
2006/2007 Highlights

- The department augmented its efforts to assist Manitoba producers increase farm profitability with a number of important new initiatives that included:
 - continued efforts with the federal government in making business risk management programming more responsive to producers;
 - reduction of school taxes on farm land by 60 per cent;
 - development of a new Agri-Weather Program that will provide data from 26 stations around the province to assist farmers make crop production decisions;
 - implementation of a program that provides young farmers with a premium subsidy on production insurance if they file a crop plan;
 - creation of \$2.4 million assistance package for producers who experienced flooding along the Assiniboine River;
 - work with the Southern Chiefs Council to form the Indian Agriculture Council of Manitoba.
- MAFRI enabled farmers make to make their views known through a department-run plebiscite in the debate prompted by the federal government's plan to eliminate the Wheat Board's single-desk selling of barley.
- A "Buy Manitoban" campaign was created to enhance key departmental priorities of supporting primary production and increasing value-added food processing.
- A successful trade mission to Japan marketed Manitoba's nutraceutical and functional foods capacity to the Japanese food-processing industry, and the newly formed Manitoba Agri-food Research Network will enhance departmental efforts to help this sector grow.
- MAFRI's Urban GO team was launched to provide a more visible connection between Manitoba's agri-food industry and urban consumers, and to foster relationships in the food-processing industry.
- Departmental commitment to rural development and economic growth included:
 - a new plan for rural economic development that focuses on opportunities in bio-energy, tourism, agriculture, natural resources, co-operative development, industry services and manufacturing, as well as new opportunities for aboriginal and northern communities;
 - strengthening of GO teams around the province.
 - funding support for the Junior Achievement Young Entrepreneur Program in rural and northern Manitoba, the Rural Development Institute at Brandon University, the Brandon Keystone Centre, and rural community improvement projects.
 - enhancement of the Rural Entrepreneur Assistance program.
 - work with communities to attract immigrants by providing settlement services and business opportunities.
- The department continued its highly successful delivery of workshops in environmental farm planning to producers, and introduced a green loan program for farmers to follow through on their environmental plans.
- Another new environmental initiative, increased staff and resources for the soil survey program, will ultimately result in detailed maps of the kinds of soils found across the province and their ability to support agricultural operations.
- A pilot project called Alternate Land Use Services, which pays producers for ecologically goods and services produced, was launched with departmental assistance and leadership.
- The department's continued support for health and wellness activities included increasing its support for the Northern Healthy Foods Initiative which assists northern Manitobans grow their own foods.
- A comprehensive emergency preparedness plan was established to protect animals and humans in the event of an animal disease outbreak such as avian influenza. Improvements were made to the provincial diagnostic laboratory, and a new program was introduced to offer free examination of birds to small-flock owners.
- Plans were developed to create an animal disease Emergency Operation Centre, with implementation scheduled for next year.
- The department held consultations with key stakeholders and conducted substantial analysis into proposed federal-provincial-territorial policy on agri-food that is intended to replace the current Agricultural Policy Framework in April, 2008.