

Quote: 218225

Mr. Chad MacPherson
ssga@sasktel.net

Dear Mr. MacPherson:

Thank you for your email and the attached copy of the resolutions passed at the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association's meeting of January 21, 2016. I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

With respect to resolution 3, the pilot Western Livestock Price Insurance Program expanded an existing program in Alberta to a regional model and was launched in April 2014 after extensive study of the Western market and collaboration with provincial governments. The pilot has been received positively by the industry, with over 10,000 policies sold. Before the end of the program's four-year pilot on March 31, 2018, governments will review program operations and management and will consider its possible extension.

In response to resolution 5, I recognize that access to a sufficient supply of labour is a key issue for many industry stakeholders. I understand that many agriculture and agri-food occupations have unique characteristics, such as the seasonal nature of work and demanding conditions, which can contribute to the challenge of recruiting and retaining a skilled and reliable workforce.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada is actively working to deepen its understanding of the sector's labour needs. The Department is also engaging frequently on these issues with Employment and Social Development Canada, and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, who have the lead responsibility for federal labour-related policies, to ensure labour market policies and programs take into account the needs of the sector. I have taken the liberty of forwarding your resolutions to the Honourable MaryAnn Mihychuk, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, and the Honourable John McCallum, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, for their consideration.

With respect to resolution 6, the Government of Canada supports free trade, as it will help to open markets to Canadian goods and services, grow Canadian businesses, create well-paying jobs, and provide choice to Canadian consumers. I appreciate your comments acknowledging the importance of trade to the Canadian agriculture and agri-food sector. The success of the sector is dependent upon access to markets, including emerging and growing markets for Canadian agriculture and agri-food in the Asia-Pacific region.

On February 4, 2016, TPP member countries signed the Agreement in Auckland, New Zealand. The Government of Canada is committed to consulting Canadians and conducting a full and open public debate in Parliament on the Agreement's merits before considering ratification. The Government is also consulting closely with the full range of industry stakeholders to ensure that Canada's approach to trade agreements remains fully informed by the interests of all sectors.

I trust that this information is of assistance. Again, thank you for writing.

Sincerely,

Lawrence MacAulay, PC, MP

c.c.: The Honourable MaryAnn Mihychuk, PC, MP
The Honourable John McCallum, PC, MP