

Box 162
Grosse Isle, MB R0C 1G0
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The Western Producer
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Letter to the Editor:

Dear Sirs:

We are writing this letter in response to the article published in the March 15th issue of The Western Producer, "Manitoba's Hog Inquiry Hears Local Complaints."

We were surprised at the attention that a prodigious paper such as The Western Producer gave to our presentation in Stonewall. Our report to the Commission followed the opening day of the hearings in Winnipeg at which major players in the hog industry, such as the Pork Council, Hogwatch and The Humane Society, did lengthy presentations.

We are concerned with the tone of the article, which would suggest that our non-Hutterite group is simply creating trouble by complaining about the colony's operation. We were very pleased that Mr. Hofer of Rock Lake, in his remarks to the reporter, did not buy into this line of thinking. The lines of communication between the community and the colony remain open and discussions we've had are frank and respectful on both sides. Our presentation dealt with the colony because that is the situation with which we are familiar. Had the reporter talked with us, he might have realized that our eleven recommendations for the Commission were intended to address issues across the province similar to the ones that we face, and also included responsibilities of municipalities and the Provincial Government.

We do have concerns, as well, about the Clean Environment Commission hearings that we see happening. The colony had not indicated that they were going to do a presentation and were not there when we talked to the Commission. It was only after we had reported to the commission, that

Rock Lake Colony indicated they would make a presentation. Does this mean that the only thing that is going to happen at the Commission's hearings is that the opposite sides of this issue will simply reiterate their position? What new information can be expected from this process? Will these groups be expected to give recommendations to improve the problems we face? Where is the scientific community in this process? We do have a problem in Manitoba. Otherwise, why would we have a moratorium on further construction of factory hog facilities?

We are amazed at the current level of advertising sponsored by the Pork Council. We assume that the activities of the Commission will cost the province a significant amount of money. Might not these resources be spent more wisely? For example, why not take a brand new facility such as the barn at Rock Lake Colony, and make it part of a research project to address the concerns around ground water usage, surface water pollution and odour. This barn is close enough to the University of Manitoba to be used as a test site. The technologies developed could be utilized here in Manitoba and exported to other jurisdictions, providing revenue and employment for members of the Hutterite colony and other Manitobans.

Intensive livestock operations including hog factory facilities in Manitoba are a very contentious issue. We need to recognize the fact that there are serious concerns with the hog industry here, and work together to address these concerns so that pork production and other ILO's can flourish in this province without damaging the environment and affecting people's wellbeing now and in the future.

Jim McCowan
Bill Massey
Concerned Citizens of Grosse Isle Committee
CC The Clean Environment Commission
Rock Lake Colony