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VOLUME 8, NUMBER 44

PRICE 50 CENTS

Monday, September 4, 2000

## Province's hog monitoring committee no-good

by KARL KOPAN  
Y-N Writer

Agriculture Minister Clay Serby thought that by putting in place a monitoring committee for intensive hog operations already being built in the Rama area tensions would over the barns - it did the exact opposite.

No members of the Concerned Citizens for a Safe and Healthy Environment - the Buchanan based group that has been fighting against the installation of massive hog operations in the area - were included on the committee. The group recommended three names for the committee but none were selected.

In response, the group paid for one hour of radio time in order to host an open line show on Wednesday evening. A panel, representing the group, consisted of David Sawkiw, Wayne Matrachuk and Isabel Muzichuk, fielded calls and talked about the affects hog barns are having on communities.

Muzichuk said that the provincial committee will need time to decide on a way they are going to meet the objectives of the mandate they are given.

"We're saying that this committee is not enough, it is too late and if he (Clay Serby) is going to go with this, then he should put a stop on further construction," said Muzichuk, in an interview with *The News* on Thursday.

"When they come up with this kind of organization, and they say

it is because of pressure from the community, it does show that the legislation that is in place is inadequate."

Her group sees the provincial government's monitoring of hog operations, that it has a financial interest in, as a conflict of interest. Florian Possberg, CEO of Big Sky Farms, is also named as one of the members of the monitoring committee.

"That's like putting a fox in charge of the chickens," said Muzichuk, pointing out that she believes at least five of the members to be pro-hog.

"I think it should have been an independent board, which it isn't ... I don't think it is a good mix."

The timing of the naming of the monitoring committee has also come into question. Muzichuk believes that a committee should have been in place long before the barns were approved and government funding was devoted to the project. With construction equipment working, she feels it is too late for the Rama area.

Although the committee will monitor water and soil samples from land used to dispose of hog manure, as it is injected into the soil, odour was not part of the committee's mandate.

There are eleven families that live within the vicinity of the barns. Allergies to pig dander (the white flakes prevalent on the backs of the animals) and the smell from manure flushed from the barns and held in open-air

lagoons, will drift into their lives.

From hog barns located in Sturgis, the smell has been detected up to eighteen miles away.

"If there is one family who is going to be affected then it has got to be stopped," she stated.

The protesting isn't over yet. Plans are being made to picket Clay Serby's office yet again, in addition to Yorkton-Melville MP Garry Breitkreuz, who has remained silent on the issue.

"The lines were jammed ... there's a lot of interest out there,"

said David Sawkiw, who said the only way to stop massive live-stock operations from infiltrating the province is to educate the general public. "Here in Preeceville the barns are up and there is really nothing we can do about it," he said.

If the public had ten per cent of the knowledge that members of his group does, Sawkiw says they would never allow a barn to come into their area.

Due to the potential for jobs in areas away from traditional job

centres, the issue is a touchy one for some people - the reason he believes some aren't choosing a side on the issue.

There are several farms in the area who have retired couples living on them. "Even if it is already time to go who wants to buy a farm with a yardsite that is in that kind of a stench."

Even worse, Sawkiw says, is that there is no legal recourse that can be taken by property owners to recoupe financial losses.