



**SUBMISSION TO THE MANITOBA CLEAN
ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION ON THE
SUSTAINABILITY OF HOG BARN
DEVELOPMENT.**

Mar.19th, 2007

Dear C.E.C.,

We the undersigned, reside in the vicinity of the Town of Roblin, Manitoba. In 2000, (operating as “Citizens Against Factory Farms”) we banded together to struggle against a secretive plan for a massive complex of hog factories in our community. We collected extensive research from around the world and soon discovered this kind of development to be a misguided method of food production and a blight on many hitherto happy communities. In our experience Factory hog barns create;

1) HEALTH PROBLEMS: Reputable medical institutions like the Centres for Disease Control, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the Canadian Medical Association, all warn that the long-standing overuse of antibiotics in raising the animals that we eat, like the pigs we produce “assembly-line-style,” compromises the effectiveness of these drugs in fighting serious human infection. The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences was set up 40 years ago as part of the US Surgeon-General's office. It published a study just a few month ago. I'd like to read you the abstract from that study, if I may.

"The industrialization of livestock production and the widespread use of non-therapeutic antimicrobial growth promotants have intensified the risk for the emergence of new, more virulent, or more resistant microorganisms.

These have reduced the effectiveness of several classes of antibiotics for treating infections in humans and livestock. Recent outbreaks of virulent strains of influenza have arisen from swine and poultry raised in close proximity. This Working Group considered the state of the science around these issues and concurred with the World Health Organization call for a phasing-out of the use of antimicrobial growth promotants for livestock and fish production. We also agree that all therapeutic antimicrobial agents should be available by prescription only for both human and veterinary use."
End quote.

<email attachment #1>

2) ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION:

The slurry produced by millions of hogs *is* escaping from lagoons and spread-fields into our waterways.

Knee jerk denials from industry notwithstanding, this slurry is a significant culprit in the eutrophication of lakes, rivers and streams. How could it not be?

<Show picture>

The last official census by the Gov't. shows the human population of Canada to be 31,612,897 souls.

Manitoba's hog population at the end of '06, according to the Canada Pork Council, was 8,803,000. The most conservative estimate I've read is that each hog produces 4 times the waste of a human being. Therefore, Manitoba's hogs produce waste equivalent to at least 35,212,000 people. In waste equivalent, that's 3,599,000 greater than the human population of this country.

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When one considers the magnitude of the HUMAN sewage problem, then I'd ask you to consider what I've just said about hog waste and draw your own conclusion. And don't misunderstand. I fully recognize that all of society contributes to this problem and all of society must face our responsibilities equally.

Five years ago, a study by the "Agri-Food Research & Development Initiative" of the Government of Manitoba concluded that total drinking water consumption by hogs is a close approximation of total waste production. A general assumption within the industry has been that waste production equals water consumption.

Now I don't have a study to quote on this, but if one assumes people and hogs drink an equal amount of water, which I believe would be a conservative assumption, then Manitoba's hogs ALSO consume more WATER than the entire human population of Can.

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To quote a recent, major study by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, ominously entitled "Livestock's Long Shadow, The world is moving towards increasing problems of freshwater shortage, scarcity & depletion, with 64 percent of the world's population expected to live in water-stressed basins by 2025." End quote.

<email attachment #2>

3) CONFLICT-OF-INTEREST: The history of hog factories near my home and elsewhere, is rife with tales of corruption among approving authorities. This includes attempts (successful or otherwise) by elected officials to benefit financially if these industries go ahead.

<CONFIDENTIAL INSERT#1>

4) SECRECY; It was apparent in my community that the public was not supposed to know too much, if anything about a network of hog factories that were planned nearby until much of the planning was developed and land deals put into place.

I learned, not from any member of my RM Council, but over coffee in Roblin, that certain Council members were showing overseas investors, properties in the vicinity that could serve as sites for a network of huge hog factories.

5) COERCION: At least four people linked to our citizens' group were threatened with either loss of jobs or business if they spoke out publicly. One of those individuals decided not to join the group, as a result. Others opted to keep a low profile, not daring to write letters or take a public position. We talked to several other people in private who agreed with our goals but, either through fear or natural inclination, did not take an active part.

<Confidential insert#2>

6) FLAWED APPROVAL PROCESS: Technical Review Committees are notorious for their bias toward proponents and their neglect of evidence of negative environmental consequences.

I'd like to read you a tale of woe told by Eva Pipp of the University of Winnipeg, a dedicated and long-time researcher into the effects of ILOs.

"On October 24th, I attended a hearing at the RM of Lac du Bonnet, where ON THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE TRC, the RM Council approved an expansion from 500 to 5000 hogs, despite the fact that:

- a) The proponent had already been cited numerous times for improper disposal of carcasses in ponds and ditches**
- b) The proposal did not have the minimum soil samples**
- c) The locations of samples were not identified**
- d) There was not enough room for storage of the huge manure piles**
- e) The parcel for the barns and manure was only about 42 acres**

f) Minimum setback requirements were not met, for barns OR spreading of manure...g) The proponent did not own more than half of the lands on which manure would be spread

h) ALL of the spread fields would drain to the Brokenhead River.

i) Four of the spread fields contained municipal drains - the proponent proposed to spread on the ENTIRE acreage including in the drains and without any setbacks for roads, property lines, ditches, etc. and the TRC did not bat an eye." End quote.....

IN CONCLUSION, I know the Pork Council is fond of saying how much misinformation is being spread about their industry. That is why, in my submission today, with the possible exception of Eva Pipp's story,

I have tried to confine my observations, to my own personal experiences as chair of our citizens group. And if anyone should know what those experiences have been, surely I should! The rest has been gleaned from the most reputable sources I could find. So, if the Council, or the Government, for that matter, doesn't see fit to believe me, then I would invite them to disbelieve the Centres for Disease Control, the World Health Organization, the Food & Agriculture Organization or the Canadian Medical Association. In closing, I implore you, the Clean Environment Commission, to recommend to the Government of Manitoba, that the existing moratorium on hog barn development be kept in place indefinitely.

I further request that you recommend the moratorium be extended to the 17 or so applications that were pending when the original announcement was made. Many thanks for you're attention and for this opportunity to appear.

Larry Powell
Citizen for Family Farms