

Buchanan woman says destructive process of hog barns must be stopped

Re: Mega factory hog barn construction near Rama.

The present government has embarked on a destructive process in this province. The promotion of mega hog barn factories is creating extreme tensions in the surrounding area. As a member of a group called the Concerned Citizens for a Safe and Healthy Environment, I would like to list concerns that are seen as an attack on our lives.

There are many farm families that will be directly affected by the odour from site number three barn. This barn is to hold 10,000 hogs. All these families depend on their local source of water for household use and for their farming operations. The water source is a well or dugout. The dugouts fill by spring run-off. The elevation of the land is such that the water from this area reaches Good Spirit Lake. The potential for contamination of the water in this provincial park would destroy tourism in this area.

The list of concerns are:

1. Air, water and soil contamination;
2. Health hazards: allergies due to animal dander, ammonia and hydrogen sulfide levels. We have documentation of two individuals in the Lintlaw area that developed chronic lung conditions and will

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be on medication for the rest of their lives;

3. Devaluation of farm property;
4. Manure application from lagoons is a dangerous process. There is a potential for ground and surface water contamination. Hog manure contains 24 pathogens transmittable to humans;
5. The regulations in place by Sask Ag and Food protect the corporate industry and the family farm. They are lax and no one enforces the regulations when the farms are operational. We have discovered that on-going regulations of these industries is non-existent;
6. Inhumane environment for raising hogs;
7. An unsafe environment for any employee to work in. They are a hazard to personal health and offer low paying jobs (ghetto work). There is no protection under the Labour Standards Act and no Workers' Compensation is available;
8. Manure spills can occur and in fact have occurred at the Sturgis barn. The authorities say it was under 500 litres so

the investigations are dishonest and there is a lack of trust in the Sask Ag and Food division that deal with intensive livestock operation;

9. The process for permit application is so designed that a small group of individuals was able to push this project into this area with little concern for consequences;

10. Liability for environmental damage will rest with the landowner;

11. Quality of meat: contains antibiotics and growth hormones.

There are many issues that I could raise. There are two farmers who have had allergy tests done and they are positive to hog dander.

Residents in Preeceville and Sturgis were exposed to the manure smell this summer. Odours were present as far as 18 miles away from Sturgis barn site.

The NDP government gave Florion Possberg 15 million dollars July 11, 2000, and more money came from Janice MacKinnon's department previously.

I believe that a very small core of members of the present government are making decisions in supporting hog factories with little background knowledge of what this will do to farm families and the environment.

Open air lagoons are being outlawed in other parts of the world because of the disasters that have occurred to the environment. Our group has suggested composting as a method to deal with the hog manure.

It is important to take action immediately to stop this massive hog expansion.

My suggestions are the following:

1. Discuss concerns with Premier Romanow;

2. Share concerns with all the elected NDP members;

3. Come up with a plan to stop this assault on the environment and farm families;

4. The plan should include an immediate moratorium on further construction of the Rama hog barns and further barns expansion;

5. An immediate decision to have an independent environmental impact study conducted in the Upper Assiniboine River Basin regarding intensive livestock operations.

It is time to take a stand and inform your elected MP of your concerns. We do not need another Walkerton situation to occur in this country.

Isabel Muzichuk,
Buchanan.