



Meeting with
The Honourable Rosann Wowchuk
Minister of Agriculture, Food & Rural Initiatives

February 25, 2008

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Executive Summary

Departmental Issues

1. Noxious Weed Issues

- Municipalities have identified the need to conduct a full review of *The Noxious Weeds Act* to update its provisions to reflect the current environment.
- For instance, Section 27(3) limits the sum collectable for weed control on private land to \$500 per year on a quarter section of land, unless the written approval of the minister is obtained, which is insufficient to cover actual costs.
- The Provincial Government must also make a greater commitment to controlling noxious weeds such as leafy spurge on Provincial ditches, rights-of-way and road allowances.
- The Province should ensure that its vehicles are adequately cleaned after working near weeds, in order to minimize the spread of noxious weeds.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to establish a coordinated approach for municipalities and Departments to control weed growth along Provincial highways, roads and ditches to minimize the spread of noxious weeds. The AMM also urges the Provincial Government to conduct a full review of *The Noxious Weeds Act*.

2. Land Use and Water Planning in Manitoba

- Municipalities have adjusted their planning efforts to comply with the new *Planning Act* and *The Water Protection Act*, yet several outstanding concerns remain.
- The discussion document *Conservation Districts – Framework for the Future* offers a clear indication that substantial financial and technical responsibilities will be downloaded to municipal governments through increased conservation district responsibilities.
- One of the main concerns for municipalities is the impact of the framework on land use planning, since municipalities must maintain local authority in land use planning decisions.
- It is essential for the departments of Water Stewardship and Intergovernmental Affairs to interact with Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives to coordinate legislation and policies that affect common interests such as land use planning and water management.
- The proposed Provincial Land Use Policy on Agriculture must be revised to reflect a greater consideration of the needs of other industries and development in Manitoba.
- As the Province reviews the Clean Environment Commission recommendations and plans for further action, it is also imperative to preserve the general principles of *The Planning Act*.

- The Province should be required to have representation from the Technical Review Committees at all municipal public hearings for which they have provided information.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to ensure greater coordination among all associated departments regarding the implementation of new land and water planning legislation.

3. Emergency Livestock Disposal Planning

- It is important to proactively identify the financial and technical resources required for timely response to livestock emergencies and the Province should continue to work with municipalities to address these concerns.
- Municipalities are anticipating the results of the site identification process and the Province should finalize these recommendations so that planning for site preparation can begin.
- In the event of an emergency, it would also be beneficial for livestock producers to have access to an incinerator.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to identify burial sites and fund an incinerator for use in the event of an emergency.

4. Prairie Grain Roads Program

- Recently, decreased rail usage has placed substantial pressure on this network through an escalating reliance on provincial highways and municipal roads.
- Since the expiration of the PGRP many municipalities are facing additional difficulties in meeting highway infrastructure needs and a continued investment should be pursued through the renewal of this valuable program.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to continue to press the Federal Government to reinstate the Prairie Grain Roads Program.

General Issues

1. Water Issues

- Water management is one of the most important issues facing Manitoba today and we believe it is important that all Ministers understand the significance of the current direction to municipalities.

- Municipalities certainly agree with the Province on the high level goals and visions laid out so far. However it is how the Province is looking to move forward in arriving at these goals that has raised concerns for municipalities.
- Conservation districts (CDs) have become the delivery mechanism of choice for water initiatives in Manitoba, however the funding for CDs has never been equal to the expectations that have been placed upon them. The *Framework for the Future* document advocates for a scenario where the Province will provide little additional funding, while increasing the expectations for CDs.
- There is real concern that the proposed changes to the funding mechanisms will seriously erode the importance of local priorities, ultimately leading to the erosion of local authority.
- By being forced to use the vast majority of the CD budget on provincially directed initiatives, there will be nothing left to deal with local priorities.
- We are also very concerned with the approach taken by the department in trying to gain feedback on the document. The questionnaire is misleading in that it does not deal with these fundamental issues, and instead focuses on support for the very general goal statements.
- We are hopeful that although the Province has moved forward unilaterally on this initiative, there is still opportunity to find a workable solution that benefits everyone.

Departmental Issues

1. Noxious Weed Issues

Concern for the spread of noxious weeds has been increasing in recent years, as demonstrated by a corresponding increase in related resolutions passed by the AMM membership. At the 2007 Convention the AMM membership passed three new resolutions related to weed control legislation and practices. There are now a total of seven active AMM resolutions pertaining to this issue, which highlights the need for enhanced weed control resources across Manitoba. Municipalities and the Provincial Government must work together to implement a coordinated weed control strategy.

Municipalities have identified the need to conduct a full review of *The Noxious Weeds Act* to update its provisions to reflect the current environment. For instance, the Act authorizes municipalities to apply the costs of weed control on private land to the tax roll. However, Section 27(3) limits the sum collectable to \$500 per year on a quarter section of land, unless the written approval of the minister is obtained. The actual costs of weed control can far exceed \$500 per quarter section, thereby leaving the municipality to absorb the additional costs. This provision must be updated along with the rest of *The Noxious Weeds Act* to promote effective weed control practices throughout Manitoba.

Furthermore, the Provincial Government must make a greater commitment to controlling noxious weeds such as leafy spurge on Provincial ditches, rights-of-way and road allowances. *The Noxious Weeds Act* clearly defines this responsibility, yet municipalities and agricultural producers are continually bearing the majority of the costs of weed control in Manitoba. Neglecting this responsibility not only contributes to the spread of noxious weeds, but increases costs to agricultural producers through reduced crop production and land values. As well, overgrown ditches increase the risk of flooding due to clogged culverts. Proper management of ditches also minimizes the development of West Nile virus breeding grounds. These risks further illustrate the significance of establishing a coordinated approach for weed control and the Provincial Government has a key role in this process.

The Noxious Weeds Act also identifies the need to clean farm machinery that is used in proximity to noxious weeds. The same risks of transporting and spreading weed seeds exist for Provincial vehicles used along roadsides. When conducting work on road allowances, rights-of-way and ditches there are the same opportunities for vehicles to attract weed seeds that are ultimately transported to other areas. This is a particular concern based on the extensive travel undertaken by many Provincial vehicles. Therefore, the Province should ensure that its vehicles are adequately cleaned after working near weeds, in order to minimize the spread of noxious weeds.

There are significant impacts associated with allowing noxious weeds to spread and the Province must work with municipalities to address this issue. Targeted weed control requires several stakeholders to work together to develop and implement an effective strategy, including municipalities and the Provincial departments of Conservation, Infrastructure and Transportation, and Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to establish a coordinated approach for municipalities and Departments to control weed growth along Provincial highways, roads and ditches to minimize the spread of noxious weeds. The AMM also urges the Provincial Government to conduct a full review of *The Noxious Weeds Act*.

2. Land Use and Water Planning in Manitoba

Since 2005, municipal planning processes have been adjusting to two key pieces of legislation: *The Water Protection Act* and *The Planning Act*. The AMM supports the basic principles of each act based on the benefits of strategic long-term land use planning and water resource management. Municipalities have adjusted their planning efforts to comply with the new legislation, yet several outstanding concerns remain. The resolution of these concerns requires a coordinated effort by the Provincial Government along with municipalities, as both orders of government have important responsibilities to fulfill.

The full ramifications of *The Water Protection Act* are still materializing. The Act itself provides little detail, particularly regarding any additional financial or other responsibilities that municipalities will be expected to bear. However as more details emerge, municipalities are increasingly concerned with the direction the Provincial Government is taking. The recent release of the discussion document *Conservation District Program – Framework for the Future* has alarmed municipalities throughout Manitoba. Prior to this document, the Province had been ambiguous regarding how the concepts and requirements of *The Water Protection Act* would be implemented. Municipalities now have a clear indication that substantial financial and technical responsibilities will be downloaded to municipal governments through increased conservation district responsibilities.

The Provincial Government must be prepared to respond to the serious issues municipalities are identifying with this framework, rather than focusing on the quantitative questionnaire results. The consultation process must recognize the fundamental concerns with the proposed framework and aim to create a new, realistic framework based on the current resources available to municipalities and conservation districts.

One of the main concerns for municipalities is the impact of the framework on land use planning. Municipalities must maintain local authority in land use planning decisions, however the framework creates major obstacles to the exercise of local authority. This is largely due to the assertion that conservation districts will become involved in land management and funding will

be tied to Provincial priorities. Local authority in land use planning cannot be minimized, therefore the *Framework for the Future* must be revised.

This discussion document also highlights the need for Provincial departments to coordinate processes to balance the needs of each department. Although land use planning and water management are primarily the responsibility of other departments, Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (MAFRI) is also a stakeholder in these processes. The agricultural sector must participate in the new structures defined by the legislation and thus will be affected by both land use plans and integrated watershed management plans. For this reason, it is essential for the departments of Water Stewardship and Intergovernmental Affairs to interact with MAFRI to coordinate legislation and policies that affect common interests such as land use planning and water management. Municipal planning must take into account legislation from each of these departments and inconsistencies in decision making are becoming a pervasive problem for development planning processes. Therefore, greater coordination among Provincial departments is necessary to support consistent planning processes across municipalities.

The need for such coordination is also apparent in the Province's current review of the Provincial Land Use Policies (PLUP). The AMM appreciated the opportunity to participate in MAFRI's consultation on the review of the Agriculture policy. However, the proposed policy must be revised to reflect a greater consideration of the needs of other industries and development in Manitoba. While agriculture is certainly a vital part of Manitoba's economy, this land use policy should not limit the development of businesses or community amenities that also contribute to the diversity needed to achieve vibrant communities. Municipalities are very supportive of the agricultural industry, however it is essential to balance the various needs of the entire community through land use planning.

The PLUP review is one aspect of the new *Planning Act* that municipalities must consider when undertaking development planning processes. Another key amendment to *The Planning Act* is the requirement for all municipalities and planning districts to adopt a livestock operation policy by January 1, 2008. The pending release of the Clean Environment Commission (CEC) report on the sustainability of the hog industry will likely impact municipal planning efforts as they

identify locations where livestock operations may be established or expanded. As the Province reviews the CEC recommendations and plans for further action, it is also imperative to preserve the general principles of *The Planning Act*. Long-term planning will be negatively affected throughout Manitoba if the Provincial rules that guide planning are in a constant state of flux. Municipalities require certainty in governing legislation in order to effectively plan for the long-term needs of their residents.

There is also room for improvement in existing practices with respect to the Technical Review Committee (TRC) and the environmental assessment process. One of the key attributes of the current process is that the Province is responsible for environmental issues while municipalities are accountable for land use decisions. For this reason, the Province should be required to have representation from the TRC at all municipal public hearings for which they have provided information. This requirement was also recommended by the Auditor General's 2007 report on the Department of Conservation's management of the Environmental Livestock Program. The department has indicated that a staff person has been hired for this purpose and the AMM looks forward to seeing this commitment fulfilled on a consistent basis. Such representation will enhance the transparency of the process while assisting the public in accepting the validity of the information in question.

The AMM is generally supportive of the Provincial Government's efforts to improve land use planning and water resource management in Manitoba, however there are gaps in the current and proposed planning tools that must be addressed.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to ensure greater coordination among all associated departments regarding the implementation of new land and water planning legislation.

3. Emergency Livestock Disposal Planning

Manitoba's economy relies greatly on the agricultural sector and when agricultural emergencies arise, municipalities also face repercussions. This connection was evident after the 2003 border closure due to Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) and municipalities learned the value of being prepared to address unforeseen events such as this. Therefore, it is important to proactively identify the financial and technical resources required for timely emergency response and the Province should continue to work with municipalities to address these concerns.

The AMM has appreciated the recent joint efforts of the Provincial and Federal Governments to work with municipalities to identify sites for emergency livestock disposal in Manitoba. The 2007 meetings in Portage la Prairie, Dauphin and Lundar were a valuable forum for municipalities to obtain information regarding site identification and associated issues. Municipalities are anticipating the results of the site identification process and the Province should finalize these recommendations so that planning for site preparation can begin.

Although allocating burial sites is an important preparation for a livestock crisis, alternative disposal measures are also required. For instance, in the event of an emergency, it would be beneficial for livestock producers to have access to an incinerator. This would minimize the amount of material to be disposed while offering additional disposal options to livestock producers. An incinerator would minimize improper disposal practices and pose fewer environmental concerns as compared to burial. Therefore, the Provincial Government should commit funding for an incinerator to be used in emergency situations.

As key participants in Manitoba's economy, livestock producers should have access to assistance in times of crisis. Municipalities are supportive of efforts to plan for emergencies in the livestock sector due to the impacts of agriculture on all Manitoba communities.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to identify burial sites and fund an incinerator for use in the event of an emergency.

4. Prairie Grain Roads Program

Manitoba's road and highway network contributes to the agricultural industry by providing a safe and efficient means of transporting agricultural commodities. Recently, decreased rail usage has placed substantial pressure on this network through an escalating reliance on provincial highways and municipal roads. Traffic on these roads will continue to increase due to transportation policies and the ongoing impacts of restructured grain handling systems. The AMM has been working to highlight the need for additional programming to address highway deterioration caused by increased grain transportation. In particular, the Prairie Grain Roads Program (PGRP) was an effective mechanism to increase investment in roads and resulted in a \$65 million investment in 837 kilometres of roads across Manitoba. Since the expiration of the PGRP many municipalities are facing additional difficulties in meeting highway infrastructure needs and a continued investment should be pursued through the renewal of this valuable program.

The AMM appreciates the Provincial Government's support of reinstating the PGRP and its efforts to illustrate Manitoba's infrastructure needs on the Federal stage. The PGRP was an effective mechanism towards meeting Manitoba's agricultural transportation needs and its renewal would be appreciated by municipalities across the Province.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to continue to press the Federal Government to reinstate the Prairie Grain Roads Program.

General Issues

1. Water Issues

Each year the AMM includes a top issue as a general agenda item for its meetings with all individual Cabinet Ministers. This year the AMM Board is taking municipal concerns with the current Provincial direction on water-related issues. The reason we are taking this issue to all Ministers is to let each Cabinet Minister know the importance of this issue to municipalities and our primary concerns. We believe this is one of the most important issues facing Manitoba today and we believe it is important that all Ministers understand the significance of the current direction to municipalities.

The AMM has always been a willing partner on water initiatives whenever asked. The AMM was one of the most vocal advocates for the creation of a single department to deal with water initiatives. The AMM has also participated on a number of provincial direction-setting initiatives, including the Manitoba Water Strategy. Municipalities know firsthand the importance of properly managing water and have always been willing to do what is needed. Clean drinking water, safely managed wastewater, and proper drainage and water management are all priorities for municipalities, just as they are for the Province.

Municipalities certainly agree with the Province on the high level goals and visions laid out so far. However it is how the Province is looking to move forward in arriving at these goals that has raised concerns for municipalities.

Throughout the last number of years municipalities have been raising concerns with how all of the new directions announced by the Province will be funded. Most recently the Province released *Framework for the Future*, a discussion document on the future of conservation districts in the province, which is most alarming. Conservation districts (CDs) have become the delivery mechanism of choice for water initiatives in Manitoba, however the funding for CDs has never been equal to the expectations that have been placed upon them. This document advocates for a scenario where the Province will provide little additional funding, while increasing the expectations for CDs.

One of the greatest strengths of CDs is that they are locally driven, with boards comprised of local residents making decisions based on local priorities. However there is real concern that the proposed changes to the funding mechanisms will seriously erode the importance of local priorities, ultimately leading to the erosion of local authority. This new proposal is to link limited provincial funding with provincial priorities, taking away a local CD's ability to use provincial funding for locally decided priorities. By being forced to use the vast majority of their budget on provincially directed initiatives, there will be nothing left to deal with local priorities. While we certainly expect there to be similarities between provincial and CD priorities, any flexibility in addressing local priorities will be lost.

These are very fundamental issues that need to be discussed and dealt with in order for the CD program to work in Manitoba. However we are very concerned with the approach taken by the department in trying to gain feedback on the document. The questionnaire is misleading in that it does not deal with these fundamental issues, and instead focuses on support for the very general goal statements. We feel the information gained from the questionnaires will only provide part of the picture, while many of the more fundamental issues are not addressed.

The AMM has a long history of working together with the Province, and over the last few years we have worked closely on numerous issues. While often we have differing opinions about what is best, we have been able to work together to find solutions to challenges and with the end result being what is best for all Manitobans. We are hopeful that although the Province has moved forward unilaterally on this initiative, there is still opportunity to find a workable solution that benefits everyone.

Appendix A – Active Resolutions

AMM Resolution 07 – 2007

Topic: Reinstating the Prairie Grain Roads Program

Sponsor: RM of Shoal Lake (Midwestern District)

Department: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation

WHEREAS rail line abandonment and elevator closures have resulted in longer grain hauls by farmers and grain companies;

AND WHEREAS more and larger trucks continue to damage older municipal roadways;

AND WHEREAS the cost to repair or rebuild these roads is beyond most municipal budgets;

AND WHEREAS the Prairie Grain Roads Program has enabled municipalities to upgrade major roads in their jurisdiction;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Government of Canada and the Province of Manitoba to reinstate the Prairie Grain Roads Program.

AMM Resolution 09 – 2007

Topic: Review of the Noxious Weeds Act of Manitoba

Sponsor: RM of Macdonald (Central District)

Department: Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives

WHEREAS the current version of *The Noxious Weeds Act* was enacted in 1987 and subsequently amended a number of times;

AND WHEREAS the current version of *The Noxious Weeds Act* makes reference to situations that are no longer applicable to the agricultural practices of today;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to have *The Noxious Weeds Act* of Manitoba reviewed and entirely updated.

AMM Resolution 10 – 2007

Topic: Costs of Controlling Noxious Weeds

Sponsor: RM of West St. Paul (Interlake District)

Department: Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives

WHEREAS *The Noxious Weeds Act* has provisions for controlling and destroying noxious weeds on lands;

AND WHEREAS municipalities find that the cost of weed control on certain lands exceed \$500.00 per lot or quarter section;

AND WHEREAS Section 27 (3) of *The Noxious Weeds Act* limits the sum collectable to \$500.00 in any one year for any parcel or quarter section without the written approval of the Minister;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to amend Section 27 (3) of *The Noxious Weeds Act* to remove the limitation on the amount that can be collected against any one parcel or quarter section in any one year.

AMM Resolution 11 – 2007

Topic: Noxious Weed Control

Sponsor: RM of Alonsa (Parklands District)

Department: Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, Manitoba Infrastructure & Transportation

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to ensure that all equipment, either owned by the Province or private contractors, being used on Manitoba highway roadsides has been cleaned to ensure that leafy spurge and other noxious weeds are not transferred among municipalities.

AMM Resolution 12 – 2007

Topic: Increase to Operating Grants for Veterinary Services

Sponsor: Town of Shoal Lake (Midwestern District), RM of Ste. Rose (Parkland District)

Department: Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives

WHEREAS Veterinary Service Districts in Manitoba may receive an operating grant of \$19,000 from the Province of Manitoba on a yearly basis;

AND WHEREAS the cost of maintaining a Veterinary District is ever increasing with municipal levies surpassing the provincial contribution;

AND WHEREAS the cost of operating veterinary clinics has increased significantly;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba for an increase in operating grants to Veterinary Service Districts in the amount equal to municipal levies.

AMM Resolution 35 – 2007

Topic: Livestock Emergency Plan

Sponsor: RM of Dufferin (Central District)

Department: Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

WHEREAS the AMM has been working together with municipalities, Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to develop a contingency plan to use in the event of a major livestock emergency;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba and Government of Canada to identify burial sites and fund an incinerator for use in the event of a livestock emergency.

AMM Resolution 29 – 2006

Topic: Education Tax Refund

Sponsor: RM of Brenda (Western District)

Department: Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs

WHEREAS the present method of remuneration of the 60% education tax refund for farmland is by means of a rebate cheque payable each year;

AND WHEREAS this method is unnecessarily cumbersome and time-consuming for ratepayers;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Provincial Government to change this system so that in the future the refund shall be made by an adjustment in the municipal tax levy.

AMM Resolution 36 - 2006

Topic: Leafy Spurge

Sponsor: RM of Pipestone (Western District)

Department: Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation, Manitoba Conservation

WHEREAS Government right-of-ways along Provincial Trunk Highways are heavily infested with leafy spurge;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Provincial Government to control leafy spurge on provincial property.

AMM Resolution 17 - 2005

Topic: Weed Control for Ditches

Sponsor: RM of Springfield, RM of Taché (Eastern District)

Department: Manitoba Conservation, Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation

WHEREAS weed growth along Provincial roads and highways has been proven to contribute to the widespread dispersal of noxious weeds, which leads to increased weed control costs for municipalities and farmers, and to reduced crop returns for the agricultural industry;

AND WHEREAS the Department of Transportation and Government Services has demonstrated in some areas in 2005 that weed growth can be properly controlled;

AND WHEREAS *The Noxious Weeds Act* of Manitoba requires the Provincial Government to control weeds on Provincial lands;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Provincial Government to recognize its responsibility to adequately control weed growth along Provincial highways and roads in order to minimize the spread of noxious weeds.

AMM Resolution 18 - 2005

Topic: Weed Control Along Rights-of-Way

Sponsor: RM of Springfield (Eastern District)

Department: Manitoba Conservation, Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation

WHEREAS weed growth along rights-of-way has been proven to contribute to the widespread dispersal of noxious weeds, which leads to increased weed control costs for municipalities and farmers, and to reduced crop returns for the agricultural industry;

AND WHEREAS *The Noxious Weeds Act* of Manitoba requires all property owners to control weeds on lands under their control;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Provincial Government to require all owners and occupants of all rights-of-way to recognize their responsibility to adequately control weeds along their rights-of-way in order to minimize the spread of noxious weeds.

AMM Resolution 08 - 2004

Topic: Dead Stock Disposal

Sponsor: City of Dauphin (Parkland District)

Department: Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs, Manitoba Conservation

WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba requested the assistance of Manitoba municipalities in the spring of 2004 relating to the disposition of dead livestock;

AND WHEREAS this assistance was requested as a result of the Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) disease in cattle and the resultant reduction in the ability of dead livestock to be rendered;

AND WHEREAS the disposal of dead livestock in licensed municipal landfill sites utilizes valuable space and presents a number of health and safety-related concerns;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Provincial Government to develop a plan to dispose of dead livestock carcasses that does not involve the use of municipal landfill sites.

AMM Resolution 46 - 2004

Topic: Priority for Drainage System Maintenance

Sponsor: RM of Woodlands (Interlake District)

Department: Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Provincial Government to have higher priority given to the annual mowing and clean out of ditches that are an integral part of the drainage system.

AMM Resolution 43 - 2002

Topic: Milk Price Controls in Rural and Northern Communities

Sponsor: Town of Churchill (Northern District)

Department: Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs

WHEREAS the sale of liquor is regulated by *The Liquor Control Act* under section 51(1) which states: "The price of each particular variety of liquor shall be the same at all liquor stores and premises of liquor vendors appointed under section 17";

AND WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba controls the price of liquor sold in stores regardless of geographical location;

AND WHEREAS the Province controls the operation and production of milk which is regulated under *The Dairy Act*;

AND WHEREAS the Province does not regulate or control the price of milk as is the case with liquor;

AND WHEREAS the price of milk in rural and northern communities is more expensive than the southern region of the province and is, at times, more expensive than an equal quantity of liquor;

AND WHEREAS the availability of fresh milk is an essential component of healthy living, especially for children, and is one cornerstone of Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating, while liquor is not;

AND WHEREAS Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating suggests that children 4-9 years consume 2-3 servings per day, children 10-16 years consume 3-4 servings per day, adults consume 2-4 servings per day and breast-feeding women consume 3-4 servings per day. The same cannot be said for liquor;

AND WHEREAS alcohol and drug abuse is the largest socioeconomic crisis in rural and northern Manitoba;

AND WHEREAS the Province has placed more effort into supplying affordable liquor to rural and northern communities than any other consumable;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the AMM lobby the Province to regulate and control the price of milk in rural and northern communities in the same way as liquor is regulated and controlled by *The Liquor Control Act*.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the AMM lobby the Province to amend *The Dairy Act* to include similar pricing controls as are found in section 51(1) of *The Liquor Control Act*, to ensure that the price of milk in rural and northern communities is the same across the province regardless of geographical location.