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The Manitoba Institute of Agrologists

Submission to:

The Manitoba Clean Environment Commission

Review of the Environmental Sustainability of the
Hog Production Industry in Manitoba

Introduction

The Manitoba Institute of Agrologists is the provincial organization that supports professional Agrologists in Manitoba. The MIA wishes to provide information through the public input process so that the Commission may have a greater understanding of the practice of agrology, and of the significant contribution professional Agrologists make to agriculture and environmental sustainability. In particular we welcome the opportunity through a concise submission to highlight specific areas of the hog production industry where professional Agrologists are involved.

We note that during the course of the Commission's public input activities, that several of our members have been prominent in advisory and advocacy roles.

Our submission includes three recommendations. The overarching theme of these recommendations is to urge the CEC in its report to the Minister of Conservation to include a specific reference to the strong link between the activities of regulated professional Agrologists, science-based decision-making, and the regulatory and operational aspects of the hog production industry in Manitoba.

What is the Manitoba Institute of Agrologists?

MIA is the provincial organization that operates under the authority of *The Agrologists Act*. Through this legislation the government has mandated the MIA to regulate the education credentials, as well as the standards of practice and conduct of its members. This means that in Manitoba the individuals who practice agrology have a defined educational and experiential framework, and a requirement to adhere to a specific code of professional conduct and ethics. Through this legislation, MIA has a public responsibility of ensuring that everyone who claims to be practicing agrology is qualified and competent to provide knowledge and advice on agriculture within a defined scope of practice. The legislation and MIA's mandate result in people who are recognized for their commitment to applying their knowledge of science to agriculture, and for having an acute understanding of the need for enlightened utilization of water, soil, plant, and animal resources. These people are called professional Agrologists.

What Is Agrology?

Agrology is a unique term in Canada and Manitoba, but it is by no means a new term. It is synonymous with the application of the sciences to agriculture. The practice of agrology is about acquiring and using specialized knowledge to serve agriculture and its many industries.

The Agrologists Act of Manitoba provides a practical and workable definition for practicing agrology that is stated below:

"every act, with or without reward, which has as its objective the experimentation with or the giving of advice with respect to the principles, laws or practices relating to the production, improvement, use, processing, or marketing of agricultural products, crops, or livestock."

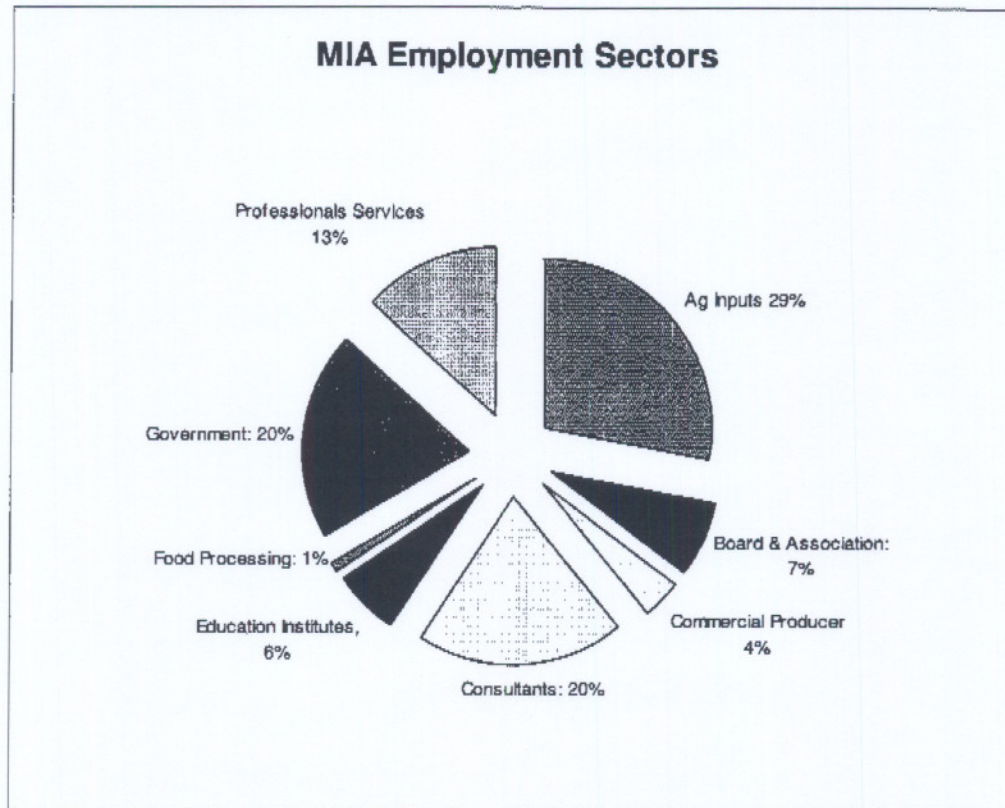
The definition is broad enough to reflect the diversity of the profession within the context of changes within the industry, while simultaneously acknowledging the core practices and education requirements of the profession.

Professional Agrologists in Manitoba have acquired the designation P.Ag., or Tech. Ag. Every agrologist, no matter what their individual practice specialty, is a professional in agriculture and environmental sustainability. They are trained and qualified to specific standards with the intention of serving the agriculture industry. These professionals have fulfilled the education and experience, and continuing professional development requirements that under Manitoba law, entitles them to take legal responsibility for the work they do and the advice they give.

Professional Agrologists at Work

Agrologists in Manitoba and across Canada provide advice and input for an industry that reaches well beyond production agriculture. Individual Agrologists work in large corporations and private companies, institutions, and are also self-employed as independent specialists and agricultural consultants. Whether its processing and packaging, marketing and communications, ag finance, public service, environmental assessment and planning, or education and scientific research, professional Agrologists apply standards and science to help keep the industry sustainable.

A simple graph illustrates the broad sector participation of the MIA's current practicing agrologist membership:



Some of the specific intersections between Agrologists and the hog production industry are reflected in the following examples.

- Agrologists are specifically involved in most, if not all aspects of the Manitoba hog production industry, including research and education. Agrologists in the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Science at the University of Manitoba are prominent and authoritative contributors to fundamental and advanced knowledge regarding every aspect of hog production including its consequences, in the province.
- The CEC has heard testimony from others who have referred to the National Centre for Livestock and the Environment located at the Glenlea Research station – a research facility unique in North America. Members of the MIA lead the work of this research facility in support of long-term sustainable approaches to hog and cattle production.

- We want to draw the Commission's attention to the overlapping and complimentary aspects of existing legislation and regulation affecting the hog production industry in Manitoba and how the MIA is directly involved. Preparation and submission of third party manure management plans, and providing expert advice to producers falls within the ambit of *The Agrologists Act*. In addition, *The Environment Act* clearly recognizes the mandate and practice of agrology by specifying the mandate of agrologists to prepare and submit third party plans within the framework of *The Livestock Manure and Mortalities Management Regulations (LMMMR)*.
- Assiniboine Community College, in co-operation with the Manitoba Institute of Agrologists (MIA), developed the study course that is required for persons, including agrologists, who prepare third-party manure management plans under authority of The Environment Act (through *the LMMMR*).
- MIA maintains the public registry of persons qualified to prepare third party Manure Management Plans under an agreement with Manitoba Conservation. MIA is also involved with the department in monitoring compliance with regard to the registry and the requirements for third party plan preparers. MIA is also working closely with Conservation officials to facilitate ongoing educational opportunities for people involved in this aspect of the industry.
- The Commission may also be interested in MIA activities relative to proposed Nutrient Management Regulations for Water Quality Management zones under the *Water Protection Act*. Part 5 of the proposed regulations concerns the preparation and submission of registered nutrient management plans and specifically the qualifications of third party preparers. The proposed new regulations appear to confirm that nutrient management plans for all sectors including hog production should consist of strong science and technical evidence. MIA agrees, and has specifically suggested that the professional qualifications of third party preparers should be spelled out. We believe that those who complete and submit third party plans are practicing agrology. In addition, we also believe that setting a high qualifications standard makes good business sense, and would, in our view help to provide additional assurance to the public that nutrient plans are comprehensive.

Therefore, our first recommendation to the CEC is that it formally note the complimentary aspects of existing legislation, namely *The Agrologists Act*, and refer the Minister to the fact that professional agrologists in Manitoba are already well positioned to continue making a significant contribution to the hog production industry, regardless of what regulatory regime is in place. Agrologists are already recognized in existing regulation as providers of high quality information and advice to the hog industry. That a community of professionals exists within a legislative framework should be reflected in the CEC's report .

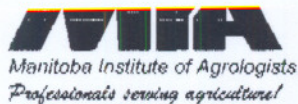
MIA is not advocating more, or less, regulation of the hog production industry. What MIA is interested in communicating to the CEC is that in the long-run, whatever regulatory regime is put in place to assist the industry and protect the public will be more credible and deserving of public confidence if the people who provide advice and support to that system are regulated professionals.

The second recommendation is that any future regulatory scheme should specify the professional standards of people who prepare and submit third party plans on behalf of participants in the hog production industry. (We have made specific representations to the Water Stewardship Board in this regard.) This will promote consistency and certainty, two ingredients to economic stability and sustainability. Regulators of the hog production industry in Manitoba can balance risks to the public by prominently including professional Agrologists in the development of timely, cost-effective and sustainable strategies for the operation and regulation of the industry going forward.

MIA was pleased to notice that throughout much of the public input process, there was considerable discussion about the need for science-based decision making. One of the guidelines to ethical responsibilities of Agrologists in Manitoba drawn from the Code of Practice is "to advocate and practice good stewardship of agricultural resources based on sound scientific principle(s)." What this means to MIA is that most people have accepted that the long term sustainability of the hog production industry in Manitoba must be based on science-based decisions. Agrologists' legislated accountability, formal training standards, and the requirement as professionals to adhere to a Code of Ethics and Practice make them well positioned to continue help achieve balance that will result in economic and environmental sustainability.

Therefore MIA's final recommendation is simply this: that while the hog production industry will inevitably evolve, the most compelling way of ensuring that there is confidence in its direction, is to require that decisions are based on scientific principles. And that the people who provide advice leading to decisions are seen by the hog industry and the public alike as well-trained professionals who held to a high standard of practice and accountability.

MIA is grateful for the opportunity to describe its involvement in agriculture complex and the hog production industry to the CEC. We are confident that our use of the public input process has improved the Commission's understand of the need for professional Agrologists - people who can be recognized for their commitment to applying their knowledge of agricultural science that will result in sustainability for the hog sector and benefit to society.



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We are attaching a short brief regarding the CEC review into the Sustainability of the Hog Industry in Manitoba. If there are any questions regarding its contents please contact:

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