

Meet the Smiths -

Pork producers, Craig and Kathy Smith are a good example of the 98 percent of family-owned and operated farms in Canada. Their farm, which lies within the city limits of Hamilton, has been in the Smith family for almost 200 years.

By today's standards, they have a small farm. Yet, in the past ten years they have spent over \$60,000 in environmental improvements. Six years ago, the Smiths completed an Environmental Farm Plan. To minimize the smell, they use a type of manure digester costing about \$1000 per year. And they purchased a liquid manure injector, a spreader that injects the manure directly into the soil. The result - Craig says that some of their neighbours actually thought they had gone out of the pig business because there wasn't any odour.

While there is a common perception that farming practices in the past were more environmentally friendly, Craig says this is just not so. He says that in 1967, there was no minimum amount of storage required and they only had enough manure storage capacity for three weeks. Today, farmers are required to have 240 days worth of storage and the Smiths have enough capacity to store over a year's worth of manure. This ensures that they are able to hold the manure until the weather and soil conditions are right to spread it. Farmers, like everyone else, are much more aware of the environment and potential impacts today.

Along with the technical improvements made on the farm, Craig also tries to keep on good terms with his neighbours. He says that for the past four years, he has gone door to door to warn his closest 30 neighbours in advance of when he is planning to spread manure. He tries to be predictable, weather permitting, spreading usually once a year in early September and is careful not to spread on the weekends. He also tries to help his neighbours by blowing snow out of any driveways that have not been already cleaned out.

"We are committed to the future and hope the Smiths will farm here for many generations to come," Craig concludes.