

# The KAP Alert

May 9, 2008

## KAP Meeting with Minister Ritz

May 5, 2008 News Release

KAP is bringing the voice of Manitoba farmers to Ottawa. On Monday, KAP President Ian Wishart was in Ottawa to meet with Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada Minister Gerry Ritz. They discussed a range of issues that are important to Manitoba's farmers, including the financial crisis facing the hog and cattle sectors.

"Many of our livestock producers need support to get through this challenge, so we identified some options and ways that the government can help," says Wishart. "We think a national Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) program should be rolled out to create a new stream of revenue for cattle producers. We also talked about the impact that country of origin labeling is having on our farmers and the programming that will be needed to address it."

KAP believes that there is an ideal opportunity to roll out ALUS as part of the next *Growing Forward* framework. Wishart encouraged Minister Ritz to build on the success of the Manitoba pilot project and the provincial project in PEI.



KAP President Ian Wishart & AAFC Minister Gerry Ritz in Ottawa.

Their discussions also focused on the timelines for Bill C-39 (Canada Grains Act). A security program to protect producers' interests must be put in place during the transition. KAP has recommended a three-year pilot project to study the changes in the operating environment and to ensure that the new system works ap-

propriately.

KAP highlighted rising input costs such as fertilizer, the impact that it's having on the entire industry and young farmers, and how fertilizer prices may be affecting the food prices for consumers. The need for better access to containers to transport value-added industries was also raised.

KAP continues to represent producers and the important issues that affect them on a provincial and national level, through meetings like this and through membership in the Canadian Federation of Agriculture.

### Changes Ahead for the Alert

The way you get your weekly news from KAP is about to change. Next Friday, your Alert will arrive as a true e-newsletter, with all of the information included in the body of an email.

We're moving to this new approach to make the newsletter more user-friendly and to make managing our subscription list a bit easier. Your feedback will really be appreciated as part of this transition, particularly if you don't receive a newsletter next Friday!

~ Lenore

The KAP Alert is published weekly by Keystone Agricultural Producers

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## BBQ Economics

KAP Commentary by Ian Wishart - May 9, 2008

It's coming up on BBQ season, and we've all heard how the price of the bun we might serve with a hamburger will be skyrocketing because of the increase in grain prices. Farmers have argued that this isn't a fair comparison to make, and that any higher prices in the store are a combination of many factors. Some consumers may have heard the message, but we're still seeing that prices are jacked up, and then grain farmers are blamed for achieving a better return.

So, BBQ enthusiasts should get ready for a cheap season. We all know that hog and cattle farmers are in a financial crisis. There are a number of factors behind it, but the end result is that these farmers are making less and have to sell their animals at extremely low prices. When you consider all the expenses of raising an animal to market weight, farmers may even be losing money on the whole transaction.

That must mean that the price we'll be paying at

the grocery store for pork chops and steaks will be going down this summer, if we follow the same logic that led to the increase in bread prices. I don't think anyone will really be expecting to buy a \$2 t-bone for the grill, and that shows the real problem in all of this food-pricing debate.

When grain farmers were suffering from low grain prices - and this has happened very recently - there was no drop for in-store prices on bread, pasta and other products. The same story is playing out for beef and pork. For farmers, it's hard to watch. When the price that a farmer receives for their cattle and hogs goes up again, which we hope happens soon, don't be surprised if the media is filled once again with people saying that they have to increase the prices of steaks and pork chops to deal with it. Hopefully, savvy consumers will remember this summer and ask questions about why none of the "savings" were passed along to them.

## News & Events

The Canadian Federation of Agriculture and other farm organizations like KAP have launched an **e-postcard campaign to call for a rail costing review**. Railways are taking advantage of farmers' captive position to reap millions of dollars in extra profit because of an outdated revenue system. Have your voice heard! Fill in the postcard at <http://cfa-fca.ca/pages/emailer.php>

Agriculture in the Classroom - Manitoba is looking for **volunteers for their Amazing Ag Adventure** in Brandon on June 3 & 4. This event is in its eighth year, and up to 500 students are expected to attend. They need helpers to host classes and tour them around the event, and to also work at the various stations. If you can lend a hand, please contact Diane Mauthe at [diane@aitc.mb.ca](mailto:diane@aitc.mb.ca) or 471-9698 before May 23.

The **Agriculture Career Focus Program** is currently available to all businesses that conduct work in the primary agriculture sector, including businesses that directly provide service to the on-farm sector. This program offers employers an opportunity to receive a wage subsidy of 30%

(up to \$12,000 per intern) to hire skilled youth on a 4-10 month placement. Eligible interns must be post-secondary graduates, in agriculture. For more info, please contact the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council at (613) 745-7457, ext. 2225 or [mercier@cahrccrha.ca](mailto:mercier@cahrccrha.ca).

The **Agri-Food Research & Development Initiative (ARDI)** is hosting a 10-year retrospective on its work in the agricultural sector on Monday, May 26 at 9:30 am at the Richardson Centre for Functional Foods & Nutraceuticals. Anyone who may be considering an ARDI application in the future may find this session informative. For more info, contact Rhea Yates at [rheayates@mts.net](mailto:rheayates@mts.net) or 896-6926.

**It's Manitoba Day!** Monday, May 12 is Manitoba Day, which celebrates the province's entry into confederation in 1870. Special events are scheduled across the province.

## Get Started on Bill 17

In last week's Alert, we mentioned that Bill 17 – the piece of legislation that would put a permanent ban on building or expanding hog barns in a large portion of the province – will be going to legislative committee this spring.

This is an opportunity for you to have your opinion heard, and you can register to present or send a submission to the committee by calling the clerk at (204) 945-4729. If you'd like some background information to help you get started, Manitoba Pork Council has provided these key messages on Bill 17:

- Bill 17 is anti-farm, anti-business, and anti-rural. It begs the question: Who's next?
- Bill 17 is not a moratorium. It is a permanent ban on hog farms. While many hog farmers may not be thinking about expansion now, this ban prevents them from expanding in the future when markets recover. This can only lead to the ultimate demise of the hog industry and will take away Manitoba's current economic advantage of production, as compared to other regions in North America.
- Bill 17 targets hog farmers and only hog farmers. This is unfair. It discriminates against individuals, families, Hutterite colonies, and rural businesses that are engaged and invested in producing & marketing pigs for food. It removes the existing legal rights of legitimate family farmers.
- Bill 17 effectively expropriates future business opportunities, which would otherwise be available to Manitoba citizens.
- Bill 17 denies Manitoba producers the opportunity to capitalize on knowledge & science as they exist today and will undoubtedly evolve in the future. It doesn't embrace science - it rejects it.
- Bill 17 is not aimed at environmental protection or sustainability. It is not based on real science – it is based on political science.
- Bill 17 has no connection to the Clean Environment Commission report, which clearly said the industry was sustainable.
- Bill 17 was introduced with no consultation, resulting in broken promises by the govern-

ment, which had said it would lift the ban after the CEC report. We have repeatedly said we would work with government on reasonable regulations.

- Bill 17 will not do what the government says it will. All hogs from Manitoba could be eliminated and it would have zero impact on Lake Winnipeg. Farmers would simply replace natural, organic manure with manufactured fertilizers. Banning new hog farms has no relationship to how manure is managed.
- Appropriate nutrient management is the right way to deal with this issue - not a ban on buildings.

If government receives enough opposition to Bill 17, it is a chance that they will withdraw the legislation or alter it to address its serious flaws.

You may also want to write a letter to your MLA, the Premier, provincial ministers, municipal councilors or the local media. If you'd like more information or statistics to help, please contact Manitoba Pork Council at 237-7447.

## KAP Activities

### Last Week...

President Ian Wishart presented at a Pest Management Regulatory Agency consultation in Ottawa. He also met with a senior advisor in Liberal Leader Stephane Dion's office to discuss agricultural issues. President Wishart met with representatives from Green Manitoba, a government body tasked with coordinating the province's environmental initiatives.

### Monday, May 5

President Wishart met with AAFC Minister Gerry Ritz.

### Tuesday, May 6

KAP facilitated a meeting between the Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation and The Co-operators to discuss insurance issues in the agricultural sector.

### Wednesday, May 7

KAP's management team met by conference call to discuss upcoming meetings and other issues.



**7TH ANNUAL  
KAP KLASSIC  
GOLF TOURNAMENT  
JUNE 27, 2008 - 1:00 PM**

**PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE GOLF COURSE**

**COST: \$70.00**

**INCLUDES: GREEN FEES, GOLF CART AND DINNER**

**(BBQ Only - \$25.00)**

**BBQ - Steak Dinner provided by Bill's Sticky Fingers,  
and will be held at the Portage Fair Grounds**

**TO REGISTER: PLEASE SEND PAYMENT WITH REGISTRATION**

**FORM TO THE KAP OFFICE BY JUNE 10, 2008**

**COME OUT FOR AN AFTERNOON OF FUN AND GREAT  
COMPETITION**

**(Two weeks cancellation required for a Full Refund)**

**(Payment MUST accompany your Registration Form to be registered)**



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PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR EMAIL SO THAT WE CAN CONTACT YOU IF NEEDED FOR FURTHER DETAILS