



TEAMALBERTA



Farmers Want to Hear From You

Team Alberta represents a working collaboration between Alberta's four crop commissions:



Alberta
Barley



ALBERTA CANOLA
ALBERTACANOLA.COM



ALBERTA PULSE
GROWERS



Alberta Wheat
COMMISSION

How will your party address farm-gate priorities?

As we move into Canada's 43rd general election, Alberta farmers want to know how your party will address the issues most important to their operations.

Collectively, Team Alberta represents approximately 20,000 primary crop farmers across Alberta and over \$5 billion in exports of unprocessed agricultural products. Our farmers contribute to the \$14.5 billion processed food and beverage manufacturing industry in the province and the Alberta crop sector employs over 18,000 employees in Alberta and contributes to 1 in 7 jobs in Canada created by the agri-food industry.

Having not yet seen any specific proposals from your party on agriculture, we would appreciate responses to the following five questions. We intend to share the responses received from all parties with our farmer members at www.teamalbertacrops.com in advance of the October 21, 2019



Questions

With over \$5 billion in direct exports, Alberta grains, oilseeds and pulse farmers support a strong pro-trade agenda and are ready to support the growth potential of Canada's agri-food sector to at least \$75 billion by 2025. Farmers, however, rely on political support to address technical barriers to trade that block access to key markets. The major crops that we represent are currently facing market access issues (e.g. canola into China, pulses into India, durum wheat into Italy and barley into Saudi Arabia, etc.).



What will your party's strategy be to defend export-oriented industries and resolve trade issues in order to improve market stability and rules-based trade with Canada's largest trading partners?

Insert response below.

Our previous Conservative government took market access very seriously. We signed 53 trade deals in less than ten years in office and worked hard to remove non-tariff trade barriers when they came up. An Andrew Scheer government would continue this proud tradition, which will include taking a more aggressive approach to removing non-tariff trade barriers.

On trade, our election platform includes the following:

Stand Up for Canada's Trade Interests:

To support Canadian industries, a new Conservative government's focus will remain squarely on promoting Canada's competitive advantage in global supply chains. Justin Trudeau has prioritized self-congratulatory speeches that charm celebrities and aggravate our trading partners. It is time to focus on Canadians, not Trudeau's progressive posturing. We will respond forcefully to non-tariff barriers, particularly in the agriculture sector, and foreign industrial subsidies so that Canadians can compete on a level playing field. Many of the trade disputes that have been big barriers to our exports of agricultural goods have been met with half-hearted responses from Justin Trudeau. Canadian canola, soy, pork, beef, berries, lentils, and many other products have been impacted, costing Canadian producers hundreds of millions of dollars. A Conservative government would set up global monitoring of non-tariff barriers and aggressively challenge these at the World Trade Organization. We would also be willing to retaliate with our own trade sanctions, such as imposing tariffs or regulatory restrictions, to forcefully defend Canada's trade interests.

To ensure that our trading partners live up to the spirit, not just the letter, of our agreements, we will insist on chapters dealing with non-tariff trade barriers in future trade deals. Decades ago, the primary barriers to trade were tariffs. As these have come down, it is now regulatory and non-tariff barriers that are the biggest problems for Canadian exporters, particularly in the agricultural sector. Canadian canola, soy, pork, beef, berries, lentils, and many other products have been blocked by arbitrary rules overseas. We will include chapters in future trade agreements to address these issues and to find new ways for resolving these types of regulatory disputes.

Create a CETA and CPTPP Accelerator:

To better support our small and medium enterprises on the world stage, we will provide extra funding to support Canada's entrepreneurs in finding customers in Europe as well as in markets opened by our new free trade agreements. Sometimes, just signing a trade agreement is not enough. An 'accelerator' is necessary to take full advantage of these newly opened markets. This accelerator will provide market intelligence or advice on local regulations, as well as funding to attend trade shows.

Share Better Information About our Free Trade Agreements with Canada's Businesses:

To help small and medium enterprises understand the benefits of a free trade agreement to their business, we will provide valuable industry-by-industry market intelligence to exporters – not just agreement-by-agreement – so they can learn where the greatest opportunities are.

On China, specifically, Canada's relationship with China needs a total reset. There is no other way to put this: Canada is being bullied by the Chinese government and the Prime Minister has done nothing to stand up for Canada in response.

Instead, the Prime Minister has continued with the same, failed, business as usual approach – hosting garden parties in Beijing and shipping his ministers off to China for photo opportunities.

Andrew Scheer has called on the Prime Minister to:

- a. Immediately withdraw Canada from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank;
- b. Increase inspections on all Chinese imports; and
- c. Start examining possible retaliatory tariffs on Chinese imports that will have the greatest possible impact while minimizing harm to Canadian consumers.

These actions will allow us to negotiate with China from a position of strength.

Farmers are very supportive of the Pest Management Regulatory Agency's (PMRA) regulatory role in ensuring the protection of human health and the environment, and ensuring the reputation of our safe, high-quality grains, oilseeds and pulses. The decisions made by the PMRA regarding the registration and re-evaluation of crop protection products have a direct and significant impact on all farmers' operations and their ability to remain competitive. It is imperative that all evaluation decisions impacting the availability of these tools be taken judiciously, based on robust and representative data, grounded in the best available science. Farmers have significant concerns with the current PMRA's decision-making process.



How will your party improve the regulatory processes employed by agencies like the PMRA, while ensuring that they are sufficiently resourced in order to operate effectively in a science-based manner?

Insert response below.



We know that the best way to help our businesses, in general, and our farmers, in particular, to succeed is to keep taxes and regulations low and ensure international markets remain open.

This is why an Andrew Scheer government will take important steps, such as reducing taxes on small business, cutting regulation by 25% over four years, and taking an aggressive approach to opening new markets and removing non-tariff trade barriers.

Regarding PMRA specifically, a Conservative government led by Andrew Scheer will:

- *Amend the mandate of the PMRA to ensure that competitiveness is taken into account when making regulatory decisions;*
- *Require the PMRA to work more transparently with regulated parties;*
- *Encourage science-based harmonization of pesticide regulation with Canada's trading partners; and*
- *Ensure that the PMRA has enough resources to deliver on its mandate in a thorough and predictable manner.*

It is also important to stress that the Conservative Party is very concerned that a Liberal/NDP coalition government will continue to enact policies and regulations that will hurt Canada's already worsening competitiveness.

With the introduction of the carbon levy in Alberta, farmers experienced a rise in costs which made them less competitive; particularly related to on-farm fuel costs that arose from their very efforts to mitigate climate change impacts (grain drying and irrigation, etc.). Meanwhile, farmers have made early contributions to greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions (conservation tillage, improved agronomic practices, equipment efficiencies and reduced emission intensity per acre, etc.) and they continue to voluntarily adopt sustainable practices but are not being recognized for these improvements.



What will your party do to ensure that farmers are recognized for their net positive environmental contributions and sheltered from a carbon pricing system that will put them at a competitive disadvantage?

Insert response below.

An Andrew Scheer government would repeal the federal carbon tax.

Farmers operate in a high-risk environment that is at the mercy of unpredictable weather, volatile prices, global market influences and distortions and emerging disease and pest pressures. Canada maintains a suite of Business Risk Management (BRM) programs that seek to stabilize this environment and provide farmers with tools to manage risk while continuing to invest in their operations and remain competitive. The current suite of programs falls short in their effectiveness. As the program is currently undergoing a review, farmers want to be sure that they are involved in the modernization of the program with improvements that make sense. To date there has been limited dialogue or consideration for the recommendations being put forward by farmers.

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What commitment can your party make toward meaningful change to current Business Risk Management programs to provide farmers with a secure economic foundation, comparable to global competitors? Will your party support our sector in reaching its potential while providing stability to farmers operating in a high-risk environment with factors that are often beyond their control?

Insert response below.

Conservatives know that Canadian farmers are resilient business owners but can also use support when events that are out of their control affect markets. Current geopolitical tensions, notably the trade war between the world's two biggest economies and worsening Canada-China relations, have had serious economic consequences for the Canadian canola, pork, beef, and soy sectors, among others. This has had a negative effect on commodity prices and on the bottom line of many Canadian farmers and agribusinesses. We have already called for Canada to challenge China's actions at the World Trade Organization and for increased inspections on Chinese imports.

To determine the best way to help farmers and agri-food business work through current market uncertainty, we will convene a meeting with farm groups to assess the damage and determine how to help farmers get through this difficult time.

We will also work with provinces and farmers to make Agri-Stability more simple, predictable, bankable, and timely.

Between 2012-17 the Canada Grain Commission (CGC), incurred a surplus of \$95 million resulting in a total surplus of \$130 million. This was obtained through its collection of user fees, primarily paid for outward weighing and inspection services, costs which are largely passed on to farmers. Despite calls from farmers to return the accumulated funds back to them through a reduction in fees, the CGC has retained the surplus, prompting calls for modernization of the Canada Grain Act and the CGC.

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What action will your party take to ensure that the service fees that have been overcharged to farmers will be returned to them? Further, will your party commit to modernization of the Canada Grain Act, which has not been done in over 40 years?

Insert response below.

An Andrew Scheer government would, in consultations with farmers, modernize the Canada Grain Act and Canadian Grains Commission and return the overcharged service fees to farmers.

Team Alberta asks parties to fill out this Q&A and return it to Shannon Sereda, government relations and policy manager with the Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions at ssereda@albertawheatbarley.com by Monday, October 7. Responses will be posted on www.teamalbertacrops.com, a site that will house all Team Alberta's policy positions, which will be launched in the coming days.