



MEDIA ADVISORY

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Prairie Farmers Want Election Answers

Winnipeg – The three major farm organizations representing producers in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta are looking to the leaders of the federal political parties with candidates in the Prairie provinces to clearly communicate priority areas for agriculture prior to the upcoming election.

The Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan, Keystone Agricultural Producers (Manitoba), and Wild Rose Agricultural Producers (Alberta), have sent an election questionnaire to the party leaders, asking for a response by September 19. The groups will share the information collected with producers in the Prairie provinces. This will allow voters the opportunity to examine the party platforms before casting their ballots in the election on October 14.

Producers are looking for federal leadership on a number of key issues. The leaders were asked to outline their plans regarding five critical areas: the environment, farm input prices, transportation, grain payment security, and working with farm organizations.

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. Canada needs a government that supports agriculture, and also implements the policies that reflect that support. APAS, KAP, and WRAP want to see a move towards a long term plan that ensures producers' sustainability—both financially and environmentally.

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Backgrounder: 2008 Federal Election Questionnaire



2008 Federal Election Questionnaire

1. Working with Farmers

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

2. Farm Input Prices

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?

3. Transportation

Revenue cap reductions in the rail sector have been delayed, and farmers have been given no relief from overpaying for rail service. Recently-announced service reviews may take years, further compounding producers' frustration with the system while railways are receiving unprecedented returns on their investment.

Is your party satisfied that the revenue cap has successfully served both the railways and the farm community? If elected, would your government commit to a mandatory, periodic review of freight rates and subsequently adjust the cap?

4. Producer Payment Security

Bill C-39 was introduced into the last parliamentary session, and would have eliminated financial protection for farmers under the Canadian Grain Commission bonding requirements for grain buyers. It is extremely important that producers have a mechanism in place for their financial protection and security when delivering grains.

If elected, what legislative or regulatory measures will your party take to ensure producers are protected in the marketplace?

5. Environment

The health of our environment is consistently listed as a top priority by Canadians. Farmers can deliver environmental services, but only if the right programs and incentives are put in place by government.

Farmers want a national Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) program to help them become better landscape managers. Will your government implement a national ALUS program as an environmental priority?