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May 13, 2021

Hon. Blaine Pedersen
Minister of Agriculture and Resource Development
minagr@leg.gov.mb.ca

Dear Minister Pedersen:

Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP) is Manitoba's general farm policy organization, providing a unified voice for farmers on issues that affect agriculture. KAP represents and promotes the interests of 4,500 farmers and 20 commodity associations.

Farmers in Manitoba operate in an environment inherent with risk. This risk can involve commodity prices, weather conditions, insects, waterfowl, crop diseases, and government policies. Farmers can mitigate some of these risks by relying on crop insurance programs offered by the Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation (MASC) that support farmers during times of production decline and improve their prospects for long-term success.

KAP members have raised concerns about crop damage caused by waterfowl and the need for increased government support. A 2017 KAP resolution highlights the 90 per cent compensation level provided by the Wildlife Damage Compensation Program for waterfowl damage. The Crop Damage Compensation Program offered by the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation offers 100 per cent compensation to farmers for waterfowl damage.

Manitoba farmers can reduce potential crop damage caused by waterfowl by installing scare cannons or growing lure crops. However, lure crops require a minimum size of 50 to 100 acres to be effective, while scare cannons are costly (\$250 to \$1000) and have a limited effective range.

In 2003-2004 MASC provided 100 per cent coverage for lost production caused by wildlife under the Wildlife Damage Compensation Program. MASC reduced coverage to 80 per cent in 2005-2006 and increased it to 90 per cent during the 2011-2012 crop year. Over the past decade, the number of waterfowl claims increased by 172 per cent. In 2011-2012, 117 waterfowl damage claims were filed that resulted in approximately \$286,000 in compensation to farmers. In 2019-2020 there were 319 waterfowl damage claims filed and \$2.06 million provided in compensation to farmers.

KAP is calling on Manitoba Agriculture and Resource Development and MASC to increase coverage for damage caused by waterfowl to 100 per cent. Waterfowl are an important part of our ecosystem and provide both ecological and societal benefits. However, the population of certain waterfowl species (e.g., Canada goose) is growing, which increases the potential for

crop damage and yield loss. We believe adequate coverage offered through the Wildlife Damage Compensation Program can be an important tool for farmers to manage risk associated with waterfowl.

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact KAP policy analyst Neil Van Overloop at neil.vanoverloop@kap.ca should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Campbell". The script is cursive and fluid.

Bill Campbell
President, Keystone Agricultural Producers

cc. Hon. Scott Fielding – Minister of Finance

cc. Jared Munro – President and CEO, Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation