



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.

Canadians know that trade is essential for our economic success. We expect trade deals will be fair, respect human rights, protect the environment, and put the interests of Canadian workers, farmers and communities first. New Democrats support fair trade that broadens opportunity in all areas of the country while protecting our industries. A New Democrat government will also do more to defend Canadian farmers against non-trade and regulatory barriers that are unfair.

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.



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New Democrats will increase the staffing of PMRA and will keep Canadian agriculture on the cutting edge of knowledge and innovation, and provide direct economic benefit to our farmers. New Democrats will invest in public agricultural research and data collection. We'll work with farmers and stakeholders to ensure that regulatory processes are based on the best available information while meeting the needs of Canadian farmers.

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.

To support sustainable agriculture, a New Democrat government will work with Canadian farmers to promote land-management techniques and methods to increase carbon sequestration and reduce GHG emissions. We'll also work with the agricultural sector to help them access low carbon tools and technology and adapt to climate- induced weather changes and other impacts of climate change, such as an increased number of pests and invasive species.

Recognizing that putting a price on carbon is an important tool to drive GHG emission reductions at the source, we will continue carbon pricing, including rebates to households that fall under the federal backstop plan, while making it fairer and rolling back the breaks the Liberals gave to the biggest polluters.

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.



Food is at the heart of our homes, our communities, and our economy. But farmers and agricultural workers feel enormous pressure. Not only do they have to contend with unpredictable weather, but they have to put up with the consequences of devastating decisions by past governments. It's time to make different choices. The NDP commits to enhance risk-management programs once and for all, so it reflects more clearly the new reality farmers are facing.

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.

New Democrats know that the Canada Grain Act has not been updated in decades and does not meet the realities of the current grain market. Past governments have been slow to start consultations and no major changes have been initiated. A New Democrat government would work with farmers to modernize the Canada Grain Act and will also make the necessary change to our grain transportation system.

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.

