



## MEDIA RELEASE

September 29, 2008

### **Political Parties Favour Face-to-Face With Farmers**

Part one of a five part series

Winnipeg – Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP), Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS), and Wild Rose Agricultural Producers (WRAP) sent a five-part election questionnaire to the Conservative, Green, Liberal, and NDP party leaders earlier this month. The farm organizations, representing producers in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, were looking at priority areas for agriculture prior to the upcoming election. The four parties were asked to clearly outline their plans regarding five areas critical to rural voters: the environment, farm input prices, transportation, producer payment security, and working with farm organizations.

Starting this week, and continuing throughout the election campaign, APAS, KAP, and WRAP will be sharing the responses received from each party to the five specific questions presented. This will provide Prairie voters the opportunity to examine the party platforms before casting their ballots in the election on October 14.

All three organizations were pleased to see the prompt and positive responses received from three leaders and their recognition of the importance of agriculture to our national economy and unique Canadian identity. This week, the parties outline their platforms for cooperation with farm organizations. *(Party responses are presented below in the order they were received.)*

Canada needs a government that supports agriculture, and also implements the policies that reflect that support. KAP, APAS, and WRAP want to see a move towards a long term plan that ensures producers' sustainability—both financially and environmentally. In this election, agriculture must be a priority and all parties are encouraged to clearly communicate their goals to farmers and the rest of the industry.

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**Backgrounder:** 2008 Federal Election Questionnaire



## 2008 Election Questionnaire Responses to Question One.

The Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS), Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP) of Manitoba and Alberta's Wild Rose Agricultural Producers (WRAP) sent an election questionnaire to the Conservative, Green, Liberal, and NDP party leaders earlier this month. The four parties were asked to clearly outline their plans regarding five critical areas: the environment, farm input prices, transportation, grain payment security, and working with farm organizations.

This week, the parties outline their platforms for cooperation with provincial and national farm organizations. (*Party responses are presented in the order they were received.*)

### Liberal Party of Canada

***"How does your party plan to work with general farm organizations in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and across Canada to ensure that agriculture is heard?"***

"The Liberal Party has always advocated a strong relationship with farmers and farm organizations. The best way to understand how issues affect our farmers is to have an ongoing dialogue. That is why our Leader, Stéphane Dion, announced the Opportunities in Agriculture Task Force.

The Task Force's goal was to find specific and practical measures to address both the challenges and opportunities facing Canadian farmers. The task force heard from more than two dozen national farm organizations as well as numerous local groups and dozens more of individual farmers and resulted in *Canadian Farmers: Targeted Actions for Results Report* which can be found at: [http://www.liberal.ca/pdf/docs/080306\\_ag\\_tf\\_report\\_en.pdf](http://www.liberal.ca/pdf/docs/080306_ag_tf_report_en.pdf).

With a specific focus on the crisis facing the livestock industry, the Task Force was part of an ongoing dialogue that the Liberal Party has held with Canadian producers. The included consultations this summer during which Mr. Dion listened to Canadians rural families about The Green Shift plan. As a result of this open process, the plan was updated to include \$400 million in Emissions Reduction Credits, a \$250 million Green Farms Fund and a \$250 million Green Fisheries and Transportation Fund."

### Green Party of Canada

***"How does your party plan to work with general farm organizations in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and across Canada to ensure that agriculture is heard?"***

"Few regions of the country have been more important in the development of grass roots politics than the Prairie provinces. The Green Party of Canada is founded on the principle of participatory democracy, and would be proud to have the opportunity to



work alongside all of the relevant stakeholders to come up with common solutions to Canada's vital agricultural needs. It is critical that before we look outside our borders, we put the needs of our own farmers first. We are committed to developing policies that meet the needs of Canada's farmers and would welcome their input."

### NDP

***"How does your party plan to work with general farm organizations in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, an across Canada to ensure that agriculture is heard?"***

"New Democrats believe in listening to and consulting with ordinary Canadians and their organizations as part of the policy development process. New Democrats also pride themselves for bringing the concerns of ordinary Canadians to Parliament. For example, in the last Parliament NDP MPs Charlie Angus and Alex Atamanenko both worked hard to ensure that Canadians are aware that the majority of farm families support the Canadian Wheat Board after the Harper Conservatives placed an unconstitutional gag order on the Canadian Wheat Board."

### PC Party

***"How does your party plan to work with general farm organizations in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, an across Canada to ensure that agriculture is heard?"***

*APAS, KAP, and WRAP sent identical questionnaires to all parties requesting a response by Friday, September 19, and that deadline was extended to Friday, September 26. To date we have not received a response from the party.*