



## COMMENTARY

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### “The Voice of Manitoba Farmers”

1-1313 Border St. ~ Winnipeg MB ~ R3H 0X4

ph: (204) 697-1140 ~ fax: (204) 697-1109

[kap@kap.mb.ca](mailto:kap@kap.mb.ca) ~ [www.kap.mb.ca](http://www.kap.mb.ca)

## Canadian Farmers Working Together

By David Rolfe, KAP President. Cell: (204) 483-0502

**There is strength in numbers.** As the number of farmers declines across Canada, it's becoming even more important that we understand this fact because our voice can become muffled or distorted unless we speak up and speak together.

Keystone Agricultural Producers fills this role for Manitoba's farmers, but there are many issues and concerns that affect more than just our province. Take safety nets, environmental issues, or international trade as examples. Government policy in all of these areas will have a major impact on how all farmers will be able to operate. Imagine what would happen if each farmer or region from across Canada told government individually what they wanted. Farming is so varied across the country that government would be given 50 solutions to a problem, with very few that would work for one area without hurting another.

Giving conflicted solutions to government is the surest way to ensure that nothing is done at all. Fortunately, there is a forum where farmers and farm organizations from across Canada come together to discuss the problems and develop workable solutions through consensus that address the needs of farmers. KAP continues to work to find common solutions through the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, which is based in Ottawa.

The CFA is a respected voice for agriculture and it represents over 200,000 farmers from across the country through its membership, which includes every general provincial farm organization and many national commodity groups. And, because it's funded by farm organizations, every farmer has a stake in its policy and its success. As a member, KAP is able to push for Manitoba's interests on a national level and build consensus with farmers from across the country. At the same time, we're able to draw on the experience and expertise of all Canadian farm leaders and bring that back home to work better for you. We've been very successful in gaining support for made-in-Manitoba ideas like the Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) environmental program.

To do this, KAP brings resolutions to CFA meetings to gain support from other provinces for our position. All of our resolutions come from our delegates, as do the resolutions from every other organization, so everything that CFA works on has been developed by farmers themselves. As anyone who has been to a KAP meeting knows, the resolutions cover a wide variety of topics and discussion can often be quite animated.

The CFA spends hundreds of hours lobbying elected officials and government staff in Ottawa, which is much more time and cost effective for KAP. Much of their recent work has been focused on developing a Canadian Farm Bill to recommend to government what farmers need to build a sustainable industry for the future. For more information about the CFA and its Canadian Farm Bill, visit [www.cfa-fca.ca](http://www.cfa-fca.ca).