



Media Release

Tree Plantings at Hog Production Sites Provide Significant Benefits to Farmers and Neighbours

For Immediate Release

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Ottawa, ON – Thanks to a project that will save energy in barns, mitigate greenhouse gas production and reduce odours in livestock operations, producers and their neighbours are also enjoying more scenery – and greenery.

The Canadian Pork Council (CPC), along with regional partners in eastern Canada, are currently delivering a program that will see more trees planted across the agricultural landscape, to the benefit of both farmers and the non-farming rural public.

Rows of trees strategically planted at or around hog barn sites are commonly referred to as *shelterbelts*, and provide farmers with an opportunity to better control odours produced at the site, at the same time reducing the amount of energy needed to keep barns warm and dry for the animals inside.

Environmental Programs Coordinator Cedric MacLeod says that the current two-year demonstration and awareness initiative, known as the *Shelterbelt Establishment for Hog Barn Odour Control and Improved Aesthetics in Eastern Canada Project*, is designed to get the word out concerning the many benefits of farmstead shelterbelts. Funded through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Greencover Canada Program, the project will also ensure that the expertise exists in the future to have shelterbelts installed properly and effectively throughout Ontario, Quebec and the Maritime provinces.

Explains MacLeod, “The project is offering a training course, open to agronomists or foresters who might be in a position to promote and design farmstead shelterbelts for hog producers. The course covers all aspects of shelterbelt plantings from the science of wind movement across a landscape, to tree species selection and planting, to long-term maintenance and care of planted trees.”

“The course also provides participants with practical hands-on experience as actual farm site plans are an integral part of both the classroom and in-field training sessions,” he continues “The result of using commercial operations for training has been the establishment of 28 shelterbelts across Eastern Canada to be used as demonstration sites for the current project and well into the future.”

This initiative is the continuation of a ‘train-the-trainer’ course developed jointly by the Fédération des producteurs de porcs du Québec (Quebec Hog Producers’ Association) and l’Institut de technologie agroalimentaire, with funding provided by the CPC through the Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Program for Canadian Agriculture.

The project is being delivered through regional partners Ontario Pork in Ontario, Fédération des producteurs de porcs du Québec in Quebec, and the Atlantic Swine Research Partnership throughout the Maritime provinces.

For years, the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration has promoted the use of shelterbelts in western Canada, and therefore, shelterbelt plantings are commonplace in the Prairies. Adds MacLeod, “We saw a need

to promote and facilitate shelterbelt plantings at livestock rearing sites in eastern Canada and sought funding to make that happen.”

CPC President Clare Schlegel asserts that the project is another excellent example of the leadership by the Canadian pork industry in demonstrating innovative ways to improve environmental awareness and sustainability in the Canadian agriculture sector.

Mr. Schlegel says, “When a hog producer comes to understand that by simply planting trees in a planned approach, the prevalence of odours is significantly reduced, farm energy costs can be cut by 25 to 30%, greenhouse gas emissions are reduced and the aesthetics of the site are drastically improved, the uptake of the practice is likely to be rapid.”

The two-year project was initiated in April 2005 and will be wrapping up activities in March 2007. Producer tours of the 28 shelterbelt demonstration sites planted in Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes will be ongoing throughout the summer of 2006.

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