



COMMENTARY

“The Voice of Manitoba Farmers”

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Nutrient Regulations Need Farmer Input

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What will the proposed nutrient management regulations mean for your farm? Now is the time for Manitoba's producers to have their say, and voice their opinions as part of the public consultation process before they're implemented by government.

Since the first regulations were proposed as Water Quality Management Zones, Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP) has been lobbying government to find a more workable approach. Overall, we've been relatively successful and the new regulations are vast improvements over government's original regulations.

As it stands, farmers who are in Zones 1 – 3 have the option to file nutrient management plans with the province. Zone 4 is considered a higher risk area for water quality, and farmers in this area would be required to submit a nutrient management plan. Many farmers may already be filing similar information as part of manure management plans. The regulation also allows for farmers in Zone 4 to appeal their classification and move to a different zone if they can show that they pose a lower risk to water quality, based on land type or farm management.

The proposed regulations appear to be a reasonable compromise. However, this is the first and best opportunity for farmers to have input in this public process. Those who are farming in Zone 4 should take advantage of this opportunity, since they are more likely to be affected by the regulation's requirements.

The deadline to send comments about the proposed regulations is Monday, January 22. A copy of the regulations, and information about how to voice your opinion, is posted on Manitoba Water Stewardship's web site at <http://www.gov.mb.ca/waterstewardship/wqmz/> or by calling toll-free 1-800-282-8069.

When it announced the nutrient management regulations, the provincial government also announced a freeze on development in the hog sector, which came as a surprise to everyone involved. As part of this process, the Clean Environment Commission will also be reviewing the proposed nutrient management regulations when they evaluate the sustainability of Manitoba's hog industry. The first round of public CEC meetings has just been announced to help determine the scope of their evaluation. These meetings are being held in January in Friedensfeld, Morden, and Winnipeg but written comments are also accepted. To get involved in this important process as well, register with the CEC online at www.cecmanitoba.ca or call 1-800-597-3556.