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Lorne Peters

Box 98

Kleefeld, Manitoba R0A 0V0

phone (204) 377-4242

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File Name: Hog Review

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Received by: [Signature]
(Commission Secretary)

ATTENTION: The Manitoba Clean Environment Commission
305-155 Carlton Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 3H8

Regarding: review the sustainability of our province's hog production industry.

To Whom It May Concern:

I'm a farmer in the R.M. of Hanover. I grew up on a mixed farming operation, that included; dairy, chickens, hogs, and honeybees. In the last 40 years our family only stayed with the beekeeping aspect of farming. I am a second generation beekeeper and this year marks our 75th consecutive year in producing a honey crop on our family farm.

In the early years, late 1930's till the early 50's, my father also had an Artesian Well Machine that pounded water wells in the Hanover area. Therefore, I have a healthy respect for where our water comes from. Our water source comes from the south-east part of the province. There is an abundant source of water at approx. the 30 foot level for non-artesian wells and then the 100+ foot level for artesian wells.

It was about the time that the NDP Government came to power in Manitoba that there were Water Stewardship or Livestock Stewardship Hearings held in the province. I attended a meeting in Steinbach and in the handbook that was distributed; I was shocked to find that ONLY two sensitive areas were identified in Manitoba. One in the Interlake and the other was south of Winkler, but no mention was made about the south-east Manitoba, which is the most sensitive area with regard to OUR future, and the World's future, fresh drinking water source. When I mentioned this concern to my R.M. of Hanover councilor, he informed me that the previous Conservative Government had planned it that way, to set aside the south-east Manitoba for the hog industry. In my opinion if that actually was part of a Manitoba Government long-term plan, not only is that totally irresponsible but it is an accident waiting to happen!

In the news media all I hear recently is the end results and how the hog industry affects Lake Winnipeg. It's interesting that I have never read or heard any concern about the risk to the water source, and that is my concern. Building in-ground hog manure lagoons in the sandy soil conditions like in the south-east Manitoba, plus the spreading of hog manure on sandy soils will eventually pollute our water source. I also place no trust when clay soils are brought in to construct or line a lagoon or plastic liners are used. The lagoon agitators can puncture a hole in these situations. Till now a large percent of hogs moved to the U.S. to finish. When I hear that the proposed Olywest plant will probably keep more hogs in Manitoba to be finished, I am concerned about all the extra water needed and the manure created and how this will all work out. I am not against the hog industry. My fear is that all these extra hogs will end up being finished on top of the south-east water

shed aquifer. There are many areas in Manitoba with heavy clay soils that would do fine with hog barns and hog manure. I just wish somebody in power would logically look at the big picture. It would have been much better if we used trains, trucks, or piped the water west, to have supplied hog barns near heavier soils that could better utilize manure and not build on top of our Eastern Water Shed, thereby safe guarding our precious water. The R.M. of Hanover is saturated with hog operations and I see the expansion of the hog industry in the R.M of LaBroquerie and Piney and all areas close to the Sandilands Provincial Forest, as a disaster waiting to happen.

During the year, Peters Honey Farm, our family farm operates bees through-out south-east Manitoba. We have kept bees in the Piney area, where the water table often is only a foot below ground level. We also keep bees in the LaBroquerie, Friedensfeld, Grunthal areas in the east and Niverville, St. Agathe and areas further west across the Red River. I am told that around Niverville and areas west that sub surface clay soils are up to 90 feet deep, and this condition would be ideal for garbage dumps or in ground lagoons. In the other areas mentioned there are sandy soils with very little clay and in these areas less intensive agriculture needs to happen and above ground manure storage or other new technology like composting or dehydration and converting manure to dry matter before spreading it on lands needs to happen, especially the water sensitive areas of the south-east. In the R.M. of Hanover for example, I always thought it backward thinking that in-ground manure lagoons were tax exempt and above manure storage tanks were considered like buildings and taxed. If the political will was there, I think the farmers that spend the \$'s to build storage tanks and minimize potential seepage, that they should get tax exemptions on a municipal level and maybe even Tax Credits on a Provincial level, ... just a thought.

In the retailing side of current North American food trends, the consumers and retailers are demanding organic produced food. The demand for organic honey is a future market potential. There is one problem in that when a honey farm gets certified organic, an apiary or bee-yard where the beehives are kept can not be within 2 miles of a sewage lagoon or farm lagoon. Therefore every time another hog barn goes up with a lagoon our industry's opportunity is lost. In our operation we maintain up to 1,000 bee colonies in approx. 50 apiary sites a year.

The other day I took the time and drove about 10 miles south of LaBroquerie on PTH 302. My suspicions were proven correct. It appears most of the hog barns are built on inexpensive marginal land surrounded with bull-rush covered swamps and marsh land. It also appears that the planning, if any, before building all these barns, didn't fully consider what to do with all the manure. Complete sections of marginal swamp-like or marsh type land has been cleared to dump hog manure. It goes against all best management practices for incorporating manure and what I would call due diligence. I'm sure the hog business investors,(because these are not hog farmers who live anywhere near their barns) will argue that they're feeding cattle on these lands. If that is the case, I would say that it's a rather poor excuse for the ends to justify the means and two wrongs, don't make a right. All I can say is that it's a nightmare and nobody seems to care. I would challenge anyone to take a few hours out of one's lifetime to see this first hand and witness this sad state of affairs. It's my understanding that the Manitoba Agriculture is doing test field experiments with cattle grazing on hog manure applied fields. However, I'm certain that it will be biased to higher elevation fields that certainly show case the best possible outcome and not reveal the dirty secrets hidden in the back country.

Manitoba has all kind of land base for a sustainable hog industry: however the Province should have said NO for the hog industry to have developed on marginal land close to the Sandilands Provincial Forest. The other question I have is who ultimately will have rights to fresh water? Last year my artesian well 130 feet deep ran dry for the first time in its lifetime. The special wells in Hanover that are operated by the R.M. of Richot for towns like St. Agathe and St. Adolphe are approx. two miles from my home. I believe they are pumping water and that causes my well to dry up periodically. In addition, if all these hog barns are located closer to the source than most populated areas, and if more barns are going to be built or existing ones are going to expand, the demand for water will increase. I would like to see a independent third party water audit conducted to test all existing livestock lagoons for seepage before any further hog expansion is allowed in sensitive soil areas. What gives the hog industry all the rights to make the rules? My fear is that if the aquifer is affected negatively by too much demand, then negative pressure will potentially stress the aquifer and the risk is there that the aquifer could become polluted by drawing down nutrients. Its one thing for an aquifer to be under stress but it's really stupid to have hundreds of hog barns sitting on top or close by. In the past many of the swampy areas acted like retention ponds and filtered the water for shallow wells. Now most swamps or marshes have been drained to create more land for you know what! These low laying areas act like a funnel to incorporate any thing other than rain water or ground water.

I wanted to address your committee when you were sitting in Friedensfeld; however, time did not allow. It is my understanding that you heard from all kinds of persons or company's who have all kinds of vested interest and or a conflict of interest. I'm sure most of them had a sob story about the current pause on hog barns and how much financial hurt most of them are feeling and they should be given free reign for the industry to run wild. I don't buy into that logic. The hog industry certainly has fueled the economy; however I think it has expanded too rapidly and I applaud the Government for this pause to take stock. The ultimate goal of the hog industry, I suppose, is that the entire Manitoba population will all work for the hog industry. There needs to be a balance and if the hog industry is all consuming than there won't be a chance for other forms of agriculture to have a chance for growth.

An Agriculture Canada bee researcher working from the Ag Station at Beaverlodge, Alberta has done a study to investigate the production of honey in Canada and the world. His findings are that of all the sweeteners produced, honey is the most ethical. It uses the least amount of inputs to produce and ecologically, leaves the smallest imprint on the environment with the most benefits. Since one third of the food that is produced and consumed world-wide is dependant on bee pollination. My hope would be that the hog industry would also want to be ethical and do everything possible to leave the smallest foot print possible on the environment. Greed is what makes the world go round and I don't want Sustainability at any cost! The question is who pays now and/or who will be paying in the future? If sustainability for the hog industry means expansion on marginal sensitive lands in the south-east Manitoba, than the Province and people who are accountable need to say No!

Thank-you for this opportunity to address your committee.

Sincerely,



Lorne Peters