



MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

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Prairie Farm Leaders Meet in Winnipeg

Winnipeg – The presidents of the three major farm groups across the Prairies emerged from a forum today with a renewed focus on the issues facing Prairie agriculture.

Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP) President Ian Wishart, Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS) President Greg Marshall, and Wild Rose Agricultural Producers (WRAP) President Humphrey Banack identified major priorities and developed an action plan to move these issues forward in the coming year. Their discussions were framed around producer payment security mechanism options, technical trade barriers, rail transportation and young and beginning farmers. The group also discussed the challenges facing the livestock industry and the future for producers and processors.

Producer Payment Security Mechanism

The Prairie Farm Leaders stress that farmers must have an adequate and financially viable option to cover their risks related to grain delivery. The leaders reviewed the Producer Payment Security Mechanism report and discussed the insurance and fund based approaches. KAP, APAS, and WRAP are calling on the federal government again to delay any decisions on bonding until farm organizations have had time to examine the implications of the insurance and fund based approaches.

Increasing Use of Technical Trade Barriers

Farmers are facing price uncertainty and substantial losses due to international market access issues with commodities such as flax and canola. KAP, APAS and WRAP ask for federal trade negotiators to include a process to resolve these increasingly frequent non-tariff barriers as part of any new trade agreement.

Addressing Rail Transportation Issues

All three leaders are pleased to see that the Federal Rail Freight Service Review submission deadline has been established. They hope the development and implementation of recommendations from the service review panel will be completed in the near future. The leaders discussed the importance of having the

federal government introduce a costing review mechanism into the revenue cap program. Western Canadian grain farmers have not benefitted from rail operation consolidation and efficiency gains made over the past decade due to the lack of competition in the rail freight industry. KAP, APAS and WRAP continue to be concerned over the lack of government action regarding the 53 rail siding sites that CN Rail delisted in 2009. These sites must be protected to support the growing use of producer cars on the Prairies and to allow for rural development opportunities in the future.

Young and Beginning Farmers

The farm leaders discussed challenges faced by young and beginning farmers and the need for engagement in farm organizations. A key factor in preparing farmers to take over their family operations is ensuring that adequate succession planning is in place, and this is one area in which governments can show leadership. The leaders reviewed and provided recommendations on "Strategies and Recommendations for New Entrant and Intergenerational Transfer Program Needs," a study by Al Sholz of A.N Sholz and Associates commissioned by APAS. KAP, APAS and WRAP emphasized the need for programming to encourage new entrants into the agriculture sector and the groups will continue to lobby all levels of government on this issue.

The Prairie organizations are members of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture and use the Prairie Farm Leaders Meetings as a forum to deal with regional issues. The next meeting of the leaders will take place in October in Regina.

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Attached Photo (Left to Right): Wild Rose Agricultural Producers (WRAP) President Humphrey Banack, Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP) President Ian Wishart, Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS) President Greg Marshall.

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