



COMMENTARY

"The Voice of Manitoba Farmers"
203-1700 Ellice Ave. Winnipeg MB. R3H 0B1
tel: 204.697.1140 fax: 204.697.1109
kap@kap.mb.ca www.kap.mb.ca

For immediate release

March 21, 2011

KAP on the National Scene

By Doug Chorney, KAP President - Cell: 785-3626

The Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA) takes action on a broad range of issues that affect farms across Canada in all sectors. KAP is working hard to bring Manitoba farm issues to the forefront through CFA.

CFA is a respected voice for agriculture and it represents over 200,000 farmers and farm families from across the country through its membership, which includes every general provincial farm organization and many national commodity groups. Farm organizations fund CFA and that means every farmer has a stake in its policy and success. As a member, KAP is able to work on behalf of Manitoba farmers to focus on our interests on a national level, and build consensus with farmers from across the country.

Last month, KAP officials returned from the Canadian Federation of Agriculture's annual meeting in Ottawa with positive results for Manitoba producers. The resolutions KAP brought forward were passed and are now CFA policy. They cover issues such as business risk management programming, plant breeding research, Canadian Grain Commission services, weather service programming, and support for groups purchasing short line railways.

All of KAP's resolutions come from our delegates, as well as the resolutions from every other organization. This ensures that CFA works on policy developed by farmers themselves. KAP is encouraged that our ideas were well received, and we look forward to working with CFA's other provincial and commodity farm organizations on these producer issues.

The CFA meeting also offered KAP an opportunity to speak with senior Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada officials to advance concerns that members have had with the Growing Forward program, specifically AgriStability and AgriInvest. We also discussed the need for changes to AgriRecovery to ensure that governments do not apply deductibles on payments, such as the five per cent deductible Manitoba farmers experienced under the 2010 Canada-Manitoba Excess Moisture Assistance Program. Another issue KAP raised with officials was the fact that forage seed acres should be eligible under AgriRecovery in the future.

Manitoba producers have expressed concerns about deadlines for applications for Growing Forward programs, and KAP also raised this issue with officials. Manitoba had the earliest deadlines for applications in 2010 and we would like to see the same time

periods that Saskatchewan and Alberta enjoyed in order to set a standard and maintain fairness for all applicants.

KAP spoke with a top government official about AgriInvest deadlines and made the point that the deadlines imposed on producers are not always easy to manage. We would like to see more recognition of the fact that deadlines are sometimes missed, and farmers should still have the opportunity to apply for this program.

KAP brought forward two Manitoba issues during a question and answer period following an address from Federal Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz at the CFA meeting. We stressed that we need to have guidelines in place that address weather disasters which will trigger AgriRecovery payments on predetermined criteria. This will ensure that governments can plan and react in a timely manner and allow producers to receive expedited payments.

KAP also brought the issue of Ecological Goods and Services (EG&S) to the Minister's attention and we highlighted the gap in Growing Forward programming. KAP wants to see an Alternative Land Use Services type of approach to managing environmental stewardship. When it is deemed necessary to restore wetlands, farmers need compensation. Ecological Goods and Services programming would support farmers and help alleviate flooding problems. The entire province would reap the environmental benefits, including urban residents in Winnipeg who are affected by flooding each spring. Minister Ritz acknowledged our ideas regarding EG&S and he said he is interested in looking for new opportunities for farmers. KAP believes EG&S offer a real opportunity for farmers to be recognized for the work we do, and that we can not let this opportunity pass us by.

Attending the CFA annual meeting also allowed KAP to discuss critical producer issues with farm leaders from across the country. Canadian farmers share many common issues in addition to environmental sustainability and safety nets, and farm organizations and commodity groups must continue to work together to find new solutions to the challenges we're facing.

When KAP brings Manitoba farm issues to CFA, we are gaining attention and awareness in the national agriculture debate—and ensuring our voice is heard.

Keystone Agricultural Producers is Manitoba's largest general farm policy organization, representing over 7,000 farm families and 22 commodity groups throughout the province. Our strength is our democratic structure, and our mission is to represent and promote the interests of the province's farm families.