

## MANITOBA AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL INITIATIVES

### POLICY GAPS TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE NEXT GENERATION OF AGRICULTURAL POLICY

#### (NON BUSINESS RISK MANAGEMENT)

#### GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Under the overarching principle that farming must be profitable:

- The Next Generation of Agricultural Policy should state a **clear common vision or goal**, with ongoing **evaluation** of the programs' progress towards the vision and program adaptation during the length of the agreement.
- Programs should not be created in silos but rather should complement each other and be more comprehensive, involving multiple chapters. The Next Generation Policy should expand to **horizontal policy management** between federal government departments, as many provincial governments' agriculture departments include rural, fisheries and or agro-woodlot programming that is not currently under the mandate of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC). This would allow access to funding from other portfolios besides AAFC, such as natural resources or health.
- Manitoba is supportive of **equal commodity** approach, in that there should not be disincentives for one commodity group to the advantage of another.
- The agreement should apply to **both livestock and crop** production, include **animal and plant health** programs, and continue to support **supply management**.
- The Next Generation Policy should include the **Aboriginal** community and **women's** groups in consultations and program design.

*The following are not numbered in priority order, but solely for ease of reference.*

#### 1. RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

- Without infrastructure, rural communities cannot take advantage of **opportunities** in alternative energy, tourism, processing, natural resource development and other areas.
- **Road and rail** transportation and access to **shipping** ports continue to be provincial priorities, as they have definite linkages to trade and value-added opportunities. Rural communities lose opportunities to process or

develop raw materials into finished products if they cannot bring in materials necessary for production or deliver the goods.

- Other priority infrastructure needs in rural communities include **high speed internet**, an integrated **water management plan**, and **waste water and sewage treatment facilities**.

## 2. RURAL DEVELOPMENT

- Farmers need **healthy rural communities** to provide them with goods, services, labour, and social interaction. Manitoba advocates that the broader rural economy be the focus of future policy planning.
- Programs that focus on **human resource and business development**, continuation and retention, including expansion of **entrepreneurship** and **commercialization** knowledge individually and in communities, are sought so that individuals and communities can create **value-added** opportunities. These programs should be funded with additional dollars.
- A good **business environment** with streamlined federal/provincial/municipal regulations is the foundation for business development, continuation and retention.

## 3. GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD

- The Next Generation of Policy should increase the level of government **investment** in all “public goods”, including **food safety and traceability** programs, **basic and applied research and development**, and the identification and promotion of agricultural or agri-food products and practices that enhance **public health** and/or the **environment**.
- The linkages between the food consumers eat and their **health and wellness** are becoming more evident. Agri-food products, such as nutraceuticals, functional foods and pharmaceuticals, are increasingly been seen as a potential solution to spiralling health care costs, by helping to keep the aging baby boomer population healthy and by reducing disease incidence in the younger generations.
- There needs to be programming for **animal and plant health** emergencies (e.g. production insurance for animal agriculture). The existing APF Food Safety & Quality pillar does not address sanitary / phytosanitary issues unrelated to food, such as disease outbreaks that don't affect humans but damage the industry.
- There should be a national program similar to the **Ecological Goods and Services** pilot project in the RM of Blanshard (ALUS), which rewards producers for the preservation and enhancement of public goods. Other new incentives to maintain and enhance natural capital should also be national programs, based on measurable environmental benefits.

#### **4. A NATIONAL BIOFUELS POLICY**

- Biofuels is a priority area for development and refinement in Manitoba. There needs to be a national biofuels policy, with special emphasis on **biodiesel**. While some incentives exist in this area in Manitoba, there are none federally to promote the growth of Manitoba's biodiesel industry.

#### **5. VALUE-ADDED PRODUCTION AND VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT**

- Value-added programming and value chain development that provides financial benefits back to the farm or producer are a priority. There should be more support for value-added/value chain development, especially for small enterprises.

#### **6. LOCAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND MARKETS**

- The Next Generation of Policy should include programming that promotes the quality of Manitoba and Canadian products provincially, nationally, and internationally.
- The policy should also promote local production and consumption of agricultural products, including their health benefits.
- Development of International/national trade and elimination of trade barriers requires greater attention.