

# The KAP Alert

August 1, 2008

## Farmers Need Input Into Rail Review

*Media Commentary by VP Robert McLean*

After years of being held captive to poor rail services at exorbitant prices, farmers added their voice to the many industries across Canada that were calling for a Level of Service Review. This was finally put in motion by the federal government, and now producers, the grain industry, and other shippers are waiting for the release of the review's Terms of Reference. This document will tell us exactly what will be studied and what recommendations could be made to improve service in the future.

It's important to remember that all of the inefficiencies in the rail transportation system trickle back down to the farm gate, so farmers are left to bear much of the cost. KAP recently held a panel discussion on transportation issues during a meeting for our elected delegates, and it is clear that rail issues are top-of-mind for many farmers.

This is why KAP believes that farmers must have direct input into the Level of Service Review. KAP is concerned that farmers and farm organizations -- even though they pay the bill -- may miss the opportunity to voice their opinions since they are not directly considered "shippers." While other players in the grain in-

dustry certainly have many service issues that must be addressed, there must also be a clear mechanism for farmers to forward their recommendations into this process.

In its initial recommendations for what should be included in the Review, KAP noted that farmers must have this avenue for comments. To date, we've not received a response from [Transport Canada](#). Recently, we also sent a letter to Ministers Lawrence Cannon and Gerry Ritz and Manitoba MPs James Bezan and Merv Tweed, encouraging them to take a stand on behalf of farmers, and ensure our voice is heard.

The terms of reference are expected to be released soon. What is and isn't contained in this document will have a significant impact on what we as farmers can expect from rail companies in the future. KAP will continue to take every opportunity to speak up on behalf of Manitoba's farmers on important issues like rail transportation, and will be looking for the federal minister of transportation to ensure farmers and farm organizations have the ability to have their voices heard. It will certainly make things easier if the Review allows for direct producer input.

## Activity Report

This week, President Ian Wishart, VP Robert McLean, VP Rob Brunel & GM Yvonne Rideout represented KAP at the [Canadian Federation of Agriculture's](#) semi-annual meeting in Moncton, New Brunswick.

CFA's committees had the opportunity to meet & discuss important issues relating to business risk management, the environment, trade & food safety. KAP is an active participant in these committees, and Wishart co-chairs CFA's Environment & Science Committee.

KAP brought a number of resolutions forward, that were originally approved as KAP policy at General Council. Look for updates on these issues in upcoming editions of the newsletter.

KAP also co-ordinated a western farm leaders meeting during this event. Representatives from Manitoba, [Saskatchewan](#), [Alberta](#) & [British Columbia](#) had an opportunity to discuss common issues and to develop a plan of how to best work together in the future.

## Collapse of WTO Talks Unfortunate

*CFA News Release*

The collapse of trade talks in Geneva this past week is reflective of the complex challenges negotiators face in securing a deal that meets the expectations of a diverse WTO membership.

"The Canadian Federation of Agriculture regrets that there wasn't a successful round reflecting Canada's position, which would have been a win for all of Canadian agriculture," said Bob Friesen, President of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA).

"It is unfortunate that negotiators representing developed and developing countries could not resolve discrepancies related to market access and cuts to domestic support," he added.

The CFA commends the Canadian government's active involvement during these past weeks of intense negotiation, and was pleased with its commitment to pursue a balanced trade position. Canadian farm leaders urge trade negotiators to continue working with the WTO in future.

"Considering Mr. Lamy's intent to resume negotiations after the dust settles, we urge the Canadian government to vigorously continue with efforts to achieve a fair and effective agreement that respects both the domestic and export interests of Canadian farmers," said Friesen.

## Increased Slaughter Capacity Good for MB

*KAP News Release*

An increase in local slaughter capacity is critical for Manitoba's beef industry, and Keystone Agricultural Producers is pleased to learn that new capacity is slated to come on stream in 2008. [Natural Prairie Beef Inc.](#) announced its plans to purchase and upgrade a facility in Winnipeg with financial support from the [Manitoba Cattle Enhancement Council](#) this week.

"Local facilities mean that we can add value to our beef here in Manitoba, and it's important for

the long-term sustainability of the sector," says KAP President Ian Wishart. "This expansion will create new jobs in Manitoba, and is proof of agriculture's positive contributions to our economy."

The facility, once operational, will accept conventionally and "naturally" raised beef, and will target niche markets. Specialized, local slaughter facilities are part of the solution to protecting Manitoba's farm families from border closures, which can economically cripple an agricultural

## Water Supply Program Deadline

Producers, producer groups and organizations are being reminded to get their applications in for the [Canada-Manitoba Water Supply Expansion Program](#) (CMWSEP) 2008-2009 program year. Three types of projects are considered for assistance:

**Tier One** – On-farm Water Supply Projects such as wells, off-stream and water storage systems and pasture pipelines;

**Tier Two** – Multi-user Water Infrastructure such as tank loaders and regional water pipelines;

**Tier Three** – Strategic Initiatives and Studies such as regional groundwater studies, ground-

water exploration or testing, regional water management planning and water supply planning.

The application deadline for Tier One projects is **August 15, 2008**. Through this program, eligible applicants can apply for assistance - technical and financial - for projects which develop, enhance and/or protect agricultural water supplies and initiatives in Manitoba.

Applications and more information can be obtained at your nearest AAFC-PFRA office, by contacting 1-800-667-8567, or by visiting [www.agr.gc.ca/water](http://www.agr.gc.ca/water).