



NEWS RELEASE

“The Voice of Manitoba Farmers”

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Ag Ministers: Give Farm Groups a Call

Winnipeg – Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP) is encouraged by a statement from the federal, provincial and territorial Ministers of Agriculture regarding the need to continue to work with the agriculture industry on issues, particularly now as the country weathers the current economic situation.

KAP would like to see adequate consultation between producer groups and the federal and provincial governments on key issues discussed at the Ministers’ meeting in Ottawa this week. As food safety and traceability are critical issues for farmers, we would like to see engagement from both levels of government before final policy is developed.

“We want to see something that works for the provincial and federal governments as well as producers,” said Ian Wishart, KAP President. “The timeline for the food safety action plan is tight, and the governments must ensure that we have a system that works for the entire country as opposed to a province by province basis.”

KAP is encouraged that the Ministers are close to completing the new agriculture policy framework *Growing Forward*, and to hear they are moving forward to have bilaterals in place by April 1, 2009.

“Farmers want *Growing Forward* to be put in place, but we want assurance that the programs will be flexible and responsive to our needs as they will have a significant impact on our industry’s future,” said Wishart.

KAP is encouraged that the Ministers recognize the need to continue to work on market access issues, and also applauds the establishment of the Market Access Secretariat. KAP is now looking to the Ministers to focus on developing a strategy for the livestock sector to set a vision and determine a path forward. KAP has a resolution that directly relates to this issue which will be brought forward at the Canadian Federation of Agriculture’s annual meeting at the end of February.

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