

April 15, 2025

To NRCB ATT: Kelsey Peddle

We are writing to express our strong opposition to the proposed confined feeding operation (CFO) expansion by Southwood Stock Farms in the Municipal District of Taber. We believe this expansion poses significant and irreversible negative impacts on neighbouring residences, the broader MD of Taber, and the Vauxhall community as a whole. As farmers, we recognize that business models must evolve to ensure sustainability; however, this should not come at the expense of the surrounding community.

First and foremost, the expansion creates an unfair economic burden on us, surrounding residents, manure disposal, and long-term sustainability concerns. The value of surrounding farmyards, acreages, and land will decline, further disadvantaging those already affected by the feedlot. Residents have had the financial burden of paying for dust mitigation when it was unnecessary in the years prior. Several families have had to go so far as to install air conditioning because they are unable to have an open window. Since the previous expansion, the air quality, dust, and high traffic have made it necessary. The issue of manure disposal further emphasizes the imbalance caused by the expansion. No neighbouring resident benefits from the feedlot's commercial operation, as the majority of the manure is being trucked outside the 2-mile radius. Instead, businesses outside close proximity are being rewarded. Moreover, several of the listed land locations used for manure disposal are rented property, and ownership and rental agreements are subject to change. It is essential to note that there is no consent from the current landowners for the continued use of their property for manure disposal, further complicating the situation. Ownership and rental agreements are known to change quite regularly; hence, there is a concern about long-term sustainability. With no clear long-term plan from Southwood Stock Farms to mitigate the negative effects, it is uncertain who will take responsibility for the continued environmental and economic impacts.

The neighbouring residents are being forced to endure a change that directly contradicts the lifestyle we have chosen and our investments, both financially and physically. We find ourselves dealing with the negative consequences of the existing feedlot and the possibility of having to endure another expansion by this commercial operation. The tranquil environment we once knew is turning into a landscape as noisy as a metropolitan city, with the drastic increase in noise pollution from traffic and the constant operation of machinery. Not to mention the constant

flow of weaning calves bellowing at all hours. The current number of lights is also bothersome for surrounding residences. In the proposal, two holding pens are being added that are too close to the residence west, which opposes the previous expansion. This is pushing the levels of tolerance too far. There is a negative impact on our health, quality of life, and enjoyment for all of us living near the proposed expansion. There is already respiratory discomfort regarding the pungent, odorous, lingering scent from this business among all nearby residents. There has been an increase in acreage properties in the area in recent years due to corner subdivision. Many of these individuals invested considerable amounts in their properties, drawn by the natural beauty and community of the region, and are also now affected. In the past, cattle have escaped the feedlot, causing significant disruption to surrounding properties, including fields and yards. All the neighbouring properties deal with the residual consequences of the daily operations of this one business, no longer operating as 'Family Farm'. It has become a large-scale commercial operation impacting the lives of everyone. This transition from a Family farm to a corporate factory was a subtle surprise sprung on all the neighbours. The reduction of beef finishers approved in the last expansion proposal left the surrounding neighbours with the impression that Southwood Stock Farms is operating at its limit, given the current land location.

The proposed expansion puts further strain on the local environment and all the residents of the MD of Taber. Our concern regards air quality, water contamination, soil degradation, and biodiversity loss. The proposed expansion is located on top-yielding, prime irrigation land, which would put the farmland out of production. On page 21 in the application, it is stated "that a pump is installed in the basin to 2 center pivots to irrigate the water on the field. We question the present manure management in these quarters. Manure has been regularly applied and not worked in as required, soil testing needs to be verified. Limits are put in place for such operations that exceed being grandfathered due to historical reasons. Run-off is a concern, and saturation issues have occurred in these neighbouring fields at various times of the year because of the current irrigation corner systems in place. More proposed water pumped will compound the current issues and increase the smell distribution. During feedlot construction, crucial nutrient-rich topsoil should be removed and stored. If this is not done, the natural soil structure is disrupted, diminishing the land's ability to support healthy crops or vegetation in the years to come. It is questionable if this was done with the last expansion, contributing to the long-term degradation of the land. Ultimately, a commercial feedlot operation of this scale should be on unproductive, low-yielding land, its current location is not ideal. The road maintenance to adapt to this expansion shouldn't be a burden to us taxpayers. The increase in traffic is destroying our rural gravel roads and, in some instances, making them unsafe. The constant traffic day and night is a concern for all neighbouring residents. The current number of approaches to this field/yard is already above the allowable for development, further increasing traffic everywhere. Our rural roads are expected to stay safe for transporting the many children in the area to and from school, with several school bus routes operating daily. Such large volumes of traffic were not taken into

consideration when the local roads were initially built; A commercial operation of this capacity was never intended to be in the area.

In conclusion, the proposed expansion of the Southwood Stock Farms Ltd. CFO represents an unsustainable path that compromises the environment, local quality of life, and long-term community well-being. While we acknowledge the need for agricultural businesses to adapt, this expansion should not come at the expense of the surrounding residents and the natural environment. The strain on air quality, water systems, soil health, and biodiversity, combined with the unfair economic burdens placed on residents, makes it clear that the expansion poses a significant risk to the area's future. Without a clear plan for long-term sustainability, we must voice our opposition and demand that the interests of the community and the environment be prioritized over commercial growth.

Thank you for your time.

Jason Van Hal

Twyla Van Hal

(Ridge Land Acres Ltd.)

NW 32-13-15-W4, home quarter

SW 32-13-15-W4

NW 29-13-15 W4

SW 5-14-15 W4

SE 30-13-15 W4 including a residence

SE 6-14-15 W4 including a residence

NE 30-13-15 W4