August 6, 2026

Standard Construction Specifications – Seeding

Dear Deputy Minister Andrushuk:

Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP) and the Manitoba Beekeepers' Association are writing to provide recommendations for improving your department's seed decision-making process.[1] KAP is Manitoba's general farm policy organization, providing a unified voice for farmers on issues that affect agriculture. The Manitoba Beekeepers' Association provides the voice for beekeepers working toward a sustainable and profitable honey bee industry through education, research and lobbying.

The standard construction specifications play an important role in Manitoba's construction activities. Roadwork often occurs near farmland, and the grass species used on side slopes, ditches, and rights-of-way matter to farmers. And choosing the correct plant species has many benefits. (1) Not only do native plant species provide erosion control through their deep-root structure, but they also absorb excess dissolved nutrients. (2) And the correct plant species reduce weed pressure and requires less maintenance for municipalities.

The department's specifications for seeding document lists "bagged seed" as being supplied to construction sites. We are pleased to see that the department's tendering practices often specify the grass or forage species required for a project. But pollinator-friendly species may not be included. Adding these species would improve ditch maintenance, reduce soil erosion, and increase water retention, and promote continuous flowering throughout the growing season while providing added benefits to cash crops such as canola, sunflowers, buckwheat, and strawberries that benefit from pollinator-friendly species throughout Manitoba.

In the appendix, we have updated a chart made by the Manitoba Water Services Board, and we have provided changes in italics. KAP and the MBA recommend that the department incorporate the updated chart in your department's seed decision-making process. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Colin Hornby
General Manager, Keystone Agricultural Producers Inc.

Ian Steppler
Chairperson, Manitoba Beekeepers' Association

[1] https://www.gov.mb.ca/mti/contracts/pdf/manual/540.pdf

Appendix

Native Seed Mix by Zone	Dry Areas (Select 4-5)	Wet Areas (Select 1)	Nitrogen-Fixer and Polinators *(Select 2)*
Tall Grass/Interlake Prairie Zone	Canada Wild Rye	Marsh Reed Grass	Purple Prairie Clover
	June Grass	Northern Reed Grass	White Prairie Clover
	Big Bluestem	Slough Grass	Canada Milkvetch
	Little Bluestem	Tufted Hair Grass	*Yarrow*
	Awned Wheatgrass	Prairie Cord Grass	*Wild Bergamot*
	Indian Grass	*Fowl Blue Grass*	*Canada Goldenrod*
Mixed Grass Prairie Zone	Blue Gramma	Marsh Reed Grass	Purple Prairie Clover
	Canada Wild Rye	Northern Reed Grass	White Prairie Clover
	June Grass	Slough Grass	Canada Milkvetch
	Big Bluestem	Prairie Cord Grass	*Yarrow*
	Little Bluestem	*Nuttall's Alkali Grass*	*Wild Bergamot*
	Awned Wheatgrass	*Fringed Brome*	*Canada Goldenrod*
	Slender Wheatgrass		
Fescue Prairie Zone	Big Bluestem	Marsh Reed Grass	Purple Prairie Clover
	Little Bluestem	Northern Reed Grass	White Prairie Clover
	Awned Wheatgrass	Slough Grass	Canada Milkvetch
	Canada Wild Rye		*American Vetch*
	June Grass		*Wild Bergamot*
	Rocky Mountain Fescue		*Canada Goldenrod*
	Northern Wheatgrass		
Boreal Zone	Hair Grass	Tufted Hair Grass	Canada Milkvetch
	June Grass	Fowl Bluegrass	*Western Canada Violet*
	Nodding Brome	Slough Grass	*Canada Goldenrod*
	Rocky Mountain Fescue	*Fringed Brome*	
	Canada Wild Rye		
	Hairy Wild Rye		
	Northern Wheatgrass		
	White-grained Mountain Rice Grass		
	Slender Wheatgrass		