



TEAMALBERTA

ADVANCING ALBERTA'S CROPPING SECTOR TO 2025 AND BEYOND

Team Alberta urges aggressive action on BRM programs, trade and carbon tax exemptions after 'Harvest from Hell'

With the 'Harvest from Hell' still ongoing, major trade disruptions still blocking farm exports into important global markets, business risk management (BRM) programs that are ill-equipped to mitigate these issues and imposition of a federal carbon tax looming on January 1, Team Alberta says aggressive action from governments on serious economic hardships facing farmers is needed.

According to the latest Alberta crop report, this year's wet conditions have resulted in 11 per cent of the crop still left in the fields, but 17.3 per cent of the canola crop, nearly 15 per cent of the potato crop and 45 per cent of the sugar beet crop. Unharvested acres represent a total value of more than \$778 million across the province. Conditions are most critical in the Peace Region where 40 per cent of the crop is unharvested with other pockets in the Peace and several areas along the Highway 2 corridor where less than half of the harvest is complete. The 2019 growing season marks the third year of drought in southern Alberta and excessive moisture in northern Alberta.

Poor harvest conditions make for increased urgency for governments to resolve the non-tariff trade barriers to important global markets and make immediate improvements to the BRM programs under the current review. In addition to calling for a more comprehensive review, Team Alberta is asking for immediate adjustments to AgriStability to increase covered losses starting at 85 per cent of reference margins and for the removal of Reference Margin Limits in time for the 2020 harvest.

Team Alberta is also pressing the federal government for exemption from the carbon tax on all farm fuels used in operations for irrigating and grain drying which has added extensive costs during this difficult harvest. The federal government has already committed to exemptions on marked farm fuel under the carbon pricing backstop which will be applied in Alberta on January 1, 2020.

In remarks during Team Alberta's breakfast event last week, the commissions were encouraged by provincial agriculture minister Devin Dreeshen's acknowledgement of the severity of the harvest situation. Minister Dreeshen also committed to working with the federal government and his provincial counterparts to improve the suite of BRM programs at upcoming meetings in mid-December. During the election period, the federal government also committed to enhancing support for BRM programs. Team Alberta says this is a good start.

Quotes

"Farmers are facing the perfect storm of devastating harvest conditions, trade uncertainty and a lack of support through programs that should be mitigating these challenges."

- Dave Bishop, Alberta Barley chair

TEAM ALBERTA

Team Alberta is a collaborative initiative led by four of the province's crop commissions. Our commissions are producer elected, directed and funded organizations established to represent the interests of our producers across the province.



“We’ve seen bad harvests in three out of the last four growing seasons. We can’t control the weather but it’s time for our governments to resolve the political issues that we can control. Not only are we facing trade barriers, but our competitors in the U.S. are receiving their third round of government payouts.”

- Don Shepert, Alberta Pulse Growers chair

“Farmers are experiencing the harvest from hell. Many of those in the worst hit areas won’t be able to get their crop off until the spring, which could push this year’s delays well into next year’s growing season. Aggressive action from our governments on trade, BRMs and the carbon tax is a must.”

- John Guelly, Alberta Canola chair

“This is the kind of uncertainty that’s bigger than farm business cash flow. The weight of these combined challenges starts to threaten farmers’ mental health.”

- Gary Stanford, AWC chair

If you or someone you know is struggling with mental health, call the Alberta Mental Health Help Line at 1-877-303-2642 (toll free) or visit www.domore.ag to learn more about the resources available to you.

Media Contacts

Victoria Decker,
Communications Manager
Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions
vdecker@albertawheatbarley.com
403-813-6956

Rachel Peterson,
Communications Coordinator
Alberta Pulse Growers
rpeterson@albertapulse.com
780-986-9398 ext. 108

Michelle Chunyua,
Communications Coordinator
Alberta Canola
michelle@albertacanola.com
780-454-0844

TEAM ALBERTA

Team Alberta is a collaborative initiative led by four of the province’s crop commissions. Our commissions are producer elected, directed and funded organizations established to represent the interests of our producers across the province.

