



**KEYSTONE
AGRICULTURAL
PRODUCERS**
1984 - 2024

July 2, 2024

Federal, Provincial and Territorial Conference

Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP) is Manitoba's general farm policy organization, providing a unified voice for producers on issues that affect agriculture. KAP represents and promotes the interests of all Manitoba producers and 19 commodity associations. KAP is pleased to provide comments to the Minister of Agriculture regarding his upcoming attendance at the federal, provincial, territorial (FPT) conference in Whitehorse, Yukon. Ministers of Agriculture will be discussing key issues, and KAP has provided comments below on these important topics ahead of the upcoming conference.

Grocery Code of Conduct

KAP supports the Grocery Code of Conduct that would provide improved commercial certainty for retailers and suppliers. The introduction of grocery codes elsewhere (e.g., Australia and U.K.) has created better interactions between suppliers and retailers. An effective, timely dispute resolution process will be key to ensuring effectiveness and success of the code. The announcement of Loblaw Companies Ltd. recently signing onto the code is a positive step. KAP encourages other businesses in the grocery sector to adopt the code to ensure its success.

Trade

Trade is an important component of Manitoba agriculture. In 2023, Manitoba trade comprised 44 percent of agricultural product – with the United States being our top agri-food trade partner. Trends towards restrictive trade policies (e.g., Proposition 12 and country of origin labeling regulations) have created challenges for the agriculture sector. Free trade agreements are intended to reduce barriers between trading nations, but non-tariff barriers and local state policies continue to undermine the effectiveness of these agreements. KAP recommends increased collaboration between all stakeholders, and using the Canada-United States regulatory cooperation council can be a valuable tool in discussing and addressing current trade barriers.

Animal Disease Preparedness and Prevention

Planning, coordination, and adequate resources are required to prevent and respond to an animal disease outbreak. KAP recognizes the valuable work governments have done in planning and preventing a potential outbreak (e.g., African swine fever, bovine spongiform encephalopathy, highly pathogenic avian influenza, and foot and mouth disease). This work ensures public trust is maintained in the Canadian food supply chain. Government must allocate sufficient resources, beyond the current BRM suite, that would address the effects a widespread outbreak would have on the sector. If an outbreak were to occur, financial support needs to be timely, simple and address the trade and market ramifications. This support must be in place throughout the duration of an outbreak to ensure the sustainability of the livestock sector. Continued planning and coordination, along with emphasizing the work of Animal Health Canada, are key to successfully responding to a future animal disease outbreak.

Sustainable Agriculture Programs

The rollout of additional sustainable agriculture programs has highlighted the large interest by producers in these programs. Producers are willing to invest some of their own money to adopt sustainable practices and technologies, demonstrating their commitment to environmental stewardship. This is shown through the oversubscribed BMPs offered through Sustainable Agriculture Manitoba. The recent senate report from the Agriculture & Forestry committee also highlights the increased adoption of practices to improve sustainability and soil health. When provided with adequate funding and incentives, producers are more likely to adopt innovation, sustainable farm practices that will lead to long-term benefits for the environment and agriculture sector. KAP recommends that government increase investments in these programs that benefit both producers and society.

FPT Pesticide Management Working Group

The announcement of an FPT working group on pesticide management at the last conference was welcomed news to Manitoba producers. The use of pesticides play an important role for producers to provide safe, affordable food for Canadians and global consumers. The science-based regulatory environment for pesticide use is critical for innovation, sustainability and growing consumer demand. The introduction of a working group allows for discussion of pertinent issues around pesticide management. There are several topics that should be a priority: sustainable, long-term funding for the PMRA, the effectiveness of the PMRA transformation agenda, increased registration fees for pesticides, and public trust with the current regulatory environment.

Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment on the upcoming FPT meeting in July. If you have any questions about this document, please contact KAP policy manager, Neil Van Overloop, at neil.vanoverloop@kap.ca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brenna Mahoney".

Brenna Mahoney

General Manager, Keystone Agricultural Producers Inc.