

Irene Cousins

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EXHIBIT NUMBER: VIR-015
File Name: Hog Review
Date: April 16 2007
Received by: [Signature]
(Commission Secretary)

Madam Chairperson; Fellow Manitobans

I commend and applaud all the work that has been done in documenting reports, filing statistics and recommendations, in response to the many concerns of Manitobans regarding the present and future impact of intensive hog operations on our communities and their future.

I appreciate the opportunity to voice my concern today.

My name is Irene Cousins. I live in the municipality of Wallace on the N. W $\frac{1}{4}$ of 28 - 11 - 29; which unfortunately is situated between two large hog operations.

I have come not to dispute or debate, but as a concerned grandmother and great-grandmother to implore the stake holders of the Hog Industry to carefully consider their decisions regarding building and maintaining huge intensive operations. Those decisions may hinge on profit making versus irreparable damage to our water supply.

When confronted with a decision that may have an impact on another I try to put myself in his shoes and look at it from his point of view - which led to an incident I, would like to relate.

A number of summers ago we were looking forward to visitors from the industrial city of Huddersfield, England and were anxious that they should enjoy a few weeks of relaxation on our farm in "Friendly Manitoba."

My husband and I had spent mega hours getting the yard and garden looking its best. We were just finishing up when all of a sudden this horrible, indescribable smell invaded us, carried along by the north-west wind.

I thought about the kind of reception our visitors were going to encounter so decided I would go to the Colony and ask the "Person in Charge" to come to our place and experience the intensity of the odour in our yard. I got in the truck and drove there and was directed to the man's home, where he met me on the door step.

I remember that I politely asked him if he would please come over to our place to understand what we were experiencing. He said that he didn't need to come - he knew what it was like and he added "the ditches are full and the sloughs are full and **you** are the only **one** that complains."

That was it. That was the end of the discussion. There was no attempt on his part to either listen or explain. It was a fact that the road side ditches were full of liquid manure. I never saw the sloughs.

I was upset by his attitude and disappointed that it would now be impossible to give our visitors a royal Manitoba welcome because of the circumstances.

Odour from the hog barns still interferes with our planned summer activities. Bar-b-cues sometimes have to be cancelled. Evenings are not as pleasant as they once were. If the wind blows from the north west it affects us and a south wind blows the smell from Boundary Lane Hog Enterprise. It is impossible to enjoy the outdoors because of the odour, and often at night we are forced to sleep with windows closed. It is annoying especially if the day has been hot and sultry and you are looking forward to a cool night breeze coming in the window and suddenly the aroma of pigs fills the air.

Its times like this I get up, close all the windows and realize I cannot do a thing about it, so I must accept that's the way it is. That's the reality!

Is there a reason why Intensive Hog Operations are not being located and developed on some of the marginal land in Manitoba where there are no residences? I realize transportation and accessibility to market might pose a problem, but I'm sure difficulties could be overcome.

From past observation I've noticed that where there is a will a way has been found. Prior to the establishment of a hog barn on 16 – 11 – 29 the builders were forewarned by neighbours that there was a severe shortage of water in the area. The barn proceeded to be built and then filled with pigs and water was hauled from the village of Elkhorn.

It is my humble opinion that forward looking management practices could alleviate some of the controversy that now exists regarding intensive hog operations. As an example I refer to an incident which occurred November 7, 2003 when liquid manure was spread on section 3 – 12 – 29, after the ground was frozen.

As a farmer I can understand the dilemma. The manure was in the pit, and the field hasn't been spread yet. The decision was made to go ahead and spread despite the rule that stated no spreading of liquid manure after the ground was frozen. As I said, I understand the dilemma but I don't condone the decision. Could better management have avoided the resulting conflict?

The chart on page 37 of, "An Examination of the Environmental Sustainability of the Hog Industry in Manitoba" shows the Prosecutions, Warnings and Orders of Enforcements. There seems to have been a large number of warnings.

1. Do these warnings often go unheeded?
2. What is the incidence of repeat offenders?
3. Is there evidence of a disregard for rules?

I believe it is everyone's right to a decent living unless it is at the expense of others. Can the hog industry survive and thrive in Manitoba without having a negative impact on our environment and the health and opportunities of future generations? There is technology available to help safeguard a workable solution. The decisions that are made now will impact not only those of us living here at the present time, but even more on the lives of future generations who choose Manitoba as their home.

It seems to me the conflict over the Hog Barn issue is not so much different than the conflict that exists all over the world when people who are interested in power and control forget to love their neighbour.

Is it a realistic expectation to **HOPE** that those interested primarily in making money are either going to recognize or take into consideration the adverse effect an intensive hog operation can have on the health and well being of a community?