



COMMENTARY

“The Voice of Manitoba Farmers”

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All Farmers Need to be at the CEC

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By David Rolfe, KAP President. Cell: (204) 483-0502.

Over the next two months, the Clean Environment Commission wants to hear from Manitobans on the sustainability of the hog industry. If you're not a hog farmer, then you may think that this whole process has nothing to do with you or your farming operation – but you'd be wrong.

Today, the hog industry is under the microscope. The CEC will be looking at the hog sector's environmental track record, in areas like nutrient / manure management, land use planning, water quality, odour, and impact on climate change. They'll also be looking on what's being done across Canada and in other jurisdictions.

The point is that all farms – not just hog farms – interact with the environment. If hog producers are isolated in this review, and few people step up to defend agriculture's environmental practices, then they could soon be facing excessive restrictions that will provide very little practical landscape benefit, but effectively cripple a farmer's ability to make a sustainable living. It's not a question of “if” but “when” another sector in agriculture will be put under the microscope. And, when the CEC makes recommendations following this process, it's likely that they would apply to all farmers, not just the hog sector.

It's important that all of us, as responsible farmers and stewards of the land, attend the CEC hearings to talk about what we do to protect our natural resources and minimize our impact on the landscape.

It's time for farmers to speak up on behalf of our industry, and tell Manitobans about the environmental protection that we already do. To register for the CEC hearings, go to www.cecmanitoba.ca or call 1-800-597-3556. Community sessions are being held in numerous locations across the province throughout March and April, so check your local papers for advertisements or call the CEC for more information. It's requested that you pre-register for your local session, and keep your presentation to 15 minutes.

Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP) will also be presenting on this important issue, and will be able to share its resources with farmers who are looking for additional information. Contact us at kap@kap.mb.ca or (204) 697-1140.

Unity is key for the survival and future viability of our industry. Stand up for your neighbours!