

## CHAPTER 4

# SUMMARY OF LIVESTOCK STEWARDSHIP PUBLIC MEETINGS

It was the Panel's belief that a carefully conducted public consultation process was essential to obtaining input from all stakeholders. There was a great deal of interest shown in the Panel's work, and many organizations and individuals made their points in a thoughtful and, on occasion, forceful manner. In total, 226 presentations were heard over the ten days (60 hours) of public hearings in six different locations (see Table 4.1). Attendance at the meetings ranged from 40 people in Dauphin to over 500 in Steinbach.

In order to accommodate everyone who wished to make a presentation, presenters were given ten to fifteen minutes to succinctly elaborate on the major points of their submission. They were invited to submit additional material, especially in response to questions from the Panel. The Panel received over 150 written submissions – some from presenters with follow-up information, but many from individuals who did not make oral presentations

After the public presentations, the Panel had a number of follow-up meetings with a number of organizations to seek further clarification on key issues. The Panel was very pleased with the response to the public consultation process and gratefully acknowledges the efforts and commitment of all who participated in the process.

What follows is a summary of key points made at each of the six locations. No attempt was made to "rank" the issues by the number of times they were mentioned. However, at the end of this chapter the Panel does make a judgment as to which issues required further attention.

**Table 4.1**  
**Panel's Public Consultation**

| <i>Location</i>          | <i>Date(s)</i>                  | <i>Number of presentations</i> |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Morden                   | June 29                         | 16                             |
| Arborg                   | July 5                          | 29                             |
| Brandon                  | July 11 & 12                    | 36                             |
| Dauphin                  | July 13                         | 11                             |
| Winnipeg                 | July 24, 25 & 26                | 66                             |
| Steinbach                | July 31 & August 1              | 68                             |
| <b>Total locations 6</b> | <b>10 days of consultations</b> | <b>226 presentations</b>       |

## Morden

### A. Evaluating Proposals

- One should only require a conditional use permit if the livestock operation proposes to operate beyond the provincial guidelines.
- Consistency is important in assessments. Science should be the basis of any assessment.
- Public access to information and input on the application is important.
- It is just as important to have an appeal process. Some felt that it should be beyond the RM level to ensure local politics do not affect appeal outcomes.
- Most presentations indicated that current regulations are acceptable but that monitoring and enforcement of these regulations are inadequate.

## B. Environmental Monitoring

- There is an inconsistency among RM zoning regulations. This requires a provincial standard to be established. Provincial leadership and enforcement will also help deal with inter-municipal issues. Larger planning districts will allow one to consider the cumulative effects and downstream impacts.
- Stricter enforcement is required with more monitoring. This will require increased commitment by government with more dollars and staff. Some expressed the view that an independent third party to enforce regulations would be the best solution.
- The TRC has a valuable role to play. The CEC could also hold hearings on livestock operations. The more information available, the better informed will be the decision-maker.
- It is necessary to consider the costs associated with the rules. Some felt that it would not be unreasonable to have different rules apply to different sizes of operations. Others felt that the small operations can pollute just as much and perhaps are disadvantaged by not using the most modern technology.
- Odor is a problem that requires further research to determine acceptable levels. A mechanism to measure, monitor, and enforce standards is also needed.
- Nutrient management should include anhydrous products.
- Producers must be educated on the need to realize that manure is a resource.
- In terms of water quality, concern was expressed about the impact of livestock operations on nearby wells. It was proposed that test wells be used to monitor impacts and that the government offer free testing of rural wells. Capping of abandoned wells was also a recognized as requirement.

## C. Property Values & Property Taxes

- Perhaps residential uses should require conditional use permits rather than farming operations.
- Property tax should consider the intensity of the farming operation not just land base.
- Hog barns provide a good tax base for municipalities.

## D. Other Issues

- There is a need to adopt more natural methods of production.
- The public should be educated on livestock operations and agriculture.
- Citizens moving to rural areas must consider that some issues are just related to general agricultural practices.

## Arborg

### A. Evaluating Proposals

- There needs to be far more consistency in assessing applications among the RMs. Having a larger body (e.g. beyond RM level) review the application would eliminate some of the local politics but could also eliminate the sensitivity to community issues. Larger planning districts would encourage harmony between operators and rural residents. TRC review should be mandatory. Some stated the TRC report should be presented in person to a public meeting.
- Some felt the same regulations should apply regardless of farm size.
- The Provincial Land Use Committee of Cabinet should take a more active role.
- Large farms should be required to undertake an environmental assessment
- Some felt that the rules should be more flexible relative to site topography.

- When a conditional use application is rejected, a written decision outlining in detail the reasons for the rejection should be provided.
- An appeal process should exist.

## **B. Environmental Monitoring**

- Enforcement tends to be limited, and level of fines inadequate. In general, all those who commented on this thought that fines should be increased.
- Some stated they should be related to the size of the operation. Increased inspection, consistency in applying regulations and more transparency are essential.
- Municipalities lack the resources to enforce. A larger body must do the monitoring and enforcement.
- Others advocated self-regulation with support of a mediator.
- Assistance in the form of dollars, tax-free loans and information should be provided to small farmers to allow them to upgrade their operations.
- One must recognize that the problem goes beyond agriculture and should consider municipal sewage systems. All lagoons should be certified.
- To reduce odors, use of covers and using injection only should be required. The owner should live next to his barn.
- Water testing of wells should be free and abandoned wells should be sealed.
- Regulations should be developed to deal with the quality of the water in Lake Winnipeg. Aquifer degradation is also a concern and should be monitored.
- There is a need to balance manure applied and crop up-take. Manure should be recognized as a valuable resource with organic matter.
- The manure from hogs when applied to the soil

provides the important nutrients and organic matter for the crops used in hog feed.

- Some felt that changing farming practices to less liquid and more straw would help the situation. Others wanted diking of manure spread fields to avoid run-off.
- One suggestion was to develop a map of manure and slurry disposal sites.
- Investor/owner liability for damages was viewed as necessary.
- Farmer education of the regulations/obligations is necessary. This could also be used to inform them of practices that could reduce neighbor complaints (e.g. manure spreading at different times).
- Forcing owners to reside on the land would help in odor management.

## **C. Property Values & Property Taxes**

- We should designate farm zones where barns can be concentrated. Freedom from changes in zoning should also be provided. Some felt that residential and livestock zones within each RM should be identified.
- There should be research done on the impact of intensive livestock operations on property values. Some stated that this should be extended to include the impact of sub-divisions on land values.

## **D. Overall Economic Impact**

- Growth in farm size is natural as economics drives the process.
- ILOs tend to be more environmentally sound as they have the financial resources to install the latest technology.
- The expanding livestock sector has had a major positive impact on the local economies of the Interlake communities. It has reversed the depopulation trend of some rural areas and encouraged agricultural diversification.

## E. Farm Ownership

- There is a need to allow processors to own pig operations, as this would ensure more sustainable operations.
- There should be special provisions for new generation co-operatives versus vertically integrated operations.

## F. Other Issues

- There is a need to educate the public about ILOs, their impact on the local economy and the spin-offs realized by urban centres.
- Larger barns mean larger dollar losses associated with fires, which results in increased premiums for all intensive livestock operations.

## Brandon

### A. Evaluating Proposals

- Some viewed TRC as “pro” hog development. Others felt the TRC has an important role to play and should review all applications with their decision being binding on the RMs.
- Environmental assessments should be done across a number of RMs or on a planning district basis.
- Science should guide the siting of ILOs.
- Regulations should consider the risk associated with the proposal.
- The decision-making time should be extended to 60 days to allow for sufficient public input.
- Written reasons for rejection of an application should be provided. An appeal body is required.
- The threshold size of operation (400 AU) is too high. Some felt it should be reduced to 300 AU, some felt it should be cumulative not species oriented; others felt that the same standards should apply to all operations.
- The application process should include not only new operations but also expanding operations.

- Restrict the total number of animal units in the watershed.

### B. Environmental Monitoring

- There is a lack of enforcement. Results of any enforcement done are typically not made known to the RM, farmer or public to let them know of the job being done.
- Some felt peer monitoring and assistance would do the job.
- Performance bonds are necessary.
- Environmental clean-up costs should be the responsibility of the farmer.
- The principle of grandfathering operations should be considered in the event of changes in regulations.
- Incentives and assistance should be provided to small operators to allow them to meet the standards.
- Increase funding for water quality monitoring. Install monitoring wells near ILO sites.
- Odor issues should be referred to Farm Practices Board, as this is a management issue. Practices such as having barns three miles from residences, venting barns vertically and covering manure storage should be necessary for large operations.
- A scientific conference on intensive livestock operations should be convened.
- More money needs to be invested in manure management research including showcasing innovative practices. One key area of study is the potential for phosphorus build up in the soil.
- Promote the use of manure on forages. Manure applied to fields provides important nutrients needed by crops.
- Regulations should differentiate between solid and liquid manure systems.

### C. Property Values and Property Taxes

- Designate land areas within the RM for the exclusive location of ILOs.
- Large barns should be taxed like a commercial industry and be subject to the same regulations (e.g. fire codes).
- Farming caveat should be allowed on properties. Currently, Land Titles does not recognize this. Could also allow odor caveats.
- There should be a buffer zone around towns.

### D. Overall Economic Impact

- Large barns create few jobs because of the degree of automation. They also don't buy locally.
- Livestock operations are a viable alternative to farm diversification. Too many regulations will hamper future development of the industry.
- Agriculture is a key component of the provincial economy and the livestock expansion is a major economic opportunity. It has a significant impact on the service sector in rural communities.
- Larger operations can afford the costs of compliance.

### E. Health – Farmer, Worker, General Public

- Study the impact of microbes, micronutrients and antibiotics in manure on human health.

### F. Farm Ownership

- New generation hog barns are more acceptable.

### G. Labor

- Large barns should be required to operate under the same labor codes as industry. Allowing hired workers to be hired under The Farm Labor Act results in subsidized labor.
- Livestock operations need to be big enough to allow farmers to hire staff so they can take vacations.

## Dauphin

### A. Evaluating Proposals

- Some felt that municipalities should not have standards higher than the province.
- Educate municipal councilors on legislation, regulation and procedures.
- 400 (AUs) is a reasonable size to define large versus small operations.

### B. Environmental Monitoring

- There is a lack of enforcement and monitoring of existing regulations.
- Performance bonds are necessary.
- Nutrient management plans that consider manure and anhydrous fertilizers are essential.

### C. Property Values and Property Taxes

- Agriculture should have priority over other uses. Protect livestock farms from encroachment of urban sprawl. Restrict "urbanization" by insisting on conditional use permits for housing.

### D. Overall Economic Impact

- Technology tends to drive the size of existing hog operations.
- Livestock expansion has provided new markets for Manitoba crops and has helped offset some input costs by allowing manure to be used instead of buying fertilizer.

### E. Farm Ownership

- New generation hog barns are more acceptable.

### F. Labor

- People who work in large barns are not farmers.

## Winnipeg

### A. Evaluating Proposals

- There is a need to have planning districts larger than the RM. Incentives should be provided to encourage RMs to get larger.
- Some municipalities have enacted tighter standards.
- Construction should be prohibited unless provincially approved. TRCs should be independent and their reviews mandatory for all ILOs but the RM should have the final decision.
- The size of operation should cumulate AUs across species.
- Public input should be encouraged.
- Written reasons for rejection should be provided along with a mechanism for appeal or re-application.
- The RMs should phase in a geographic information system (GIS) system with the applicant paying cost recovery.
- Develop a database of inventories of livestock operations.
- Many felt the current regulations were adequate but that enforcement was needed.

### B. Environmental Monitoring

- The regulations are good. Enforcement and compliance is lacking. Penalties are too minimal and should be based on the size of the operation. The system should shift from a complaint-based, reactive approach to a proactive approach with comprehensive, routine testing.
- More well testing is required. Each residence should have two free tests per year with even more if they live near an ILO. Abandoned wells should be sealed.

- There should be performance bonds to pay for clean-ups and recourse for monetary compensation.
- TIP line for complaints and a one-stop place for the farmer to seek help on particular problems.
- Nutrient management plans including manure and commercial fertilizer should be required.
- Train and license custom manure applicators.
- Promote the use of manure on forages. There can be a positive interaction between the hog and beef sectors by applying hog manure to forages.
- Identify sources of phosphate pollution.
- Measure emissions to regulate odors.
- Incentives should be provided to encourage the adoption of new technologies that are compatible with our trade obligations.
- Riparian areas should require fencing.
- Biogas generation needs to be re-examined.
- We should periodically sample our waterways to assess impacts.
- Stricter regulations are required for municipal lagoons.

### C. Property Values and Property Taxes

- Transfer approval for livestock usage with the land.
- Repeal *Farm Practices Act* to allow for provision for compensation of other residents.
- Update *The Land Use Act*.
- Undertake a study of the impact of ILOs on property values.

### D. Overall Economic Impact

- Manitoba is suited to intensive livestock. Marketing boards should be eliminated to allow expansion of the poultry industry.

- ILOs have increased demand for grain and helped the grains sector.
- The expansion in livestock is critical for many rural communities if they are to survive economically and socially.

#### **E. Health - Farmer, Worker, General Public**

- Undertake studies on public health associated with ILOs.
- Need to study the impact of nitrates and pathogens on water.

#### **F. Farm Ownership**

- Should have anti-corporate farm legislation. The number of off-site investors could define a corporate farm.

#### **G. Labor**

- Small operators have difficulty in getting relief workers. This tends to promote larger operations. Farm families want a lifestyle similar to their urban counterparts, including vacations. Farm operations need to be big enough to afford hired labor.
- Need to bring farm workers and managers under labor legislation.

#### **H. Animal Welfare**

- Concern about crate confinement of pregnant sows. A viable alternative is required.
- Improve dead animal disposal.

#### **I. Other Issues**

- There has been a loss of price transparency for hog sales. Many marketers and dealers are not bonded or licensed, leaving the producer with limited recourse for non-payment.
- Need a comprehensive program with a public information component. This should include information on changes in agriculture.

- Production and processing of 10 million hogs will never be reached because of a wide range of other factors.

## **Steinbach**

#### **A. Evaluating Proposals**

- TRCs should solicit public input and play a greater role in public education.
- TRCs could involve citizen participation, Keystone Agricultural Producers and staff from RM.
- Need for scientific based decisions. Apply fairly and let the public know
- Reduce trigger point for AU and make it cumulative.
- Often the first application is for the best site. Rejection can mean selecting a less appropriate site for future applications.
- Some RMs have different AU standards that are less than the 400 AU limit. They routinely add amendments as they see fit.

#### **B. Environmental Monitoring**

- Straw covers on manure storage eliminate odors.
- Need more staff for monitoring, more accountability and more research.
- Should not "grandfather" operations.
- Need nutrient management plans to consider the impact of fertilizers.
- End clay lagoons.
- Provide incentives to bring existing farms up to standards through tax write-offs.
- Encourage mediation and a cooling off period.
- TIP line for violators.

### C. Property Values and Property Taxes

- Local land values have not dropped.
- Concern expressed over the urbanization of farmland.
- Repeal *Farm Practices Act* to allow for suing farmers.
- Caveats should be placed on land to be designated for livestock.
- Inconsistent treatment of property taxes for land-intensive versus livestock-intensive operations.

### D. Overall Economic Impact

- ILOs increase farm income and creates local jobs.
- Many farmers in their presentations indicated that raising hogs has meant the difference between farming and not farming.
- Several agribusinesses talked about the positive impact the boom in livestock operations has had on their businesses.

### E. Health - Farmer, Worker, General Public

- Study the impacts of antibiotics on humans.
- Canadian Quality Assurance program and separated hog sites have reduced the need for drug usage.

### F. Labor

- Need to determine the illness and injury rate in hog operations compared to other industries.
- Full labor rights to farm workers.

### G. Animal Welfare

- Phase out gestation crates by 2010. A viable replacement is required.

### H. Other Issues

- Educate the public on agriculture.
- Designate Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) funds for ILO infrastructure.

## Summary and Next Steps

A wealth of information and strongly held opinions (both on occasion conflicting) were presented during the Panel's public consultations. In spite of the efforts of many people, the summary in this chapter cannot do full justice to the wide range of views. After reviewing the oral presentations and the written submissions, the Panel concluded that a number of key issues required further analysis. These were:

- Planning for sustainable livestock development at the provincial and local levels.
- Environmental and health concerns, including water quality, air quality, and climate change.
- Management issues, manure management, swine housing, and riparian management.
- Socio-economic issues.
- Information and monitoring systems and research.

To get a better understanding of the scientific underpinnings of some of these issues, the Panel convened four research roundtables at the end of August to further explore issues of water quality, air quality, manure management, and monitoring and information systems. Scientists and practitioners knowledgeable in these matters were invited to meet with the Panel for further discussions. Dr Ross Bulley served as a scientific advisor to the Panel during these roundtables.

The Panel met with a wide range of provincial and federal officials, university and industry researchers, producer organizations and public stakeholder groups to enhance our understanding of these issues and explore alternative solutions. These discussions took place in Manitoba,



Saskatchewan, Alberta, Quebec and Ottawa. We sincerely acknowledge the time and effort expended on our behalf by all of these people and organizations.

The range of issues raised far exceeds what could be covered in this report, given time and resource constraints. What follows is the Panel's interpretation and synthesis of what we heard and read. We have endeavored to reach conclusions and make recommendations based on the principles for sustainable livestock development laid out in the previous chapter.