



KEYSTONE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS

June 9, 2025

Federal, Provincial and Territorial Consultation

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 20 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 Winnipeg.

International Trade

Manitoba farmers rely heavily on trade. In 2024, Manitoba trade comprised 45 percent of agricultural product, with the United States as our top agri-food trade partner. Trends towards restrictive trade policies (e.g., tariffs and non-tariff trade barriers) have created challenges for the agricultural sector. And American and Chinese tariffs have added further uncertainty. The status quo no longer works. Governments across Canada must adapt to a changing geopolitical environment. How can the provincial government make improvements? (1) Consult with farmers and exports; (2) collaborate with all levels of government; (3) establish offices in key export countries; (4) develop an agricultural export growth strategy.

Interprovincial Trade Barriers

Canada is a federation, and within the federation governments have created public policies that negatively affect internal trade. Fourteen jurisdictions in Canada have their own rules that have hindered the movement of people, goods, services, and investments. Regulatory restrictions matter. Manitoba companies have commented that it is easier to trade with other countries under free trade agreements than selling or buying within Canada. Meat inspection, the National Safety Code, Canada's national highway system, and labour mobility represent internal trade concerns for farmers. Governments have made agreements (e.g., the Canada Free Trade Agreement and the Internal Trade Agreement) among one another but significant work remains. Real progress with internal trade requires strategic investments, significant collaboration, extensive research, and forward-thinking regulatory change.

Animal Disease Preparedness and Prevention

Planning, coordination, and adequate resources represent key elements for preventing and responding 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). Without this work, public trust becomes difficult. And governments 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, comprehensive and address the trade and market ramifications.

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, remain essential to successfully responding to a future animal disease outbreak.

Sustainability

Additional sustainable agricultural programs through SCAP have highlighted government's environmental focus. And the demand for these programs have highlighted strong producer interest. The oversubscribed BMPs offered through Sustainable Agriculture Manitoba exemplify this interest. When provided with adequate incentives, producers are more likely to adopt innovative, sustainable farm practices that can lead to long-term benefits for the environment and agricultural sector. But without incentives, change becomes challenging. KAP recommends that government increase investments in sustainability programs that benefit producers, society, and environment.

FPT Pesticide Management Action Plan

KAP welcomed the announcement of an FPT working group on pesticide management. Pesticides play an integral role in a farmer's operation. Not only do pesticides protect plants from diseases but also help ensure a sustainable, cost-effective method of production. But farmers have expressed concerns about recent policy changes at the PMRA—such as amending Pest Control Products Fee and Charges Regulations and implementing the continuous oversight policy and proportional effort policy. Continuous improvement matters for farmers. But farmers have concerns that these changes have not advanced the agency's core scientific work. The FPT Pesticide Management Action Plan provides a path forward for the agency. A path that benefits farmers, registrants, and consumers. But the action plan also requires initiative from governments to ensure that the recommendations provide meaningful change.

Business Risk Management

Modernizing business risk management programs have been an ongoing discussion in agriculture. Timeliness, predictability, and simplicity remain key parts for any BRM program. But not every farmer sees value in every BRM program (e.g., declining participation rates for AgriStability). Governments have an important role in providing this insurance considering the limited private offerings available to farmers. And government has an important role in ensuring programs adapt to the changing farming environment (i.e., severe weather events, trade disruptions, and animal disease outbreaks). Considering the current context, KAP recommends governments reach an agreement on two topics: increasing the Advanced Payments Program interest-free portion to \$350,000 (permanently) and gaining broad support for the proposed improvements to AgriStability.

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 blue ink, appearing to read 'Colin Hornby', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Colin Hornby

General Manager, Keystone Agricultural Producers Inc.