

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY Pre-FPT ENGAGEMENT SESSION

Project Overview

The objective of the Minister's engagement was to inform Manitoba's Minister of Agriculture, in preparation for the annual Federal, Provincial, Territorial (FPT) agriculture ministers' meeting July 20 to 22, 2022 in Saskatoon. Information gathered from participants helped the Minister represent the sectors' needs and concerns at the FPT level.

Engagement Overview

Thirty-four organizations attended the engagement, resulting in a total of 48 industry participants. The list of industry attendees is found in Appendix A.

Department executive shared presentation overviews of the Next Policy Framework (NPF) negotiations and priorities, Business Risk Management (BRM) programs and Manitoba's Protein Advantage Strategy.

Organizations were advised in advance that the Minister wanted to hear from them to ensure the key principles and priorities of the NPF are reflective of the opportunities and challenges faced here at home. Each participant was provided with three minutes to present their organizations' views to the Minister and all those in attendance.

What We Heard

Indigenous Engagement and Participation

The Minister of Agriculture for the Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF), Minister Beaudin, acknowledged the letter from Minister Johnson to engage and hear from Red River Metis citizens. MMF looks forward to working with Manitoba Agriculture to engage elders and members for their feedback and perspective. A report will be provided from MMF to the department once engagement has been completed. Minister Beaudin looks forward to a collaborative approach to co-develop programs.

The First Peoples Economic Growth Fund (FPEGF) supports building resiliency and improving food security for First Nations and believe this can be achieved through programming focussed on inclusivity and enhancing supply chains. Partnerships between government such as the MMF, and organizations like the FPEGF will support continuing economic growth in Manitoba.

Industry and academia are seeking opportunities to enhance participation and build partnerships with Indigenous Peoples. They recognize the importance of building relationships with Indigenous communities and organizations to support the co-development of programs and tools to support equal access to economic opportunities. These relationships will also support industry and academia to better understand how to align training and workforce needs.

Industry recognizes the value of increased participation by underrepresented groups, both for generating innovative ideas, products and business models and for addressing workforce challenges. They believe that increased diversity in the sector can be achieved by greater awareness of opportunities in the sector and by increasing public trust.

Climate Change & Environment

Farmers see themselves as climate change solution providers, who have been active participants in climate change mitigation and adaptation for generations. As those closest to the issue, farmers want to work with government to support climate change solutions.

Primary agriculture and the food processing sectors both agree that sustainability and economic growth are not mutually exclusive and that government programs should be incentive-based and founded on science. Organizations support long term funding for climate change adaptation and mitigation to ensure competitiveness and viability of the industry.

Industry and academia would like to see more investment in data and data infrastructure to establish benchmarking standards, and to set targets for GHG emission reduction goals. Funding must be available to share and support technological innovations that help to meet sustainability goals.

Water monitoring and watershed management remain a priority for Manitoba producer associations, especially for pesticide detection and extension.

Science, Research & Innovation

Industry and academia requested a consistent call for September intakes of research proposals to allow funding to roll out by April 2023, when the new framework begins. They also support more research dollars, and for research dollars to extend beyond five years. This type of multi-year funding supports budgeting decisions for organizations, and allows for early adopters and influencers to convince others to adopt new findings and for funding to still be available for adoption. Organizations are concerned that more NPF dollars will be used to incentivize environmental targets at the expense of science, research and innovation. It was suggested that collaboration be encouraged by including it in the application process.

Market Development & Trade

Farmers worry governments may limit access to inputs such as fertilizers in an effort to achieve environmental targets, which would negatively impact growth of the sector.

Small and medium sized agri-food enterprises have large growth potential, but need targeted programming to expand and evolve to the next stages of business. Their needs are unique, and require different cost share models, program streams and training. Increased investments in value-added industries would allow Manitoba to diversify its export opportunities, rather than relying on marketing raw product alone.

Participants reaffirmed that the focus on local food systems was appreciated. Industry is focussed on accessing domestic and international markets and building new relationships to ensure a diverse platform for selling product.

Building Sector Capacity, Growth & Competitiveness

Industry recognizes the value of increased participation of underrepresented groups for generating innovative ideas, products and business models, and addressing workforce challenges. Industry believes that building awareness of opportunities in the sector and increasing public trust will support increased diversity.

Participants expressed concerns over workforce shortages - in some industries as high as 20-25% of their workforce needs. This lack of available labour will hinder expansion of the industry. Academia hopes to provide support to industry by building relationships with industry organizations to better align training needs to deliver the skilled workforce and innovators that are needed.

Resiliency & Public Trust

Collaboration is essential to building public trust. Public trust messaging requires a joint effort across governments and producer groups.

The livestock sector worries about disease threats. Their organizations emphasized the need for collaborative and proactive approaches with government to manage disease pressures such as African Swine Fever and Avian Influenza. They would like to see government support to ensure emergency resources are available to industry, before biosecurity threats occur.

Rural communities continue to be concerned about the inconsistent availability of broadband internet in some regions. Participants support greater investments from the province to ensure more rural residents are able to access stable, quality internet.

New Areas of Emphasis & Target Setting

Supply chain resiliency, food security, mental health supports and the need for greater inclusion and diversity in the sector were frequently mentioned by participants. These priorities align with new areas of emphasis under the NPF, including enhanced inclusion of underrepresented groups (Indigenous peoples, women, youth), the circular economy, COVID-19 lessons including supply chain resiliency, local food systems and food security, planning for disruption and resiliency and mental health supports.

The NPF includes economic, environmental and social targets aimed to achieve a balance between the needs of today without compromising the needs of future generations. Participants were clear that environmental targets cannot come at the cost of financial sustainability, and they support the need for improved diversity and inclusion.

Business Risk Management

Farmers and commodity organizations do not support linking BRM programs to environmental targets. They stressed that incentives are more effective than penalties in getting producers to reduce GHG emissions. Several organizations emphasized that BRM programming must be equitable, simple and predictable. There was some support by organizations for an 80% compensation rate for AgriStability and 90% coverage for AgriInsurance.

Small Farms/Small Industry Groups

Small producers and industry groups offer a unique economic growth opportunity for the province, and support supply chain resiliency and food security in rural and northern communities. Because small producers are more able to connect directly with consumers, small producers offer a gateway to building public trust for the sector at large. Small producers are interested in working with government to develop specific, scalable programming in support of peer to peer mentorship, administrative capacity building, workforce development and management, innovation and technology adoption and equipment trials. Participants representing smaller producers, organizations and farmers markets support an alternative funding model to encourage participation in NPF programming; a revised cost share model has been suggested.

Next Steps

Manitoba Agriculture is committed to continued engagement throughout the development and implementation of the NPF. The June 29, 2022 engagement session was a continuation of dialogue that provides a foundation for future discussions. The Department is currently shaping program design and parameters for the NPF and looks forward to continuing to work with stakeholders throughout the process. This participation will inform program and policy development.

Active Offer Statement

This information is available in an alternate format on request. Please contact agrpolicy@gov.mb.ca

Questions?

Industry Participants are welcome to send questions to agrpolicy@gov.mb.ca

Appendix A: List of Industry Participants

Organization	Contact Name
Assiniboine Community College	Tim Hore
Association of Manitoba Community Pastures	Barry Ross Rachel Whidden
Canadian Federation of Independent Business	Kathleen Cook Gunter Joachim
Dairy Farmers of Manitoba	David Wiens
Direct Farm Manitoba	Kristie Beynon
Egg Farmers of Manitoba	Cory Rybuck Catherine Kroeker-Klassen
First Peoples Economic Growth Fund	Fabian Sanderson
Food and Beverage Manitoba	Sarah Schwendeman
Keystone Agricultural Producers	Bill Campbell Neil Van Overlopp Colin Hornby
Keystone Potato Producers	Dan Sawatsky
Manitoba Association of Watersheds	Lynda Nicol Garry Wasylowski
Manitoba Beef and Forage Initiative	Mary Jane Orr Tracy Gilson
Manitoba Beef Producers	Carson Callum Mike Duguid
Manitoba Bison Association	Robert Johnson
Manitoba Canola Growers Association	Delany Ross-Burtnack
Manitoba Chicken Producers	Jake Wiebe
Manitoba Crop Alliance	Robert Misko Darcelle Graham
Manitoba Forage and Grassland Association	Duncan Morrison Lawrence Knockaert
Manitoba Industry-Academia Partnership (MAIP)	Myrna Grahm
Manitoba Metis Federation	Minister David Beaudin/Dustin Hoft
Manitoba Pork Council	Cam Dahl
Manitoba Pulse and Soybean Growers Association	Daryl Domitruk
Manitoba Sheep Association	Morgan Moore Simon Atkinson
Manitoba Turkey Producers	Larry Kleinsasser
Manitoba Women in Agriculture & Food	Laura Lazo
Peak of the Market	Tracy Shinnars-Carnelley
Prairie Oat Growers Association	Jenneth Johanson
Red River College Polytechnic	Jamie Wilson/Mavis McCrae
University of Manitoba – Agriculture and Food Sciences	Dr. Nazim Cicek
University of Winnipeg	Chris Bidinosti
Winnipeg Food Council	Jeanette Sivilay

Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation	Jared Munro/David Van Deynze
Agriculture & Agri- Food Canada	Bob Nowalsky
MARIC	Betty Green