



GPM helps Maki family to keep their chickens.

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--For immediate Release--

The Green Party of Manitoba (GPM) was among many parties who successfully urged the RM and Council of Lac Du Bonnet to use their discretion and allow Alison and Jeremy Maki to keep the fourteen chickens that are living free range on their property -- contrary to municipal by-laws.

The Maki's are raising these birds as pets and egg producers. They also grow their own vegetables and harvest their own maple syrup. "We want to be self-sufficient. We want to teach our children how to live green," Alison told the Lac Du Bonnet Leader late last week.

"The simple fact that these people are choosing to raise animals and produce food in the confines of their property is simply a forward thinking example of environmental responsibility," wrote GPM Leader James Beddome in an e-mail to the Reeve and Council of the RM.

The GPM fully recognizes the need for animal welfare standards, which require maintenance of the animals' health and living environs. As long as animals are kept healthy and are not offensive to neighbours (noise, waste effluent, etc.), residents should be free to raise their own food.

Apparently the RM agreed with GPM's reasoning and allowed the Maki's to keep their flock. The RM, however, stopped short of amending the by-laws, because the roughly \$1200 in legal fees required was prohibitive.

The GPM wants to encourage rural municipalities to change animal control by-laws that forbid keeping chickens on residential land. "It is simply absurd that our municipalities are so cash strapped that they cannot afford the legal costs of amending their own by-laws.", asserted Beddome adding, "I do not blame the RM of Lac Du Bonnet who has shown a willingness to embrace a sustainable future. I blame successive Provincial and Federal governments who have systematically under-funded our municipalities. When the Greens govern, we will do better!"

Beddome, who is studying law at the University of Manitoba, has offered to help the RM *pro bono* provided a licensed lawyer can be found to supervise the project.

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