

Hello. Thank you for visiting our community. I am Karen Hausmann and I have been asked to speak on behalf of the farmers. I grew up on the Storsteen farm you flew over today and my husband, Jim & I farm it with my parents.

It's your job to know the history of this situation, so I will get right to our point—Farmers want their land back.

In the list of flood facts, if agricultural land is mentioned at all, it's usually like an afterthought—"every foot rise in the lake floods another 10,000 acres". There is no mention of the value of the land or the lost production. This is land people bought and have paid taxes on for 125 years and counting. There would be absolute outrage if a factory building worth \$150,000,000 was destroyed by a flood that was preventable, and yet that describes our land. All food is produced by the land and the people working that land---food essential for life and exported to feed a hungry world.

The soil in this area is highly productive and right here we raise; livestock and hay, spring wheat, winter wheat, barley, corn, soybeans, edible beans, potatoes, canola, flaxseed, durum, oil sunflowers, confectionary sunflowers and dry edible peas. How many other places can successfully produce this many crops? Based on 100,000 acres, the estimated lost value of the production is over \$22,700,000/ year. The direct and indirect impact of those losses is estimated at over \$83,652,000 /year and the resulting employment loss is estimated at 530 jobs. If there was a business that could generate 530

jobs, people would be working night and day to attract it, but instead farmers have been unacknowledged, unrepresented and ignored. There is a belief we are being compensated in some way and we aren't sure where that idea comes from. Flood insurance is for buildings and homes, not farm land. Preventative plant payments are only available after meeting specific criteria and many acres don't qualify. *The 30 year easement program eliminates a generation of producers and limits the future of our area.*

Beyond the economic losses are the human losses. We have lost our feeling of security. I carry this escape hammer in my car and am especially worried about people with kids in the backseat in car seats trying to escape from a sinking car. Whenever the wind blows, more of our inadequate road systems wash away and whenever it rains, we hold our breath wondering what will be left. The anxiety and misery levels are unimaginable. The beauty of our area has been replaced by; water lapping where it doesn't belong, dead trees, farmsteads rotting in standing water, the auctioneer yelling "sold" as machinery is sold to replace lost income, farewell to our children as they scatter for employment when their opportunities here are washed away and the deafening silence and emptiness of lost hope and dreams.

Besides all these losses, our tax dollars are being used to build dikes, build up roads, including roads acting as dikes, to higher and higher elevations, putting more water on our land, and yet farmers are expected to wait for a "natural solution" when the Tolna Coulee reaches its natural outlet level and flows through the Hudson Bay Watershed. We understand the duty to protect the

infrastructure, but it is wrong to ignore the harm being done to others in the process. How differently would the "cost/benefit analysis" pencil out if the agricultural losses had been included? *I attended 2 meetings this spring that highlight the current flawed approach. First, the Corps of Engineers are not required to quantify the damage done by their projects, but are only required to value the cost of the project and the value of what is protected. What is the point of saving a town while destroying the economy that created and sustains it? The second meeting was one of the regional transportation meetings held in April. I asked a highway engineer what amount of water is put on farmland as a result of raising roads; he responded with a vague answer of 6" or so, to which my neighbor and I stated that to us that was huge and is 5000 more acres. My table included people from Rugby, Langdon, Munich and Nelson County. While the counties without flooding are sympathetic to our plight, they are feeling shortchanged and why shouldn't they? The available funding continues to be spent here while the needs of other areas are delayed and pushed back year after year. Speaking of roads, on behalf of the townships, let me publically thank you for the additional \$10 million in road funding last year. Without that, it would have been very difficult to address the 2009 road problems. Unfortunately, some of those same roads are now flooded again in 2010 and the without additional funding, townships will be hard pressed to fund the match needed for FEMA approved projects.*

Farmers want what legally belongs to them-their land-and that would; #1, restore businesses and homes to land owners as well as the operators who rent land and #2, it would restore the roads and railroads that are essential to produce and transport our products to market for our country and exports worldwide, and #3, we would have hope for a future here again.

This flooding can be solved, but so far, the solutions are only being provided for certain areas. Maybe it is legal, but in our gut we know it is wrong. Now that you have seen the devastation and the potential for even more, how can you continue to ignore the economy of this area? Going forward, every report, request for funding and discussions and decisions about the future, must include; input from farmers and the agricultural impact; what is the value of the inundated and inaccessible land, what is the value of the lost production and its impact on the larger economy, how many farmsteads will be lost, how many miles of roads will be affected, and most importantly, how many people will feel betrayed and leave? We have given up our net worth, our ability to make a living and beyond. We have nothing more to give and we want our land back.

It has been 6 weeks since the May 3 Flood Summit. The water is higher than ever and continues to rise while the federal agencies continue to spend and study, but their "solutions" ultimately result in a federal land grab and every buyout limits the future potential for our area and our state because you always give up more than what is received. There is a difference between "spending" and "investing"----we can "spend" money for years and have nothing to show for it---or we can "invest", as the state has in the west end outlet and now the larger pumps, and obtain a return on the investment. We implore the state to protect our future by investing in additional projects that provide current and long-term benefits. I can't think of a time where anyone in our area has opposed the flood control projects in other areas of our state, and yet, people in our own state continue to oppose us and have the mistaken idea that we are to blame for the flooding caused by years of increased precipitation. There is no time for blame. What does it take for this flood to rise to the level of an emergency? Or, are we

already there? As the water rises ever higher and finds its own path, the sandy and rocky areas that farmers have observed in their fields for years, take on new meaning. It is now clear and obvious that these sandy areas are old shorelines and the scary thing is, the water is rapidly approaching that last shoreline.

We continue to hear all the reasons we can't do this or that. It is time for our state to work together and take charge of our destiny rather than let it happen by default. We need to challenge the status quo and instead ask "how can we?" so that everyone in our state has the opportunity to participate in a bright future.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to speak to you today.

Speech presented on May 3, 2010 to the federal delegation's Flood Summit.

Italics additions presented June 15, 2010 to a ND Legislative Water Over Site Committee.

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