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Honourable Lana Popham
Minister of Agriculture
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Popham,

Gary and I live on a small acreage just south of Golden BC. We raise 10 or so pigs each year to sell to our local friends and families via Farm Gate Sales. The current Class "E" Regulations are limiting our ability to raise our pigs on our property and slaughter them on our property.

In discussion with David Charchuk, a meat industry specialist based out of Kamloops BC, he advised us to contact you in order to discuss and explore the possibilities of making some minor changes to the regulatory requirements regarding the Class "E" meat processing facilities in the Province. David was instrumental in the design and licensing approval process for our Class "E" Slaughter and Licensed Cut & Wrap facility, at that time he headed up the meat inspection team for the Interior Health Authority.

The Class "E" License gives a farmer the ability to slaughter their animals on their property, take their product to a cut and wrap facility of their choice and then sell the product via farm gate sales.

The steps in attaining a Class "E" License are as follows:

1st) farmers have to find out if they are in designated or nondesignated areas within BC

----designated areas within BC mean that a farmer can apply for a Class “E” License and will be approved.

----nondesignated areas within BC mean that a farmer must complete a Feasibility Study first to see if they even qualify for a Class “E” License.

This is where the issue lays.

2nd) If a farmer falls within the nondesignated area, they then have to do the Feasibility Study. The opening sentence within this study says,

“This Class E Feasibility Study has been designed to help you to assess the slaughter services that are available at provincially licensed Class A, B and C facilities in your area, and to determine whether they meet your needs. If the slaughter services that you need are already available through an existing provincially licensed facility in your area (i.e., within a 2 hour travel time from your farm/property), you are unlikely to be issued a Class E licence. If a facility is not available, you will be Considered for a Class E licence”.

This opening paragraph is enough to scare most people from even reading on.

Most of the profit in raising a few animals is the way of life; knowing that we are eating animals that are healthy, breathing fresh air, eating good food (no antibiotics or hormones), and not STRESSED before slaughter.

3rd) If a farmer falls within the 2 hour restriction (from an abattoir), then, NO CLASS “E” LICENSE.

If the farmer is outside the 2 hour restriction, then the can apply for the Class “E” License and will be considered for approval.

We the people of British Columbia are asking to change the wording in this document and exclude the 2 hour distance within an abattoir. We agree that a Class “E” License is necessary, but should not have the time restriction.

These are our supporting reasons:

1) The stress of loading, hauling, unloading, and not to mention being in a strange environment until slaughtered. What affect does this have on our meat? The

adrenalin in our meat prior to slaughter would be huge. Not to mention the cost of transportation, once to deliver the carcass to the facility and once to go pick it up.

2) Many of the abattoirs within the province are overloaded and cannot accommodate the number of animals that need to be slaughtered in their areas. If Class “E” Licenses were given to local farmers, allowing a farmer to slaughter his own animals, this would take some of the pressure off of the larger scale, licensed abattoirs.

3) The expense that incurs by having pork inspected, (by a gov’n’t inspector, at a licensed abattoir for farm gate sales is a complete waste of gov’n’t (tax payers) money as farm gate sales is much different then gov’n’t inspected meats at an abattoir.

4) Carbon Footprint: localized foods, better quality, more nutritious, higher animal survival rates. By allowing farmers to have farm gate sales we are preserving a way of life, keeping small agricultural lands productive; therefore, protected and having a healthier, vigorous enthusiastic rural community that will grow more produce and build economic development in the Agricultural Sector.

5) Because of todays impersonal high-volume meat producers and exports we need inspected product; but our society also deserves the right to raise and buy meat not subjected to the industrial short falls of nutrition and quality.

6) The small farmer would have to build a facility for easy loading and hauling, with stress of the animal the main concern. The effort of his animal husbandry to raise a highly nutritious, tasty product will not only be degraded, but may be lost altogether. In our case, G & K Persson Farms; we raise 10 pigs per year, we can only cut 2 pigs per day in our licensed cut and wrap facility. It would take us 8 trips to Invermere to deliver and then to pick up our carcasses.

The differences between farm gate and inspected meats.

Farm gate sales: a farmer raises his animal on his own property, slaughters the animal (stress free) and takes it to a legal cut and wrap, he then brings the product

home to sell from his farm. Usually this is to family and friends, and within their own regional district.

Inspected meats: these animals are raised on a farmer's property, then shipped to a Licensed Abattoir. The animals are then slaughtered (a gov'n't paid inspector inspects all animals) and are ready for cut and wrap. These meat products are now ready to sell retail (health food stores, grocery, restaurants).

There is a need for both types of facilities and Licensing programs within our province.

In closing, please find attached links for supporting documents.

<https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/why-scared-animals-taste-worse>

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/003/x6909e/x6909e04.htm>

<http://www.sapork.biz/stress-can-affect-meat-quality/>

http://animalstudiesrepository.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1019&context=acw_p_faafp (pages 324,5,6 are of most concern)

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-seafood/food-safety/meat-inspection/classfeasibilitystudy.pdf>

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/food-safety/meat-inspection-licensing/designated-areas>

<http://vancouversun.com/news/local-news/federal-documents-reveal-repeated-cases-of-pigs-dying-en-route-to-langley-slaughterhouse>

<http://vancouversun.com/news/local-news/b-c-slaughterhouse-documents-reveal-inhumane-treatment-risk-of-contamination>

We have added a brief summary of the attached supporting documents for a quick reference for yourself.

*stress through transportation, rough handling, fear, fighting and/or botched stunning reduces the amount of Glycogen in the animal which turns into Lactic Acid after the animal has bled out. Low levels of Lactic Acid in pigs “Pale Soft Exudative” (PSE) meat is usually unsellable, and the pork industry loses \$275 million/year on meat that has to be discarded. In cattle and sheep “Dark Firm Dry” (DFD) meat is tough, dry, acidic and dark, and like PSE meat, it has a shorter shelf life. Enough of the PSE meat is disguised as ground, thus reducing the losses enough that it is still not a financial benefit for the use of more humane slaughter arrangements.

Thank you very much for reviewing our letter and documentation. We are looking forward to a timely response regarding the Class “E” Licensing.

Gary and Karen Persson