



**For immediate release**  
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## **Prairie Farmers Focus on Environment, Inputs**

**Winnipeg** – The three major farm organizations representing farmers in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta emerged from a forum today with a renewed focus on the issues facing Prairie agriculture. Their discussions were framed around the current crisis facing cattle and hog farmers across the Prairies, and what is happening in the way of support and solutions in each province.

Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP), the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS), and Wild Rose Agricultural Producers (WRAP) identified three major priorities, and developed an action plan to move these issues forward in the coming year.

### **Recognize farmers for their environmental stewardship.**

The farm groups believe that farmers must be recognized for the environmental services they provide to society, like clean water, habitat, and biodiversity. Farmers also have a unique opportunity to create carbon offsets for the country, if the appropriate tools and resources are in place. KAP, APAS, and WRAP support the Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) model of creating a market for environmental services that are nurtured on the farm landscape, and will be lobbying governments to move forward with this kind of program in the *Growing Forward* policy framework.

There is no question that cattle and hog producers across the Prairies are in an extremely dire financial situation. The groups identified ALUS as a critical opportunity to create a new stream of revenue for these Prairie farms, and will be conveying the urgency of this policy direction to Minister Gerry Ritz.

### **Tackle rising input costs.**

Building on previous work, the three Prairie organizations will be working together to monitor the input costs that producers must pay, and highlight price disparities between provinces. The goal of this initiative is to increase awareness

about the impact that input costs have, and to provide grain and livestock producers with additional information to help inform their purchasing decisions.

**Address proposed changes to the Canada Grains Act.**

Bill C-39 proposes fundamental changes to the grain system in Western Canada, and the three Prairie organizations believe that more time is needed for producers to investigate what the impact will be, and what options are available. APAS, KAP, and WRAP will be investigating options to the current bonding services that are under the power of the Canadian Grain Commission. Bonding currently protects a producer's grain delivery to an elevator and ensures that he or she will be paid. This is an absolutely critical protection – particularly when grain prices are high – and there must be no gaps until an effective replacement is put in place. There are also a wider range of issues at play in C-39, and the groups will work together to provide input to government and develop sound recommendations.

The leaders of WRAP, APAS, and KAP also discussed grain transportation issues, research, and building agricultural awareness. The organizations remain committed to working together to speak for Prairie farmers with a strong voice.

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