



## COMMENTARY

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### “The Voice of Manitoba Farmers”

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## **Feds: Farm Input Prices Need Attention**

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*This is the fourth in a series of four columns on agricultural election issues put forward by Ian Wishart, President of Keystone Agricultural Producers.*

It appears Canadian consumers are finally getting some relief at the pumps as gasoline prices have started to slide closer to the dollar per litre mark, and the cost of diesel has also headed downward. This is good news for us all, but the changes come too late farmers who paid inflated fuel prices to run machinery this season.

Harvest is wrapping up and farmers are already looking ahead to next year and assessing their production needs such as fuel and fertilizer. With increased costs taking a toll on their bottom lines, they have quite a challenge ahead.

Farmers have watched the prices for fuel and fertilizer double over the past few years, and they need a commitment from the next federal government to monitor these prices and take action as necessary to ensure that the input marketplace remains competitive. In short, farmers' livelihoods must not be held at the mercy of input suppliers' bottom lines.

A government investigation of farm input prices would ensure there is competition in the marketplace. This could be accomplished through changes to the Competition Bureau to allow it to investigate the pricing of inputs. It's critical that the government works in conjunction with farmers to establish this as a short-term goal in order to sustain a financially viable environment for all agricultural producers.

Increasing costs at the farm gate mean it will only become more difficult for farmers to afford to grow food, and reducing the financial squeeze on farm families needs to be a priority for the government elected on Oct. 14.

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.