There are a few colonies that are not blessed with an adequate water supply like we have in the Interlake area. Those colonies usually resort to building a large water reservoir. The reservoir is usually replenished with spring run off water and than processed for human consumption and washing. This system has its merits because the water is snow melt with very little if any hardness therefore requiring very little softening in some cases, chlorination is used for drinking water.

In my case here at Rock Lake we use surface water run off for irrigation purposes only.

Soil Quality- a major problem for a good number of Stewarts of the land is alkaline and saline soils. Now there is a challenge! How to make that soil fertile? Here's where history can help us again. We have all heard the riddle: Why do they have dikes in Holland? Now the Nay Sayers of the hog industry will tell you it's "To keep the manure in". But the real reason is to claim land from the sea. So once the water is pumped out, the Dutch grow salt tolerant clover to remove salt from the soil. This process takes approximately ten years. This must be sustainable agriculture at its best because the Dutch have been doing this for 100's of years.

There are as many hogs in Holland and Belgium as there are in all of Canada. Bear in mind, you can drive across Holland and Belgium in two and a half hours one way and two hours the other way. Holland and Belgium is also home to a Giant Dairy Industry and millions of cows.

Odor- at Rock Lake we control odor with a negative pressure tarp cover. We find this cover very effective for odor control and very essential, bear in mind as I mentioned earlier the colony is situated one mile from a residential area.

I would like to add at this point that we are working together with a firm called Agcert Technology. A covered lagoon is a perfect opportunity to collect gases to burn off methane gases for the generation of carbon credits. Agcert personnel told me that they have one flame burning in Alberta from a lagoon. In our case the apparatus is sitting on site but is not hooked up yet.

Disease Transmission- The hog industry today has a pretty clean Record regarding Major disease out breaks. The chicken industry has seen avian influenza and cattle have seen BSE, the Hog Industry has learned early on the importance of Bio security and animal husbandry. For a hog operation to be any kind of a profit centre a Disease Free Status is paramount.

Climate change- Most hog operations are net users of energy and in most cases use fossil fuels and hydro power for energy sources. There are exceptions one colony uses Bio Mass flax straw. One colony in the states is successfully burning turkey manure which is wood shaving based with a 20% coal 80% shaving mixture. A colony in Alberta is just putting the finishing touches on a 4,000,000 BTU solar heating system.

If scientist and environments are to be believed all those CO2 emissions, are creating atmospheric changes in our climate. Speaking of CO2 emissions, this is one area

where we should give credit where credit is due. All of us old timers will remember how the tractors of old, spewed black diesel smoke into the atmosphere under load. Today's New Electronics Run Diesel Engine doesn't spew black smoke, even if you try to make it do so. So hats off to the diesel manufactures, and the fuel companies who have cleaned up their act by taking the sulfurs out of the Diesel Fuel and cleaned up the emissions.

So where else can we eliminate CO2 emission?

The Decker Boiler Manufacturer advises me that their scrubber can remove all emissions except mercury.

Wind power- Here's an area where we dropped the ball! When this land was settled ¼ sections by ¼ sections, virtually every farm had a windmill turning on it, usually for the purpose of pumping water. I spoke earlier about the Dutch and their sustainable agriculture. Well the Dutch never dropped their Wind Generation technology and today are exporting that expertise to other countries.

I feel quite comfortable that, that clean source of energy was instrumental in developing that big sow herd in Belgium and Holland. People in general seem to think that when one talks Wind Power Generation you have to feed power into the hydro grind. That is not necessarily true! Wind power can be used to heat water which can be used later or to produce hydrogen or even to evaporate liquid manure and sell the dry material to greenhouses. I remember when I arrived at Rock Lake as a boy we had a wind powered generator charging batteries.

I would like to remind the panel that industries can be here today and gone tomorrow. Winnipeg used to be home to:

- A thriving beef packing industry-GONE!
- Flour milling industry-Gone!
- Brewing industry -Gone!
- Sewing and knitting industry-Leaving fast!
- Brick manufacturing -Gone!
- Bridge building-Gone!
- Foundry/casting business-Gone!
- Wire manufacturing-Gone!
- Steel hull ship building (Kunic Steel)-Gone!
- Boiler manufacturing (Vulcan Iron)-Gone!
- Tannery-Gone!
- Cement Manufacturing- Gone!
- Coop implements (CIL) - Gone!
- Sugar industry- Gone!
- Road grading equipment manufacturing (Austin Western)-Gone!
- And our one sole remaining, Winnipeg Maple Leaf kill floor is very tired!-Almost Gone!

So regarding the present pause on the Hog industry, let's not throw the baby out with the bath water!

So in closing I would like to remind the panel that the hog industry in Manitoba is a driving force to the Manitoba economy.

Thank you for listening!

Don't work for the next election, work for the best interest of Manitoba. May the good Lord bless you all, and make good decisions for Manitoba for years to come!