



## COMMENTARY

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### “The Voice of Manitoba Farmers”

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## **Protecting Manitoba’s Farm Families of the Future**

January 18, 2008

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*In December, KAP submitted its pre-budget document to Manitoba’s Finance Minister. This is the third of four commentaries that focus on portions of the paper and areas that are important to Manitoba’s farm families. The complete pre-budget submission is posted at [www.kap.mb.ca/policy\\_briefs.htm](http://www.kap.mb.ca/policy_briefs.htm)*

Agriculture’s future depends on the young farmers of today. Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP) has an ongoing commitment to these producers, with a young farmers committee established to identify and act on the issues that are important to them so that the organization can take action. This committee also serves as an information and leadership network.

The provincial budget is also a time to look forward, and KAP sees a number of opportunities where government can help these young farmers establish a strong foundation in agriculture.

In the past, the province has committed resources and expertise to the young farmers committee, which has helped to deliver programs and events. We encourage government to continue developing educational opportunities with the specific needs of young producers in mind.

But the future of agriculture relies on more than just information. It’s critical that governments consider the needs of young farmers and their new farming operations when developing programs and policies. Young farmers need access to dollars at reduced interest rates to help offset the high initial costs of startup. We also encourage the government to continue to develop of programs and taxation policies that allow for the easy transition of farming operations to the next generation.

Young farmers are also much more likely to be raising a family on the farm. It is critical that the provincial government continue its leadership and support on programs that will help to protect farm children. In recent years, Manitoba farm families have had access to a Play Safe grant provided by the province to assist with the development of safe play areas on the farm. KAP appreciates that government understands the unique circumstances on farm and has implemented such a program for the benefit of farm

families and the safety of our children. We encourage government to continue with this program, and also to consider increasing the amount of funding available to each project while directly targeting young farmers and their families in their communications activities relating to the program.

For agriculture to continue to grow in Manitoba, it's critical that the provincial government invest in the future of young farmers. There is a unique opportunity in the next budget to set a foundation for young farmers and their families.