



COMMENTARY

“The Voice of Manitoba Farmers”

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Canadian Farmers Working Together

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A unified voice speaks louder. 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. 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.

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 Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS).

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. At the end of July, KAP will have its delegates in Moncton, New Brunswick for the CFA’s semi-annual meeting. We have resolutions dealing with food safety and security and the need for better weather forecasting and warning systems prepared that will be up for debate and discussion by farmers from across the country.

The CFA spends hundreds of hours lobbying elected officials and government staff in Ottawa which means that KAP has this connection federally, but still allows us to keep our focus on provincial issues. Much of the CFA’s recent work has been focused on developing a regional component for the *Growing Forward* programs (called AgriFlex), transportation, renewable energy, food labeling, and ongoing WTO negotiations. For more information about the CFA visit www.cfa-fca.ca.