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NEWS RELEASE

Subject: New rules would allow bigger barns next to houses

Guelph, July 2004. The Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario believes there is room for livestock operations to expand next to houses if farmers adopt specific management practices or modify existing livestock facilities.

"The province has written land-use planning rules that govern how close houses and barns can be located to each other," said John Kikkert, president of the CFFO. "We believe there needs to be some room to accommodate farm expansions next to houses when certain steps are taken to ensure that neighbours aren't inconvenienced."

According to Kikkert, the large number of housing severances granted in rural Ontario over the last 20 years has land-locked farms and limited their ability to expand or intensify. He notes that new technologies and management practices can open up expansion options for farmers if land-use planning rules are modified accordingly.

Kikkert's comments came after a recent meeting of the CFFO's Provincial Council, a gathering of delegates from 22 district associations across the province. Delegates to that meeting ratified a policy statement on the changes needed for land-use planning rules. Those changes include the following points:

- Existing livestock facilities could be expanded by up to 25% beyond the limits established for them by the Minimum Distance Separation formulae if they undertake specific modifications of their facilities and/or adopt specific management practices that will leave the net inconvenience created by their facilities at a comparable level;
- To be eligible for this expansion option the extra livestock capacity must be within the livestock carrying capacity of the property on which the facilities are situated;
- To be eligible for this option the MDS limits should be caused by a recent (20 years) severance or a recent non-agricultural development of a severance;
- The farm community, in consultation with OMAF and MOE, needs to develop a list of specific modifications and specific management practices that will reduce the inconvenience experienced by neighbours when livestock facilities are expanded (possible examples: covered storage, shelterbelts, raised vents, scheduled applications and feed additives);
- Committees of Adjustment need to be given the role of approving these modifications to MDS and
- The Provincial Policy Statement under the Planning Act needs to be amended to include this expansion option so that all municipal zoning bylaws will need to be consistent with this policy.

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