

June 23, 2026

The Next Policy Framework Statement

Dear Minister Kostyshyn:

Manitoba agricultural groups are writing to share feedback on the upcoming next policy framework statement. The framework development occurs at a critical junction in Canadian agriculture—e.g.: tariffs are becoming the norm; trade relations are fracturing; and reliability is being replaced with uncertainty. While farmers have always faced challenges, the current challenges in their depth and scope require forward-thinking policy that remains relevant for years to come. We describe three priority areas below that must be part of the next policy framework statement.

- (1) Competitiveness represents an all-encompassing priority. A central pillar for the framework must be competitiveness. Without competitiveness, the sector does not grow. Without competitiveness, Canadian agriculture will fall behind. Advancing competitiveness means providing strategic investments that support agriculture's growth and potential. As Manitoba farm production continues to grow, new marketplaces, improved infrastructure, updated regulations, and adequate labour remain key aspects for improving competitiveness.
- (2) Increasing volatility and unpredictability require resiliency. Government plays an important role in assisting farmers through severe shocks such as extreme weather, trade wars, and animal-disease outbreaks. Creating resiliency not only means addressing problems as they arise but also creating a structure that better adapts and manages future stresses and shocks. Being proactive rather than reactive matters. A proactive approach fosters resiliency and adaptability, supports profitability, promotes productivity, and lessens government expenditures. Risks change, and the programs and strategies that address risk must change as well.
- (3) The provincial and federal governments play a key role in advancing research and innovation. Canada's agricultural position is due in part to research and innovation. And the benefits are profound for all commodities. Despite the benefits, Canada lags the United States in R&D spending and sits behind the OECD R&D spending average. The next five years will be critical in addressing challenges such as dated research infrastructure, limited private sector investment, ageing demographics, and decreased government funding. Both increasing funding and strengthening the research and development model will ensure farmers continue to benefit.

Manitoba agriculture has enormous potential. With over 14,500 farms, the agriculture and agri-processing sector contributed \$5.19 billion to the GDP in 2024: representing seven percent of the GDP. As the population grows, increased demand for agricultural products will occur. Farmers want a framework that works, meets current and future demand, and acts as guideline for governments to follow when implementing policy. Action matters. Farmers remain committed to meet the growing demand for agricultural products and count on government to provide the necessary support when required.

We thank you for your continued support and wish you a productive meeting in Halifax. We look forward to reading the next policy framework statement and working with your department.

Sincerely,

