



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

April 6, 2009

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Executive Summary

Departmental Issues

1. Noxious Weed Issues

- The breadth of issues raised by AMM's eight weed control resolutions indicates a serious need to invest greater resources in weed control throughout Manitoba.
- In early 2008, the Province committed to undertake a review of *The Noxious Weeds Act*, yet the AMM has not been advised of any progress in this regard.
- 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 and red bartsia on Provincial ditches, rights-of-way and road allowances.
- The Province should ensure its vehicles are adequately cleaned after working near weeds in order to minimize the widespread expansion of noxious weed growth.
- The AMM is not advocating for mandatory participation in weed control districts, however the Province should explore alternative mechanisms to engage non-participating municipalities in weed control efforts.
- At the same time, the Province must provide adequate support for municipalities participating in the weed control district structure.

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 in order to minimize the spread of noxious weeds. The AMM also urges the Provincial Government to conduct a full review of *The Noxious Weeds Act* in a timely manner.

2. Land Use and Water Planning in Manitoba

- The implementation of *The Water Protection Act* and the recent review of *The Planning Act* both have major consequences for municipal planning processes.
- The primary municipal concern with *The Water Protection Act* is that it provides little detail regarding any additional financial or other responsibilities municipalities will be expected to bear.
- The need to preserve local authority was a key factor for the AMM during the review of *The Planning Act* and the new water management framework must respect these established processes.

- The need for coordination of Provincial policy and legislation is also apparent as the Province moves forward with the review of the Provincial Land Use Policies.
- Amending and updating this regulation offers an opportunity to articulate that land use and water resource planning are complementary processes.
- While agriculture is an important part of the planning process, it must be balanced with all aspects of planning. All too often agriculture stands in the way of municipal planning. Building strong and vibrant communities across Manitoba will only benefit the agriculture sector and needs to be recognized.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to promote greater coordination as new land and water planning legislation and policies are implemented.

3. Education Tax Rebate System

- The AMM was pleased that the Province implemented a reduction on farmland education property taxes in 2004 and that the amount of this rebate has increased significantly since its inception.
- While the intent of the education tax rebate on farmland is consistent with municipal goals, opportunities remain to improve the delivery mechanism.
- Municipalities and agricultural producers agree that it is far more efficient to reduce the amount of education taxes initially paid than to require full payment and issue a refund.
- Doing so would leave money in the hands of producers rather than requiring each producer to wait until their payment is returned.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to replace the rebate system for education taxes on farmland with a direct adjustment on property tax bills.

4. Emergency Livestock Burial

- Municipalities are prepared to work with the Province to prepare appropriate sites and develop the necessary emergency response mechanisms.
- However, the Province must complete the process of identifying the financial and technical resources required in order for this process to move forward.
- Although identifying burial sites is an important preparation for a livestock crisis, alternative disposal measures are also required, such as an incinerator.
- Several years ago, the Province conducted a feasibility study regarding an air curtain burner, however municipalities were not informed of the outcomes of this research.

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

5. Economic Development Report

- The AMM was pleased to participate in the Province's consultative process since municipalities play an important role in economic development.
- The AMM is very interested in hearing what the Province learned from this process and looks forward to reviewing the final report.

Therefore, the AMM requests an update on the status of the Province's economic development consultation.

General Issue

1. Alternate Revenues for Municipalities and Infrastructure Investment

- Today's municipal council must balance community economic development, land use planning and infrastructure renewal and development with an eroding tax base and an increased reliance on application-based grants.
- The message the AMM is hoping to convey is not that the provincial or federal government has completely forgotten about municipalities, but rather that despite their efforts municipalities still face enormous challenges and more is needed.
- A new approach is needed, and for this reason we are asking the Province of Manitoba to share one percent of the Provincial Sales Tax with municipalities for infrastructure. This will provide municipalities with in excess of \$200 million a year.
- In 2009, the Saskatchewan Government has allocated \$100 million for municipal infrastructure to be distributed on a per capita basis, as well as \$167 million for municipalities from the Provincial Sales Tax.
- What should not be lost is the positive impact infrastructure investment would have for the provincial and national economy.
- A study by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities found that an increase in municipal infrastructure spending of \$1 billion in 2008 (at nominal process and allocated to a representative mix of infrastructure) would increase the size of the real economy by roughly 0.13 percent or \$1.3 billion in nominal terms.
- Municipalities are not looking for new revenue sources to store money away for a rainy day. The storm has arrived.
- Providing municipalities with new revenue sources will not only begin to address the growing infrastructure deficit, but will help build and strengthen our economy.

- For municipal government to be sustainable into the future, and for Manitobans to have access to the quality of life they deserve, municipalities need to have access to sustainable growth revenues.

Therefore the AMM is asking the Province to undertake a serious review of the roles, responsibilities and resources of municipal government in Manitoba and in the short term provide municipalities with one percent of the current PST to help address the growing municipal infrastructure deficit.

Departmental Issues

1. Noxious Weed Issues

The recent increase in AMM resolutions related to weed control illustrates the growing concern for the spread of noxious weeds in Manitoba. At the 2008 Convention the AMM membership passed two new resolutions related to weed control and there are now a total of eight active AMM resolutions related to weed control. The breadth of issues raised by these resolutions indicates a serious need to invest greater resources in weed control throughout Manitoba. For this reason, municipalities are prepared to work with the Provincial Government to develop and implement a coordinated weed control strategy.

One of the most pressing issues is the need to conduct a full review of *The Noxious Weeds Act* to ensure its provisions reflect the current environment. In early 2008, the Province has committed to undertake a review of this legislation, yet the AMM has not been advised of any progress in this regard. The serious impact of noxious weeds demands that this legislation be updated and the Province must move forward with a full review of *The Noxious Weeds Act*.

Municipalities have identified several concerns with the current legislation. For instance, the Act authorizes municipalities to apply the costs of weed control on private land to the tax roll, which is a valuable mechanism for cost recovery. However, Section 27(3) currently limits the sum collectable to \$500 per year on a quarter section of land, unless the written approval of the minister is obtained. This amount is outdated and the actual cost of weed control today can far exceed \$500 per quarter section. By limiting municipalities in this manner, a significant portion of the actual costs must be absorbed by the municipality. As a result, all ratepayers ultimately bear the cost of one landowner's negligence. Therefore, the Province should strengthen the penalties for ineffective weed control and empower municipalities to conduct required works by removing the maximum amount collected against a parcel of land each year. 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 and red bartsia on Provincial ditches, rights-of-way and road allowances. *The Noxious Weeds Act* clearly defines the Provincial responsibility for such weed control, 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. 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 Provincial Government should be subject to similar expectations for weed control as municipalities and agricultural producers. For instance, *The Noxious Weeds Act* identifies the need to clean farm machinery that is used in proximity to noxious weeds in order to minimize the risks of transporting and spreading weed seeds across a considerable distance. The same risks exist for Provincial vehicles used along roadsides. When Provincial employees conduct work on road allowances, rights-of-way and ditches there are the same opportunities for their vehicles to collect weed seeds and carry them to other areas. This is especially problematic given the extensive travel undertaken by many Provincial vehicles. Therefore, the Province should ensure its vehicles are adequately cleaned after working near weeds in order to minimize the widespread expansion of noxious weed growth.

There are significant impacts associated with the spread of noxious weeds and the Province must work with municipalities to address this issue. Although there are systems in place such as weed control districts, municipalities are not required to participate in any related efforts. This creates gaps in weed control practices which can dramatically exacerbate the spread of noxious weeds. The AMM is not advocating for mandatory participation in weed control districts, however the Province should explore alternative mechanisms to engage non-participating municipalities in weed control efforts. At the same time, the Province must provide adequate support for municipalities participating in the weed control district structure. This system once offered an example for other provinces to follow, however this is no longer the case due to the recent inadequacy of Provincial support. Targeted weed control requires many stakeholders to work

together to develop and implement an effective strategy, including all 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 in order to minimize the spread of noxious weeds. The AMM also urges the Provincial Government to conduct a full review of *The Noxious Weeds Act* in a timely manner.

2. Land Use and Water Planning in Manitoba

The implementation of *The Water Protection Act* and the recent review of *The Planning Act* both have major consequences for municipal planning processes. Although the AMM supports the basic principles of each act due to the benefits of implementing strategic long-term land use planning and water resource management, concerns remain in terms of the interaction between the two acts and the extent municipalities are affected. Municipalities are still working to adjust their planning efforts to comply with the legislation, yet they continue to lack the information required to complete these processes. The Province must work with municipalities to ensure that water and land use planning move forward in a coordinated manner in order for either process to function effectively.

The primary municipal concern with *The Water Protection Act* is that it provides little detail regarding any additional financial or other responsibilities municipalities will be expected to bear. The AMM agrees that a broad framework is a necessary tool in moving forward with water management objectives, however this legislation has been in place for several years without offering municipalities a clear indication of its full impact. It is evident that this legislation will change municipal planning processes but municipalities cannot move forward until this matter is resolved.

In particular, municipalities engage in land use planning at the local level and the Province's emphasis on water resources will certainly impact these processes. Municipalities can strive to coordinate land use planning with water management objectives, but this must not jeopardize local authority in land use planning decisions. The need to preserve local authority was a key factor for the AMM during the review of *The Planning Act* and the new water management framework must respect these established processes.

The need for coordination of Provincial policy and legislation is also apparent as the Province moves forward with the review of the Provincial Land Use Policies (PLUP). Amending and updating this regulation offers an opportunity to articulate that land use and water resource planning are complementary processes. The AMM has raised this in its discussions with Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs regarding the PLUP since municipalities are prepared to

work with water management agencies to accomplish shared goals. Policies developed by Water Stewardship must also reflect this important principle to further promote coordination between the two processes.

It is also critical 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, the departments of Water Stewardship and Intergovernmental Affairs must 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, however inconsistencies in Provincial decision making are becoming a pervasive problem for development planning processes. While agriculture is an important part of the planning process, it must be balanced with all aspects of planning. All too often agriculture stands in the way of municipal planning. Building strong and vibrant communities across Manitoba will only benefit the agriculture sector and needs to be recognized.

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 promote greater coordination as new land and water planning legislation and policies are implemented.

3. Education Tax Rebate System

One of the most important issues for municipalities in recent years has been the need to reduce the reliance on property taxes to fund education. For this reason, the AMM was pleased that the Province implemented a reduction on farmland education property taxes in 2004 and that the amount of this rebate has increased significantly since its inception. Agricultural producers have certainly benefitted from the growing rebate and the Province has begun to shift the focus away from property taxes as the primary means of funding education.

While the intent of the education tax rebate on farmland is consistent with municipal goals, opportunities remain to improve the delivery mechanism. In particular, municipalities and agricultural producers agree that it is far more efficient to reduce the amount of education taxes initially paid than to require full payment and issue a refund. Sufficient information is available that would allow the property tax bill to accurately reflect the rebate amount through an adjustment that reduces the amount producers are required to pay. Such a system would inevitably save on the administrative costs of issuing personalized applications and cheques to approximately 33,000 producers.

Furthermore, agricultural producers are not immune from the impacts of the downturn in the global economy and would benefit from the elimination of such a payment. Doing so would leave money in the hands of producers rather than requiring each producer to wait until their payment is returned. The current economic situation demands a greater consideration of efficiency and eliminating the rebate system in favour of an adjustment would accomplish this goal.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to replace the rebate system for education taxes on farmland with a direct adjustment on property tax bills.

4. Emergency Livestock Burial

The agricultural sector is a critical part of Manitoba's economy, therefore agricultural emergencies can have a profound effect on the local municipal economy. This connection was clearly demonstrated during the 2003 Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) crisis that caused the lengthy border closure. This situation illustrated the importance of being prepared to address such unforeseen events. Municipalities are prepared to work with the Province to prepare appropriate sites and develop the necessary response mechanisms. However, the Province must complete the process of identifying the financial and technical resources required in order for this process to move forward.

The AMM appreciated previous joint efforts of the Provincial and Federal Governments to work with municipalities to identify sites for emergency livestock disposal in Manitoba. The series of meetings held in 2007 were a valuable forum for municipalities to obtain information regarding site identification and associated issues. However, there has been little interaction with municipalities since that time and municipalities are anxious to learn the results of the site identification process. The Province should finalize these recommendations so that site preparation planning can commence.

Although identifying 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 an incinerator to be available to livestock producers. This would minimize the amount of material requiring disposal, while offering more options to livestock producers. Compared to burial sites, an incinerator would minimize improper disposal practices and pose fewer environmental concerns. Several years ago, the Province conducted a feasibility study regarding an air curtain burner, however municipalities were not informed of the outcomes of this research. There are still municipalities interested in pursuing regional incinerators and the Province should commit funding for an incinerator to be used in emergency situations where extensive disposal is required.

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

5. Economic Development Report

In 2008, the Province conducted consultations with key stakeholders to discuss economic development issues in Manitoba. The AMM was pleased to participate in this process since municipalities play an important role in economic development. In 2003, the AMM tabled a report on this topic entitled *Creating a Vision: AMM's Report on Economic Development*. Many of these recommendations remain valid and the AMM appreciated the opportunity to discuss these and other important municipal concerns with the consultation coordinator, Clay Serby. For this reason, the AMM is very interested in hearing what the Province learned from this process and looks forward to reviewing the final report.

Therefore, the AMM requests an update on the status of the Province's economic development consultation.

General Issue

1. Alternate Revenues for Municipalities and Infrastructure

Investment

The lack of revenue is not a new problem for municipalities. In fact a strong argument can be made that from its inception municipal government has not had the resources required. You need only look back to the resolutions from the founding meeting of the Union of Manitoba Municipalities in 1905 to see municipal revenues were front and centre.

But now more than ever municipalities need new tools to deal with new responsibilities and new expectations. Municipalities are playing an ever greater role in the lives of Manitobans, as the days of simply collecting garbage and plowing roads are long gone. Today's municipal council must balance community economic development, land use planning and infrastructure renewal and development with an eroding tax base and an increased reliance on application-based grants. This has left many municipalities to question whether the current system is tenable any longer.

Currently, Manitoba municipalities are more reliant on provincial and federal grants than any other province in Canada. While in some cases these types of programs are necessary (for example large-scale infrastructure projects), it leaves municipalities having to compete against one another for limited dollars and restricts a municipality's ability to properly plan for much needed investment. The amount in grant programs like the recent Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund is nowhere near the total demand, meaning there is no guarantee much needed projects will ever see funding.

Overreliance on grants and transfers leaves municipalities without the tools required to meet demands. Many issues raised by municipalities are really issues of access to revenue when stripped down to their core. For example, the need to remove education tax from property is really a municipal revenue issue, as municipalities see education tax as eroding the property tax, which is the single greatest source of municipal revenue. Over the last number of years we have seen more and more municipalities speaking out on the need for greater municipal revenue sources.

It is important that the federal and provincial governments' contribution to municipalities are not forgotten. Federally, municipalities have benefited from a GST rebate, the sharing of the federal gas tax and the new Building Canada Fund. The recent Federal Budget has made an unprecedented investment in infrastructure, which will benefit municipalities. Provincially, municipalities have benefited from the sharing of provincial income tax, the Building Manitoba Fund, and supports in several other areas. The message the AMM is hoping to convey is not that either order of government has completely forgotten about municipalities, but rather that despite these efforts municipalities still face enormous challenges and more is needed.

Municipalities must have access to new revenue sources. A greater reliance on property taxes and provincial and federal grants has created an ever-widening chasm between municipal revenues and needs, leaving future generations with what is quickly becoming an insurmountable infrastructure deficit.

A new approach is needed, and for this reason we are asking the Province of Manitoba to share one percent of the Provincial Sales Tax with municipalities for infrastructure. This will provide municipalities with in excess of \$200 million a year. For a community of 1,000 people, this means an investment of roughly \$185,000 in their local infrastructure, or \$370,000 for a community of 2,000 people. A community such as Thompson could see close to \$2.5 million while Winnipeg would expect to see over \$117 million. Although these amounts alone will not erase the infrastructure deficit in Manitoba, it would be a positive first step.

Other provinces have recently made significant strides to address municipal infrastructure needs, notably in Saskatchewan. In their 2009 Provincial Budget, the Saskatchewan Government made an impressive commitment in establishing the new Municipal Operating Grants program through consultations with Saskatchewan's two municipal associations. The program provides \$167 million, including \$107 million to urban municipalities, \$48 million to rural municipalities, and \$12 million to northern communities. This is equivalent to 90 percent of one point of PST (from 2007-08 Public Accounts). In 2010-11 and subsequent years, the Saskatchewan Government has committed to allocating the equivalent of 100 percent of one point of PST to municipalities. This

funding is in addition to January's announcement of the Municipal Economic Enhancement Program that provides funding to Saskatchewan municipalities to strengthen the provincial economy. This program allocates \$100 million on a per capita basis to assist municipalities in making much-needed infrastructure investments. This type of commitment stands in stark contrast to the additional \$4 million Manitoba municipalities received in the 2009 Provincial Budget.

The AMM understands that providing additional revenues to municipalities may become more difficult as the economy continues to fluctuate. While economic projections can never be taken as absolute fact, they are often a prophetic divining rod on economic times. However what should not be lost is the positive impact infrastructure investment would have for the provincial and national economy.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities has investigated this principle in depth and has found in their 2008 study "Municipal Infrastructure- Macroeconomic impacts of spending and level-of government financing" that an increase in municipal infrastructure spending of \$1 billion in 2008 (at nominal process and allocated to a representative mix of infrastructure) would increase the size of the real economy by roughly 0.13 percent, or \$1.3 billion in nominal terms. While this would erode slightly over time with consistent investment, over a four year period it would still result in meaningful gains to the economy, dropping to a 0.6 percent increase in the final year.

The resulting investment would be felt in the employment sector as well, since a great number of industries would benefit. A \$1 billion investment in 2008 would add 11,500 new jobs, in industries from labour and material suppliers through to architects and engineers.

Giving municipalities access to additional revenues, will translate to stronger investment in our communities. The Institute for Research on Public Policy has shown that providing adequate infrastructure has both direct and indirect benefits for private-sector manufacturing.

Infrastructure is an intermediate input into the production process, with businesses locating where they have access to water, hydro and transportation. New roads reduce fuel costs and haul times. Access to high quality (and adequate) water reduces input costs. There is also evidence

that increased investments in public infrastructure allow private companies to use labour inputs more intensively, translating into more jobs.

Municipalities are not looking for new revenue sources to store money away for a rainy day. The storm has arrived. The national municipal infrastructure deficit is in excess of \$123 billion for current infrastructure with another \$115 billion needed for new infrastructure to keep pace with other developed nations. Left to deal with this ballooning deficit alone armed only with property taxes and grants, it will continue to grow exponentially. Alternatively, providing municipalities with new revenue sources will not only begin to address this growing deficit, but will help build and strengthen our economy.

The time has come for a new approach to municipal funding. The expectations of today's municipalities are greater than any time in history. Regrettably so are the financial challenges facing municipalities. For municipal government to be sustainable into the future, and for Manitobans to have access to the quality of life they deserve, municipalities need to have access to sustainable growth revenues.

Therefore the AMM is asking the Province to undertake a serious review of the roles, responsibilities and resources of municipal government in Manitoba and in the short term provide municipalities with one percent of the current PST to help address the growing municipal infrastructure deficit.

Appendix A – Active Resolutions

AMM Resolution 13 – 2008

Topic: Leafy Spurge Management Program

Sponsor: RM of Cornwallis (Western District)

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

WHEREAS the Rural Development Institute of Brandon University in partnership with the Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group and the Governments of Canada and Manitoba have partnered to manage and prevent the spread of leafy spurge;

AND WHEREAS the uncontrolled spread of leafy spurge is a problem of provincial and national significance;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to dedicate the financial and human resources necessary to develop and implement a meaningful and effective leafy spurge management 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 exceeds \$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 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.

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 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 08 - 2008

Topic: Control of Red Bartsia

Sponsor: RM of Armstrong, RM of St. Laurent, Town of Winnipeg Beach (Interlake District)

Department: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Government of Canada to take responsibility for the control of red bartsia.