

Morden

Thank you for the privilege of allowing me to address this commission.
I am a councillor for the RM of Morris and would like to express some of our concerns.

Our municipality has been involved in orderly hog expansion with about 30 sites being developed within the last decade. We have always had stringent criteria to address environmental and residents concerns. This has been accomplished by having a sound development plan, zoning by-laws and conditions within the conditional use agreement.

Many of our requirements are above that of the province.

Some examples are:

Separation distances from residences are about twice the minimum requirement.

Manure application has to be by direct incorporation into the soil.

Sites need to be surrounded by shelter belts.

Lagoons require complete straw cover or plastic covers.

This consistency by council has created an atmosphere of responsibility, understanding and trust by all stake holders.

Leeching is not a problem because we are on heavy clay soils.

Phosphorous levels in our soils are very low.

Surface water is used as drinking water for the hogs.

During the past year most of the blame; because of the algae encountered in Lake Winnipeg, has been placed on the shoulders of the hog industry, culminating with the moratorium of hog expansion. This has effectively placed a dark cloud on the industry and on the decisions our local council made in approving hog barns.

It also needs to be noted that we only had one hog application in the past three years and that one was withdrawn. The "rapid expansion" was over long before the fear of further "rapid expansion."

The Clean Environment Commission needs to have a much broader mandate. Some of the questions that beg answers are:

Why Hog Production Review and not Livestock Production Review?

Have comparisons been made and tests conducted between livestock sites built in the last decade and the many that have been grandfathered over many years when standards were much less stringent?

How can all violations of existing and future regulations be effectively enforced?

Would the problem with algae in Lake Winnipeg exist even if there never were hogs in Manitoba?

What is the present and future role of local municipal government and how do we work together with all levels and departments of government in order to sustain livestock production?

When it comes to the environment each one of us has to take responsibility and make improvements within a network of support. Let us not only single out the hog industry because the number of animals is greater.

Thank you,
Sieg Neumann
Councillor, RM of Morris