



Team Alberta welcomes changes to MELT making it easier for experienced drivers to earn their Class 1

For Immediate Release

(Edmonton, Alberta) November 26, 2020 – Team Alberta welcomes today's [announcement](#) that will make it easier for agricultural producers, among others, with at least two years of Class 3 driving experience to earn a Class 1 commercial licence. Safety continues to be farmers' top priority. The Experience Equivalency program recognizes farmers and farm workers' previous driving experience, and their commitment to safety by allowing Class 3 drivers to take a reduced, 40-hour Mandatory Entry-Level Training (MELT) program. Alberta Transportation is also introducing a \$3 million Driving Back to Work grant program to cover 90 per cent of the MELT program costs for unemployed Albertans to earn their Class 1 commercial truck driver's licence.

Team Alberta, along with other agriculture stakeholders, advocated for changes to the implementation of MELT to reduce barriers that were significantly impacting our farmers such as high program costs, limited training spaces, difficulties booking testing appointments, and labour shortages. Team Alberta is pleased the Government of Alberta listened to our concerns and is continuing to find practical approaches to resolving these concerns, without sacrificing safety on our roads. Team Alberta commends Alberta Transportation and the Executive Council for making changes that will benefit Alberta agriculture's competitiveness in moving goods to market and Alberta's economic recovery, while ensuring the safety of Alberta's roads and highways.

Quotes

"The need for Class 1 drivers licences on farms will continue to grow as farms expand, efficiencies improve and crop yields increase. For farm businesses that operate on tight margins, these programs are a welcome relief to hire skilled employees and enable them to continue working on farms, while upgrading licences on farms to Class 1."

John Guelly, Chair of Alberta Canola

"Safety on the roads is paramount. Having an Experience Equivalency program recognizing Class 3 licences, in addition to support from the Driving Back to Work grant program, is a big step that will encourage more farmers to explore the Class 1 MELT opportunity."

Don Shepert, Chair of Alberta Pulse Growers

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.



“Working toward building a pipeline of qualified Class 1 commercial drivers will also benefit the agriculture sector who competes against other sectors for these high demand drivers. Continuing to work toward bridging the driver shortage in Alberta is an important step toward ensuring farmers can get their grain to market and their necessary inputs to the farm.”

Dave Bishop, Chair of Alberta Barley

“Farmers rely on trucking year-round and safety is the top priority for every farming operation. We welcome the new experience equivalency Class 1 MELT program since it recognizes the strong history of driving experience that most farm workers, who are often family members, already have.”

Todd Hames, Chair of the Alberta Wheat Commission

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