



TEAMALBERTA



Farmers Want to Hear From You

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



Alberta
Barley



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.

Securing new markets means new customers for Canadian farmers - helping them to grow and succeed – and we have been making smart investments to create new opportunities for Canadian exports to expand in markets around the world.

With new trade deals with the US, Mexico, EU and Asia-Pacific countries, Canadian businesses are now connected to 1.5 billion consumers in over 50 countries. These agreements were just a first step. Our Liberal government is investing over \$1 billion to help Canadian exporters market their innovative ideas and products globally.

A re-elected Liberal government will keep working to get Canadian goods to the world so businesses remain competitive, our economy stays strong, and more good jobs are created here at home. We will continue our support of the rules-based international order and will look for every opportunity to knock down tariff and non-tariff barriers that continue to limit market access for Canadian producers.

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.



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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.

Canada has one of the safest and most abundant food supplies in the world, thanks in part to our strong regulatory system. We are committed to evidence-based decision making rooted in sound science, but we also understand that Canada's regulations need to run at the speed of business. That's why the agri-food sector was identified as one of four priority high-growth sectors for the regulatory review process. In June 2019 the Government published regulatory roadmaps that will help to create a more responsive regulatory environment to sustain the competitiveness of the agri-food sector.

We are committed to maintaining Canada's science-based regulatory process for the approval of new novel crops and foods. At the same time, we will ensure our science-based process can keep up with the pace of technological advancement and innovation within the biotechnological sector – while always ensuring that neither the health nor safety of Canadians is compromised. Indeed, it is because of our approach's ability to manage flexibility through the novel foods regulatory system that Canada's process is well-respected worldwide. Moving forward, we will venture to provide greater regulatory certainty regarding which products are subject to regulation – while at the same time maintaining the strengths of our system. We will also continue to engage with international partners to ensure global approaches to the management of biotechnology are practical, science-based and transparent.

We know that innovation is vitally important to keeping our agricultural sector and farmers on the cutting edge to maintain our competitive position in the global market. That is why we have made significant investments to support innovation and science in agriculture. This includes almost \$700 million under the Canadian Agricultural Partnership to support science and innovation, including \$13.9 million for the wheat research cluster, over \$150 million in the Protein Industries Supercluster and more recently \$50 million from ISED's Strategic Innovation Fund has been announced to help the agricultural sector harness the potential of emerging digital technologies.

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.

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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.



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The Liberal Party recognizes that Canadian farmers and growers are responsible stewards of the land.

In government, we have a proven history of supporting the agricultural sector's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in areas like soil health, carbon sequestration, clean technologies, and value-added bio-products.

As part of our commitment to tackling climate change and growing the economy – we ensured it is no longer free to pollute across Canada. In jurisdictions that did not take leadership and implement a price on pollution, there is a federal backstop in place that will incent innovation, and ensure lower emissions, cleaner air, new business opportunities and more money in the pockets of Canadians.

It is required, by law, that all of the revenue from carbon pricing return to the jurisdiction that it came from. In Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Ontario and on January 1st of 2020 in Alberta, 90% of the revenue from the federal backstop goes directly back to households in a Climate Action Incentive rebate when they file their taxes – such that 80% of families will be better off, as confirmed by the independent Parliamentary Budget Office. Residents in rural areas receive an additional 10% top-up.

Our pollution pricing policy also reflects the realities of the agricultural industry. Gasoline and diesel fuels for on-farm use are exempted under the federal backstop.

The system for heavy industry – the Output Based Pricing System – supports industry and businesses that are emissions intensive and trade exposed in reducing their emissions, while continuing to be competitive.

We know that farmers compete in global markets – which is why the OBPS covers fertilizer production, and why a similar system applies to the greenhouse sector.

Budget 2019 included funding to create a National Offset System, and a re-elected Liberal government will continue its work on developing an offset system where companies participating in the OBPS can buy offset credits to reduce emissions that are not part of the carbon pricing system. Offset credits can provide an important opportunity to receive compensation for reducing agricultural emissions.

Lastly, we have committed to review the federal backstop in 2022 and to do an early review in 2020 focused on competitiveness issues in trade exposed industries, such as agriculture. We will continue to work with farmers and all parts of the Canadian economy to ensure that the backstop is working well for them.

We will continue working together with farmers and the sector to help them adapt to the effects of climate change, and stay on the cutting edge of innovative solutions.

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.



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.

Across Canada, hard-working farmers and their families help to grow the food that keeps people healthy and keeps our economy strong and growing. At the same time, because of the dramatic cuts Stephen Harper made to Canada's business risk management programs, many are in a weaker position today – unable to manage the serious losses in income that can happen when commodity prices fall unexpectedly, when climate-related floods or droughts strike, or when a major market disruption occurs.

To ensure that farmers have access to the help they need when they need it, we will move forward with a collaborative review of Canada's business risk management programs, with a special focus on Agri-Stability, and are prepared to increase federal support to farmers to help them manage risks beyond their control.

We will also continue to work with farmers on tax measures to facilitate the intergenerational transfer of farms, making it easier for farmers to transfer or sell family farms to family members or others.

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.



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.

Our Liberal government initiated a process to review the Canada Grain Act and the Canadian Grain Commission through Budget 2019. The review is in a very preliminary stage and we remain committed to the review. Given it has been over 40 years since the Act was last updated, we agree that it is well past time that this review should be taking place. The review process must be inclusive and include all voices within the grain sector, including producers, to ensure the best outcomes for farmers.

As part of the review, the accumulated surplus will be considered and we will work with producers to identify the best way to manage this surplus to benefit farmers, including examining the equitable return of accumulated surplus to farmers.





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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.

