

The KAP Alert

August 29, 2008

WCB Coverage Coming to Farms

August 29, 2008 News Release

This week, the provincial government announced that Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) coverage will be mandatory for farms and many other agriculturally-based businesses. Keystone Agricultural Producers' position has always been that WCB coverage should remain voluntary, due to the unique and diverse conditions facing farmers.

"During WCB consultations this year, we advised the government that agriculture should remain voluntary," says KAP President Ian Wishart. "However, mandatory coverage may turn out to have a mix of positives and negatives for farmers and KAP is already planning out how to work with WCB to make sure the new requirements work for farmers."

When the expansion of coverage was announced, government noted that family mem-

bers working on the farm would still be excluded. KAP will be working with WCB to define who is considered a family member, and how this exclusion might work in situations where family members are also employees of their farm corporation.

"WCB coverage will help to protect farm employees, and also minimize liability and risk for the farm employer, so that's the positive side of what will come from this," says Wishart. "On the negative side, there will be some increased costs and paperwork that will cut into the farm's resources."

KAP will also be encouraging WCB to partner on aggressive farm safety campaigns to build a stronger culture of safety in agriculture.

Forage Program Provides Needed Help

August 26, 2008 News Release

Despite this year having what many people are calling "the crop of a lifetime," a number of farmers across the province are watching their crops wither or float away because of drought or flooding. Grain and livestock farmers are affected, as many producers rely on good crops to feed their animals over the coming year.

KAP is pleased that the provincial government has acted quickly to announce a forage assistance program. It will help farmers who have no choice but to move their feed much greater distances or to move their livestock to a different pasture.

"When we see forage crop failures in areas that have livestock, there is an immediate concern that needs to be dealt with quickly," says KAP President Ian Wishart. "It's an animal health issue, it increases the financial strain on farmers, and plans need to be made quickly to ensure an adequate feed supply."

KAP is encouraging all farmers who need forage assistance to contact their local government office to get more information about the Manitoba Forage Assistance Program. Farmers across the province who are enjoying bountiful crops could also consider dropping their straw instead of chopping it, as this may also be in short supply.

KAP will continue to monitor the situation in areas experiencing flooding or drought conditions, and will make recommendations to government on any additional support that may be required.

All About Member Benefits

KAP is pleased to offer a comprehensive member benefits program with special pricing on a wide range of products. For more information, visit our web site, or call us toll-free at 1-866-527-0123.

KAP Focuses on the Farmers' Share

This week, KAP hosted a media event to showcase the results of its Farmers' Share research. KAP found that an average of only 27% of the cost of an entire week's worth of groceries for a family of four goes back to the farm gate. Depending on the food group, that percentage ranged from 4% for grain products like bagels and rice to 35% for dairy products like yogurt and cheese.

Manitobans have access to some of the most affordable food in the world, but only a relatively small portion goes back to the farmers that grow and raise it," says KAP President Ian Wishart. "We're hoping this information helps people to understand where their money is going, and to help them think critically when media is saturated with stories that put the blame on rising food costs straight back to the farm gate."

Wishart noted that the vast majority of the farmers' share is simply the cost of doing business: Farmers' expenses and inputs account for about

86% of their revenue, according to figures from Statistics Canada. This means that only about 4 cents from every dollar spent on food in the grocery store actually stays on the farm, to be re-invested into the business.

KAP received excellent media pick-up on this event, with stories published in the Winnipeg Free Press, and many other media outlets. Using the data supplied by KAP, the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan also hosted a successful event focusing on The Farmers' Share. The groceries purchased as a visual aide for both events were later donated to local food banks.

To see all of the documents from KAP's event, including more specific details of the farmers' share on a selection of food products, go to our web site and follow the link on the main page.

KAP News & Events

Tuesday, August 26: KAP hosted the Farmers' Share event in Winnipeg.

Wednesday, August 27: President Ian Wishart met with Ducks Unlimited to discuss ecological goods & services and carbon trading. He later participated in a workshop on food security, hosted by MPs Judy Wasylycia-Leis and Alex Atamanenko. President Wishart and Yvonne Rideout met with Labour & Immigration Minister Nancy Allan to learn about the province's plan to extend mandatory WCB coverage to agriculture. VP Robert McLean participated in a national conference call to discuss transportation issues.

Member Benefits Corner

With harvest in full swing, everyone is wondering what is happening and will be happening with commodity prices. In the next two issues of the KAP Alert, we'll have ProFarmer's Mike Jubinville provide his insight in to where the markets are going in his weekly market report. Click here to view this week's edition.

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kapbenefits@stratabenefits.ca or call Mike directly at (204) 654-4290.

KAP members receive the weekly product at the group rate of only \$120/year and 10% off his more specialized daily product, where members receive information 2 or more times per day.

Remember to Harvest Safety!

KAP is reminding Manitoba's farm families to focus on harvest safety during this busy season. While the rush of harvest puts a number of pressures on farmers, we need to take the time and care to protect our most important resources – the people who live and work on the farm.

KAP asks all farmers to think about whether the decisions they make are the safest choice. Fatigue is a major contributing factor to injury, so farmers can take an important safety precaution by ensuring that they, their families, and other farm workers are well-rested and take adequate breaks.

KAP asks motorists to be aware of slow-moving vehicles, and to take the time and space needed to pass safely.