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February 3, 2020

Transmitted by email: [trc@gov.mb.ca](mailto:trc@gov.mb.ca)

Attention: Don Malinowski  
Livestock Technical Review Co-ordination Unit  
604 - 800 Portage Avenue  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3G 0N4  
Phone: 204-945-8353

Dear Mr. Malinowski:

**Re: Gall Family Farm – Site Relocation**

### **Introduction**

The following is in response to concerns raised by the Metner family concerning the proposed cow-calf operation by Gall Family Farm Inc. The concerns were provided in three letters from: David and Marlene Metner; Ryan and Andrea Metner; and Victoria Metner. All Metner family members reside at one yard site to the north of the proposed beef operation. They will be the closest neighbours.

The concerns raised by the Metner family include: runoff, manure disposal; the presence of natural springs; mortality disposal; and noise and odour.

This document has been prepared by DGH Engineering Ltd. on behalf of the Gall Family Farm, and addresses the above technical issues raised by the Metner family. A separate personal response to the Metner family by the Gall family is attached to this document for reference.

### **Clarification of Operation Size and Nature**

The Gall Family Farm presently consists of a cow-calf operation with approximately 350 cows and backgrounder animals.

The Conditional Use application identifies a longer-term capacity 550 cows and 430 backgrounders which is approximately 60 percent larger than the existing operation. The reason for this is to permit the Galls the flexibility to expand the operation over time to remain an economically viable family farm. All family farms in Manitoba have grown in size over time to remain viable. The Gall family is proposing this size in recognition of this economic reality. The timeline to achieve this growth is indefinite at this time.

The nature and size of the proposed operation is consistent with existing farms in the area. Within a radius of two miles there are seven other cow-calf beef operations ranging in size from approximately 150 to 500 cows; or a total of approximately 2200 cows. Certainly, the size and nature of the proposed livestock operation is totally consistent with neighbouring land use.

The management of the Gall cow-calf operation will be consistent with not only the seven other operations within the immediate area, but with the approximately 4500 other cow-calf operations in Manitoba. Gall Family Farms intends to follow or exceed best management practices for cow-calf operations.

The proposed cow-calf operation can be sub-divided to the following:

- Summer pasture – the cattle graze on various pastures from June 1 to November 1. These pastures are approximately 35 miles from the yard site. Manure is naturally distributed during grazing and the cattle are not permitted access to natural watercourses.
- Seasonal feeding areas – these are areas where the cow herd is provided supplemental feed in fall, winter and spring. In the Gall operation, three fields, approximately 50 acres each, will be used for the main cow herd and will be rotated every three to five years or as required. In this way a build-up of phosphorus is avoided as the crops (alfalfa, grass, oats, barley and peas) have time to utilize the nutrients. The yard site will also contain four fenced paddocks (also seasonal feeding areas) varying in size from 5.7 to 16.5 acres. These paddocks will be used from March 1 to June 1 for calving and post calving. Because of the low animal density and short duration, it is anticipated that the manure nutrients in these paddocks will be utilized by the grass cover. Note the paddocks will be harrowed to disburse the manure and promote forage growth. The paddocks do not drain directly into any watercourse and are isolated from the springs located on NE 33-26-8W.

A small (4 acre) area that will be used for overwintering the backgrounder cattle is also a seasonal feeding area. This area will have relatively high animal density therefore the complete area will be graded to drain and store up to three inches of runoff in a settling and retention pond.

This backgrounder pen area differs significantly from a conventional feedlot in that it is not stocked with animals year-round. The backgrounder pen is expected to be stocked from October to March.

### Water Quality

Surface and groundwater protection is provided through environmental regulations, monitoring and enforcement as follows:

- Our professional agronomist, Agra-Gold Consulting has confirmed that Gall Family Farms has sufficient land base to safely recycle manure nutrients. The Provincial Technical Review has verified this;
- Manure application will be in accordance with a government approved **annual** manure management plan. All manure application will be applied at an agronomic rate and in locations that meet the requirements of the Livestock Manure & Mortalities Regulation. Manured fields are soil tested annually and the test results are reviewed by Manitoba Conservation and Climate. Because the beef herd will be on pasture during the summer months at a remote location some 35 miles away from June till the end of September manure volume from the operation will be reduced considerably.
- The seasonal feeding area for the main cow herd will be managed as discussed earlier by rotating every three to five years; and
- The cattle will not be allowed access to the natural springs on site and runoff will not be allowed to enter the springs.

**Mortalities**

All mortalities will be disposed of through composting. Straw and manure will be utilized to bury the carcasses to control odour and prevent access to the carcasses by predators. Composting is a proven technology that when properly managed provides odour free and environmentally safe disposal of livestock mortalities.

**Noise and Odour**

Given the nature of both the proposed operation and the significant number (seven) of similar operations in the immediate area, noise and odour should not be an issue. Some odour and noise is normal with every cow-calf operation. The size of the proposed cow-calf operation (550 cows) is consistent with other operations in the area. During the summer months when neighbours spend more time outdoors, there will be very few livestock at the farm yard location.

**Summary**

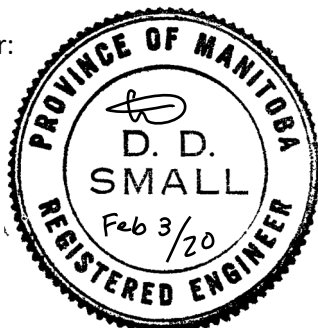
The proposed cow-calf operation will be a moderate increase in size from the present Gall operation. The proposed size (550 cows) is consistent with seven other cow-calf operations within a two-mile radius. The land use for this proposed operation is therefore completely compatible with existing land use.

The environmental aspects of this proposed operation have been reviewed by the Provincial Technical Review Committee as well as DGH Engineering. The operation will meet or exceed all Provincial requirements as well as the standards of practice of approximately 4500 other cow-calf operations in Manitoba.

Yours truly,

**DGH ENGINEERING LTD.**

Per:



MB PERMIT TO PRACTICE No. 540

Doug Small, P.Eng.

DS/kl

To the Metner family

January 13, 2020

Two days ago we received the multiple letters your family wrote to the province of Manitoba regarding us and the relocation of our farm. Never in any of our lives have we heard anyone talk about anyone in our family the way you have, and I am shocked by the viciousness and obvious resentment behind the comments. I could not sleep the entire night after reading it because we had no indication that that was the way your entire family viewed us. Some of the concerns you addressed (groundwater contamination and Watchorn Beach) are warranted, but the way you addressed them and portray us to complete strangers was extremely hurtful. My ancestors came to this area because of the clean drinking water and I would never do anything to jeopardize that.

Watchorn Beach has also been a very large concern as my children spend a lot of time there. Every meeting we have ever had about our own properties and what is going to happen to it, we have also specifically included our concerns for that park as we feel it will be greatly affected by this channel.

I have taken many courses and spent two years in university obtaining knowledge of livestock and the effects they have on the environment. I have completed two separate provincial environmental farm plans and am currently working on my third. Through these farm plans I have done many things to try and limit the impact our current farm has on the surrounding area.

Your family has never once brought any of the multiple concerns you have with us about our cattle across the road from you, and if I had known the severity of those concerns I would have addressed them. Yes, I admit the fence along the road isn't the greatest and it was in our plans before these letters to replace it with a new one. I would like to point out that replacing that half mile is going to cost over \$10000. I would also like to point out that of the times you have called me about cattle being out they were not always our animals. Our family does not keep any animals (including bulls) on our farm that would attack anyone and I had no idea that you feared walking around your yard because of them. I would also like to point out that when every time I have gone to repair the fences I have been met by your dogs growling and barking at us to the point I couldn't let my son out of the truck and no longer bring any of my children there because I don't trust them.

Another thing we would like to address is the spot we chose. I personally approached 5 other land owners in the area multiple times in an attempt to find a place to move to. The governments solution was for us to purchase an existing farmyard that would be grandfathered in terms of facilities and regulations regarding our animals and their manure. We would not have to follow government guidelines regarding our animals and would be free to do what we want. Our view is that if we are being forced to relocate, our facilities are going to be fully up to all government guidelines and regulations regarding confined livestock. When complete, our new farm will be one of the most environmentally friendly livestock facilities in the province. We have spent a lot of our own money hiring experienced engineers to design this so that all government guidelines are followed. Had we chose to leave this area, our land around you would probably been sold and turned into annual cropland that would be sprayed with chemicals multiple times a year. In my opinion chemicals can cause more harm to human health than any cow ever could.

There are many more points I would like to address but at this point I am totally exhausted. The mental and physical stress this whole thing has brought on our entire family is something that I can't even begin to try and explain to people who have never gone through it. My parents are going to see absolutely everything they have worked incredibly hard to build taken and completely wiped off the face of this earth. My wife and children have seen a side of me that I am ashamed of and hope they never see again. The last thing I'd like to point out that upon hearing of David's termination as building inspector I personally contacted three different councilors to explain how he helped us from getting into a bad situation with Visionary Homes and saved us from getting into a situation that would have cost us a lot of money and caused a lot more undue stress. I had many conversations with Dave and Marlene and valued their years of building experience as I have none. Not once were any of the concerns you presented to the province mentioned and never in the entire time of knowing your family have we ever felt the anger and resentment that has been spelled out in these letters. I think that is what really hurts the most.

Your concerns involving our manure and the other environmental concerns will be addressed and answered by qualified and highly experienced engineers. This letter was more to address the personal aspect, and if this is way you truly feel about our entire family it deeply saddens us. One of the main reasons we wanted to stay here was because of the people that live here and I have never felt there wasn't a neighbor around us I couldn't call or ask for help if needed and I thought that everyone felt the same about us. Everyone has their differences and quirks and I hope that if we are allowed to proceed with our new location we would be able to still be good neighbors. The days of 30 to 40 cow farms are sadly over and I in no way have any intention of becoming a "factory farm." I enjoy raising cattle and take pride in my animals and think this is the best place in the world to raise my family and hope to leave my children a farm that is beautiful and environmentally sustainable.

David, Mandy, William, Cole, Sara Gall