



MEDIA RELEASE

October 2, 2008

Political parties propose unique solutions to rising input prices Part two 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 back in September. 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.

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 the leaders and their recognition of the importance of agriculture to our national economy and unique Canadian identity. This week, the parties outline programs and services to monitor and manage input prices. (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 response to Q2



2008 Election Questionnaire Responses to Question Two

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 in September. 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 in response to our question about rising farm input prices. (Party responses are presented in the order they were received.)

Fertilizer prices and the cost of other farm inputs continue to rise at an extremely fast pace. On behalf of our members, APAS, KAP, and WRAP have repeatedly called for a full investigation into chemical, fertilizer, and other input prices.

What program or services will your government offer producers to monitor and manage input prices? If elected, what initiatives would you provide to agricultural producers to assist in properly managing this and other market risks?

Liberal Party of Canada

"Both rising input costs and the lengthy regulatory process make it difficult for you to access chemicals and fertilizers. The Liberal Party is committed to streamlining the regulatory process to ensure that affordable chemicals and fertilizers are approved in a more efficient manner, leveling the playing field with competitors who do not face those regulatory hurdles.

As well, the Liberal Party has always been committed to improving our risk management programs. The Conservative Party dismantled the advisory committees put in place by the former Liberal Government to improve these programs, preferring to impose their ideology rather than consult with farmers on how to make programs work better."

Green Party of Canada

"Over the last five decades, federal policies, subsidies and changing technologies have shifted food production away from small ecologically-sustainable family farms to giant agribusinesses. This shift has given multinational corporations



control over our food supply. Meanwhile, farmers increasingly rely on off-farm income to survive.

We believe that we must restructure our agricultural markets to sustain farming and provide farm families with a fair share of the consumer food dollar. We want to expand local small-scale agriculture and support a rapid transition to organic agriculture rather than subsidizing costly agro-chemicals, industrial food production and genetically modified crops.

The Green Party would ensure that supply management systems provide stable domestic markets, viable farm income and permit unregulated production by smaller and family farms that sell to local markets.”

NDP

“New Democrats are concerned about the impact high oil and natural gas prices are having on working families. As natural gas is one of the key components in chemical fertilizer its price has a direct impact upon farm families. As available supplies of easily accessible fossil fuels decrease in the upward pressure on the cost of products from these nonrenewable energy sources will increase.

New Democrats believe the best way to deal with these rising costs is to move toward a more sustainable system of agricultural production which moves away from relying on inputs based upon non-renewable resources. This will help reduce the input costs that farm families pay to large multinational corporations.

Later in this election Jack Layton and the New Democrats will be bringing forward a comprehensive plan to help farm families’ deal with the economic crunch they find themselves in.”

Conservative Party

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.