



Tariffs top of mind as Team Alberta Crops shared farmers' priorities with Government

Team Alberta Crops met with Alberta Ministers, other Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) and government officials in March to share Alberta farmers' top concerns.

Farmer directors and staff from the seven organizations that comprise Team Alberta Crops advocated for government support in the areas of competitiveness through innovation, environmental sustainability, regulatory hurdles, and market access.

"The four pillars of Team Alberta Crops were key guide posts and the messaging developed in regard to those reflect, with a bit of variation, all members' priorities," said Connie Phillips, Executive Director of Alberta Beekeepers Commission. "The level of engagement was quite high. Perhaps the increased attention was due to tariffs, however, this opening allowed all of us to engage meaningfully with all meeting participants."

Team Alberta Crops coordinates this annual meeting and reception featuring locally grown commodities to maintain the lines of communication with Alberta MLAs and key government officials, as well as to keep issues affecting farmer-members at the forefront.

"We were able to explain how integrated the North American market is," noted Andre Harpe, Chair of Alberta Canola. "Everybody was totally engaged and concerned about agriculture and tariffs. Team Alberta Crops undertakes these meetings because we need to keep elected officials up to date. We grow many of the same crops. For example, understanding how tariffs are impacting the potato industry was extremely important."

Team Alberta Crops is a collaboration between seven of Alberta's producer groups: Alberta Beekeepers Commission, Alberta Canola, Alberta Grains, Alberta Pulse Growers, Alberta-British Columbia Seed Growers, Alberta Sugar Beet Growers and the Potato Growers of Alberta. We work together to advance grass-roots policy and advocate on behalf of Alberta's crop and beekeeping sectors.

Alberta has a cultivated crop area of more than 20 million acres, producing on average 23.6 million tonnes of barley, canola, potatoes, pulses, sugar beets and wheat including pedigreed seed every year, marking this as one of the world's most productive agricultural economies. In addition, Alberta produces 40% of Canada's honey, valued at approximately \$106 million in 2023. Exports of unprocessed commodities from Alberta's 21,000 farms rose to approximately \$6.9 billion in 2024.

Team Alberta Crops maximizes farmers' dollars by collaborating and sharing resources. Advocating alongside more experienced team members was reassuring for Carl Huvenaars, Vice-President of Alberta-British Columbia Seed Growers, who hadn't previously experienced meetings with government officials at the Alberta Legislature.

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“My first experience as a Team Alberta Crops advocacy person was great,” he said. “Working with the members of our group that have experienced this really helped me along. For the most part, the Deputy Ministers, Assistant Deputy Ministers, MLAs and Ministers all seemed very interested in what we had to say. Some of the points we wanted to get across maybe got missed a bit because a lot of talk went to tariffs but that was bound to happen in this political landscape. I found what the politicians had to say very interesting as well. They wanted to hear our concerns and also wanted to know how they could change the landscape to help those concerns.”

Team Alberta Crops shared a document with the government officials ([available here](#)) that stated that to continue to grow, farmers need investments in addition to a policy and regulatory environment that is focused on the growth of domestic and international trade.

Farmers often turn to the Alberta government to help overcome provincial red tape and amplify concerns in the federal regulatory environment to ensure a predictable, streamlined and science-based regulatory framework that supports access to innovative tools. Conversations on March 19 and 20 with Ministers, MLAs, and key public officials focused on several asks from Team Alberta Crops under the previously mentioned pillars.

Members of Team Alberta Crops explained that addressing regulatory hurdles is essential to ensuring science-based, predictable policies that support farmers and agribusinesses. Specific asks in this area focused on right to repair legislation, the land titles process and a prohibitive Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) fee proposal.

The delegation also discussed how expanding market access through trade agreements and reduced barriers will strengthen global competitiveness. Points in this area included asking the provincial government to lead trade missions to emerging markets, continue support for domestic value-added processing capacity, as well as provincial support for federal intervention when rail service issues occur.

Team Alberta Crops representatives pointed out that fostering innovation in crop science and technology enhances productivity and resilience. Specific asks centred around long-term funding for research infrastructure and to regain the capacity of key crop management researchers.

Meanwhile, the group shared that promoting environmental sustainability through climate-smart practices and incentive programs will ensure long-term viability for both producers and the environment. Key priorities included asking the government to review policies and regulatory hurdles preventing greater adoption of water management tools and revisiting the Alberta Wetland Policy. They also promoted the use of regional planning to minimize

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loss and land use conflicts, as well as continued investments and studies into irrigation expansion and modernization.

For more information, visit teamalbertacrops.com.

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