



KEYSTONE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS

July 7, 2026

Federal Provincial Territorial Meeting

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 all Manitoba farmers and 18 commodity associations.

We thank you for the opportunity to meet with you in May about the next FPT meeting. KAP values your department's collaborative approach in understanding farmers' needs, and we look forward to hearing the meeting's outcomes this month. Below is a summary of the main issues.

Next Policy Framework Statement

What does Canadian agriculture wish to achieve by 2032? That is the guiding question for the priority areas in the next policy framework. Unfortunately, farmers have seen how priorities and goals in previous framework have not only been reformulated for subsequent frameworks but also unrealized. Many examples exist. (1) Farmers continue to express concerns how AgriStability is untimely and unintelligible. (2) Recent AAFC research cuts do not align with the Guelph Statement about supporting primary agricultural research. (3) Interprovincial trade barriers still exist.

Themes such as growth, competitiveness, resilience, innovation, and regulatory reform should guide the NPF statement. The priorities, goals, and vision for the next framework must be achievable, measurable, and realistic. Reflection is required. Because Manitoba farmers operate in an increasingly competitive global market, the NPF needs to set a path separate from our competitors. The status quo will no longer work. A forward-thinking framework needs adequate resources along with initiative from all levels of government.

Trade

International trade matters. In 2025, Manitoba trade comprised 46 percent of agricultural product—a number that continues to rise with the United States as our top agri-food trade partner. Tariffs and non-tariff trade barriers have created challenges for the agricultural sector. E.g., market access restrictions exist for malt barley treated with tetraconazole and sub-national decisions such as California's Proposition 12 have proved problematic for pork producers. And Canadian tariffs on American steel and aluminum imports mean farm machinery and certain parts have increased in price. Governments across Canada must adapt to a changing geopolitical environment. Not only diversifying trade but also promoting how Manitoba agriculture distinguishes itself from our competition will help. Other ways the provincial government can help: (1) Consult with farmers and exporters; (2) collaborate with all levels of government; (3) establish more offices in key export countries; (4) develop an agricultural export growth strategy.

Research and Innovation

The provincial and federal governments play a key role in advancing research and innovation. Without research and innovation, agriculture does not advance. Without advancement, Canadian agriculture becomes less competitive. The benefits are profound. E.g., Canada's wheat breeding program has a 30:1 return on investment, and Manitoba hog farmers have adopted innovative methods that reduce water use creating cost savings while reducing their environmental footprint. And further potential exists through AI adoption and nitrogen-fixing cereals. Despite the benefits and potential, Canada lags the United States in R&D spending and sits behind the OECD R&D spending average. And the recent federal announcement to cut 665 positions and close seven research facilities does not improve Canada's global position in research and innovation. Cost-savings and efficiencies exist (e.g., increasing collaboration to reduce duplicate research studies), but the drawbacks from research cuts likely exceed any realized savings.

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 potential outbreaks (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

Sustainability has been a repeated theme in every single next policy framework statement. The federal government has set numerous sustainability targets involving GHG emissions, water and air quality, biodiversity, waste management, and energy efficiency. Not only governments but also companies have continued to emphasize sustainability expectations from primary producers. In the hog sector, farmers have committed to PigSAFE and PigCARE while reducing nutrient runoff and water use. The cattle sector has led with the Certified Sustainable Beef Framework that recognizes sustainable beef practice that are supported by science-based claims.

Farmers require partnership when discussing sustainability, not further regulation. Farmers have adopted sustainable practices over generations, and governments can play an important role in advancing these practices (e.g., 4R nutrient stewardship, cover cropping, shelterbelts, zero-till). The BRM programs offered through SCAP have received strong producer 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 continue to provide incentive-based programming to improve sustainability outcomes in agriculture.

Regulatory Reform

Regulatory reform has been an ongoing ask, and farmers often view regulatory burden as a high concern for their operation. Both provincial and federal governments can act on regulatory reform. Regulations do play an important role, but outdated laws, duplicated requirements, and inefficient processes have little place in a sector that operates in an extremely competitive global market. A shortage of regulatory recommendations does not exist. Take grain for example. The Canada Grain Act was introduced in 1912, and the last revision occurred in 1985—much has changed since this time. Or consider livestock inspections required at the border. Livestock movement at the US-Canada border require vet inspections at the origin, border, and destination. Both countries should accept each other's inspection system to reduce duplication. Reducing duplication matters given the already limited CFIA vets at Canadian border crossings. Finally, interprovincial trade barriers still exist—e.g.: across Canada, retailers must follow provincial rules regarding the sale, storage, use, transportation, and disposal of registered pesticides. But rules differ between provinces resulting in additional time and costs. Real progress with internal trade requires strategic investments, significant collaboration, extensive research, and forward-thinking regulatory change.

Labour

A chronic agricultural labour shortage exists. Each year, thousands of agricultural jobs go unfilled resulting in millions in lost sales. These shortages affect the whole value chain—from the farms, to the factories, to the ports. Programs such as the temporary foreign worker program and the Manitoba provincial nominee program play an important role in Manitoba agriculture. But recent federal immigration changes have caused concerns. The pork sector relies heavily on the provincial nominee program and a decrease in allocations of nominations presents additional hiring challenges. Not only do labour shortages equate to lost earnings but also have wide-ranging impacts. Having an adequate labour supply means producers can effectively implement disease mitigation and biosecurity strategies that prevent disease outbreaks. Having an adequate labour supply means producers can harvest when required thereby reducing food waste. An adequate labour supply benefits everyone—producers, consumers, and government. Addressing the labour shortage will improve efficiencies, and the Government of Manitoba should advocate for increased agricultural immigration.

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 more improvements to AgriStability. E.g., permanently increasing the compensation rate to 90 percent and introducing a \$6 million payment cap.

Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment on the upcoming FPT meeting. 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 loop at the bottom.

Colin Hornby

General Manager, Keystone Agricultural Producers Inc.