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Hidden Costs to Taxpayers of Large Scale Swine Production

1) Environmental Impacts

a) Water

- High phosphorus and ammonium/ammonia releases from processing/slaughterhouse plant as well as suspended solids, BOD and pathogens (current treatment applications in Winnipeg and Manitoba do not remove phosphorus and ammonia)
- Over application and improper application of manure on farmland resulting in nutrient runoff and contamination of surface and groundwater (phosphorus, nitrogen, copper, zinc, chlorides, potassium)
- Improper design, overflows, seepage and leaks of lagoons and storage containers (all lagoons seep)
- Siting deficiencies of lagoons (located in pollution zones and flood plains)(pollution zones have not adequately been mapped in Manitoba)
- General increases in eutrophication, algae blooms, toxic blue/green algae blooms, fish kills, groundwater contamination
- Groundwater and surface water depletion (very water intensive)

potential economic impacts: commercial fisheries, sport fisheries, hunting, tourism, water recreation activities, irrigated agricultural industries, municipal water treatment facility upgrades, resource depletion costs, increased staffing levels for monitoring, research and enforcement

b) Air

- Methane (Green House Gas) release from treatment/storage facilities of manure (methane is much more potent than C02)
- Ammonia releases from lagoons, manure spraying and hog confinement areas
- Toxic hydrogen sulfide releases (plus numerous other compounds)
- Intense odor problems
- Increase in CO2 (GHG) emissions from increased truck traffic
- Cumulative increases in greenhouse gas releases into atmosphere, local and regional acid rain and nitrogen disposition (ammonia) and decreases in property values

potential economic impacts: increase to global warming contributions (severe and variable weather conditions and disasters), property value decreases, acid rain impacts (reduced crop yields, loss of vegetation)

c) Land

- Accumulation of heavy metals (zinc and copper) and other elements such as selenium in soils from manure application
- Excess nutrient buildup creating imbalances in soil chemistry

potential economic impacts: resource depletion, reduced crop yields

2) Human Health and Worker Safety Impacts

a) Processing/Slaughterhouse Facility

- Repetitive movements leading to carpal tunnel syndrome
- Stress, fatigue, assembly line working conditions
- Chemical, biological and infectious hazards present
- Overall high rate of illness and injury (triple that of manufacturing as a whole) leading to very high turnover rate for workforce

potential economic impacts: increased health care costs, increased worker compensation costs, increased unemployment and social assistance costs

b) Factory Farms in Rural Manitoba

- Increased respiratory diseases from presence of dust and endotoxins
- Long term exposure leading to chronic bronchitis, asthma and decreased pulmonary functions
- Chemical, biological and infectious hazards present
- Overall high turnover rate for workforce

potential economic impacts: increased health care costs, increased social assistance costs (*note - farm hand workers are not classified in employment standards legislation and therefore do not qualify for standard benefits; workers compensation is not mandatory)

c) General Population

- Major groundwater impact is increased ammonium in our region leaching from lagoons and applied hog slurry
- Over 40 different diseases and parasites can commonly be shared with humans from swine
- Contaminants in drinking water (groundwater) such as nitrates causing blue baby syndrome
- Antibiotics in the livestock industry are the main source of R-factors and antibiotic resistance in pathogens in the environment today
- Pathogens (bacteria and viruses) in drinking water causing outbreaks of illness such as cryptosporidium and giardia
- Greater incidence of nausea, vomiting, dizziness from toxic air emissions in proximity to factory farms
- Ammonia gas in proximity to factory farms exacerbates respiratory problems
- Hormone residues present in the meat

potential economic impacts: increased health care costs, increased legal costs through litigation

3) Economic and Social Impacts

- 80% of hog production is derived from 10% of the producers in Manitoba. Also, in 1970's there were 6000 farms producing hogs whereas today there are less than 1600 farms producing hogs. These figures will only worsen in the future where less farms will be producing more hogs in the province. (In the late 1970's, Manitoba produced 1 million hogs; this figure increased to roughly 6.5 million up until 2002)
- The pork processors are becoming vertically integrated, meaning they control more of the production aspects of the industry through the establishment of their own factory farms or contracting with other large factory farm operations. (ie, the McCain Family owns Maple Leaf Foods, who owns the Landmark Group (Feed Company) who owns Elite Swine (Manitoba's largest swine producer) Maple Leaf Foods also owns Rothsay Rendering (the only rendering plant in Manitoba).
- Bargaining power of family farms and independent producers is lost with the removal of single desk selling (centrally controlled marketing board which was removed in 1996) and the concentration of ownership.
- Large factory farms and transnational processors tend to procure goods (such as feed) at reduced rates and from non-local sources, whereas small local farms

(producing the same amount of hogs) create more jobs, higher per capita income and larger increases in local community retail. (It has been noted that in Manitoba, cheap corn imports from the US is on the rise)

- Farmers share of the retail price of pork has dropped from 1/2 to 1/3 over the last 20 years (1975 - 1995, USDA)
- Downward shift in wages over last 15 years in US slaughterhouse/processing facilities which is now occurring in Canada
- Transnational corporations have unfair advantages due to access to: subsidies, legal experts, and capital for investment and consultants for advice, which has lead to the privatization of research and agricultural services
- National treatment provision and investor state mechanisms of NAFTA may apply for other transnational food companies because of the Maple Leaf Pork subsidy

Potential economic impacts: loss of family farm and small producers, profits are not retained in the community and region, job growth but not job quality, quality of life impacts, added stresses for educational services, housing, and social services, increased costs for related infrastructure (ie, roads), potential NAFTA challenge, increased liability and risk placed on small producer.

4) Legal and Political Impacts

- Zoning and land use planning within local governments in the Province has been quite arbitrary (not mandatory) with little coordination between the municipal and provincial governments which has lead to a loss of political control and a sense of violation of democratic principles for individuals and families when factory farms are proposed for construction.
- The public is not adequately informed or provided adequate information when factory farms are proposed in their locale.
- Nuisance suits have been removed from the Farms Practices Act (Right to Farm legislation) and Class Action Suits are difficult to pursue in Manitoba, more innovative and precedent setting legal challenges may occur.
- Existing legislation in Manitoba is inadequate; the siting of factory farms are guided by the Farms Practices Guidelines for Hog Producers (non enforceable), and a permit is also required under the Livestock and Mortalities Regulation of Manitoba Conservation for the construction of a manure storage facility and a manure management plan.
- Water quality in the province is based on water quality objectives for certain parameters which when exceeded is non-enforceable.

- The siting and construction of large slaughterhouse/processing facilities such as Maple Leaf Pork, make the Manitoba Environment Act and the subsequent environmental assessment process redundant, as all major economic and legal decisions are achieved with the signing of an Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which can be considered as the property rights bestowed to the transnational corporation. MOU's do not incorporate the public into the decision making process and once signed, they are not available to the public.

Potential economic impacts: increased litigation costs, increased compensation costs for existing environmental degradation and for potential costs when standards and regulations are improved

5) Animal Welfare Impacts

- Living conditions for the majority of the 6.5 million hogs are atrocious as they are confined to small spaces (sows in crates so small that they cannot even turn around) on concrete or slatted floors with no straw or other bedding, forced to stand above pits of their own liquefied manure and breathing air heavily laden with ammonia and other toxic fumes.
- Pigs are intelligent animals when living in these intensive confinement systems they have no opportunity to engage in normal behavior of rooting, nesting, creating separate areas for eating, dunging and sleeping.
- These intensive confinement systems have been banned in Great Britain and Sweden.
- The treatment of animals is not ethically sustainable. The public is increasingly concerned about the treatment of animals, even food animals, and the living conditions for pigs in huge corporate barns will draw increasing criticism and censure.

Potential economic impacts: increased compensation costs from increased disease outbreaks, increased compensation costs from consumer awareness and boycott campaigns.