

Alberta Crop Commissions Working to Minimize Carbon Levy Impact

Submitted by Team Alberta

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Alberta's four major crop commissions, operating as Team Alberta, continue to work together to minimize the impact of the carbon levy on farmers.

In recent consultations with the provincial Climate Technology Task Force, Team Alberta advocated for many solutions-based changes to be considered, including research investments, and recognition that agriculture already contributes to reducing greenhouse gases.

In these meetings, Team Alberta recognized the farm fuel exemption for a significant input, but never waived that the full impact of the tax on input costs, transportation and prices that farmers receive for their crops remains unclear.

"Producers are natural leaders in carbon capture and an important part of the climate change solution," said Allison Ammeter, Chair of Alberta Pulse Growers. Kevin Auch, Chair of the Alberta Wheat Commission adds, "Agricultural crops are great users of carbon dioxide (CO₂) as part of their metabolism to produce essential oxygen through photosynthesis, making producers who grow crops natural leaders in carbon capture and sequestration."

In a series of meetings with provincial cabinet ministers, Team Alberta has reinforced that farmers rely on global markets and cannot pass the increased costs onto their customers. Farmers should be recognized for the contributions they have already made to reducing greenhouse gases through practices such as conservation tillage. In addition, Team Alberta cautioned the government against imposing an increased tax burden on exporters, processors, and crop input manufacturers that will reduce market competitiveness.

Team Alberta has also called for more funding for research into technologies that would benefit farmers, as well representation on the Emissions Reduction Alberta panel that allocates research expenditures.

"The tremendous growth in the cropping sector can be traced back to research investment, and adoption of new practices and technologies," said Jason Lenz, Chair of Alberta Barley. "Sustainable cropping practices in Alberta, which are among the most globally advanced, contribute to productivity increases that produce more yield per acre using less resources and more research can be done for further advancements."

Continuous improvement in land management practices and a strong commitment by farmers to address soil degradation have resulted in crop productivity increasing at twice the rate of increases in GHG emissions between 1990 and 2013. In 2000, for the first time in Canada's history, agricultural soil sequestered more carbon than was emitted.

Team Alberta met with Alberta's Deputy Premier and Minister of Health Sarah Hoffmann, as well as Minister of Agriculture and Forestry Oneil Carlier and Minister of Environment Shannon Phillips to discuss climate change and the work that producers have done in this regard.

“Climate change policies aimed at the cropping sector must be fluid in nature,” added Greg Sears, Chair of Alberta Canola. “Economic and environmental conditions change rapidly and producers employ different production practices for diverse growing regions.”

The cropping sector is engaged on this file as farmers are an important part of the climate change solution. Team Alberta will continue to represent our members with the provincial government and advocate for a thriving and competitive agriculture industry in Alberta.

Team Alberta is made up of the Alberta Wheat Commission, Alberta Canola Producers Commission, Alberta Pulse Growers Commission and Alberta Barley. Together the organizations represent over 43,000 farms across Alberta.

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TEAMALBERTA ADVANCING POLICY ON BEHALF OF ALBERTA'S CROP SECTOR