

July 22, 2022

Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau  
Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food  
Government of Canada

Via email: [marie-claude.bibeau@parl.gc.ca](mailto:marie-claude.bibeau@parl.gc.ca)

Dear Minister Bibeau,

On behalf of Alberta Barley Commission, Alberta Canola Producers Commission, Alberta Pulse Growers Commission and Alberta Wheat Commission representatives, thank you for the opportunity to meet with you, and your contingent, on July 15, 2022. We were pleased to have time with you to discuss how the current crop year is progressing as well as share important points on key issues. As a follow-up, below is a summary of what we shared during the meeting.

- **Crop Conditions:** There is general optimism for the crop conditions at present, especially with the increased moisture that has been accumulating in southern Alberta, and overall crops in Alberta are in better condition than last growing season. It was the most expensive year to grow a crop due to increasing input prices at the start of the season and now market prices are starting to soften. The importance of a successful harvest is imperative this year.
- **Business Risk Management:** Farmers feel it is important to have business risk management programs like AgriInsurance and AgriInvest. For farmers who grow crops, AgriStability is not working and in the case of emergency situations, AgriRecovery did not work for the crop sector like it did for livestock during the challenging drought of 2021 in Alberta. Cross-compliance of environmental objectives overlaid to the BRM suite of programs is not supported by Alberta farmers. The environment and BRM need to continue to be separate.
- **Fertilizer emissions reduction:** Farmers are already watching their use of fertilizer and adoption of the 4R nutrient stewardship. Farmers want to know what is the baseline that the Government of Canada is using in the fertilizer emissions reduction discussion? Many farmers have been doing sustainable practices for years and it is challenging to measure the effectiveness of fertilizer emissions reduction initiatives if there is no clear starting point.
- **Transportation:** With the promising growing season across the province, farmers are concerned about the rail system's ability to move the harvest to market as there is significant potential for a large crop this fall. For most of the 2021-22 crop year, grain movement was hindered by poor rail service in a year where there was significantly less crop in the system. Poor service impedes Canada's ability to support global food security and tarnishes the Canadian reputation for supplying the world with high quality exports. In addition, containers continue to be a significant problem for the pulse and special crops industry to the point where production has been reduced and the opportunity for farmers to expand acres on crops that are moved by containers is being lost. Farmers need you to be a strong advocate for a successful container and rail transportation system as harvest 2022 progresses.

- **Pest Management Regulatory Agency:** Farmers recognize and support the PMRA's mandate to protect human health and environment by minimizing risk associated with pest control products. Farmers also recognize that the PMRA is not under AAFC; however, actions of the PMRA directly affect farmers and their ability to successfully grow crops. Farmers have concerns about the PMRA transformation process. Recent actions of the PMRA, including the appointments to the new Scientific Advisory Committee and halting the review of certain pest control products to delay alignment with CODEX, are concerning, and farmers are worried about these decisions.
- **Next Policy Framework:** Farmers appreciate the support the federal government has provided through the Next Policy Framework. With the linkage to environmental objectives, farmers are concerned that the funding envelope is not robust enough to be reflective of the pursuit of this added objective. In addition, AgriScience Cluster application requirements are not recognizing that important project funding like dedicated support for genetic improvement and agronomic resiliency are paths forward to successfully adapt to environment and climate change. The requirement that Clusters adhere to 30% total cluster value dedicated to environment and climate change research, including a 15% minimum requirement for greenhouse gas reduction and carbon sequestration, is not feasible given the current research capacity constraints. Environment and Climate Change should be topping up the budget allowed for the envelope of funding for Cluster programming. Finally, a commitment to longer term research beyond five-year increments would be valued by farmers.
- **Green House Gasses and Carbon Sequestration:** Agriculture is part of a solution for several climate issues and many organizations are working on reports outlining how agriculture can play a role. These reports will be shared over the next year including reports from the pulse industry and Grain Growers of Canada. We look forward to dialoging with you when they are released.

Lastly, thank you for the recent announcement on the Agriculture Climate Solutions Living Labs for Alberta. The Commissions are all partners in the project, and we look forward to seeing results from this work. In addition, thank you for the work that you continue to do supporting other Ministries in the areas of Global Affairs for continued efforts on trade agreements and we look forward to you sharing our concerns with the Ministers of Health and of Transportation.

Sincerely,



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Chair, Alberta Barley Commission

cc: Abed Harb, Senior Advisor to the Minister  
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