

1. Working with Farmers

How does your party plan to work with general farm organizations in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and across Canada to ensure that agriculture is heard?

Few regions of the country have been more important in the development of grass roots politics than the Prairie provinces. The Green Party of Canada is founded on the principle of participatory democracy, and would be proud to have the opportunity to work alongside all of the relevant stakeholders to come up with common solutions to Canada's vital agricultural needs. It is critical that before we look outside our borders, we put the needs of our own farmers first. We are committed to developing policies that meet the needs of Canada's farmers and would welcome their input.

2. Farm Input Prices

What program or services will your government offer producers to monitor and manage input prices? If elected, what initiatives would you provide to agricultural producers to assist in properly managing this and other market risks?

Over the last five decades, federal policies, subsidies and changing technologies have shifted food production away from small ecologically-sustainable family farms to giant agribusinesses. This shift has given multinational corporations control over our food supply. Meanwhile, farmers increasingly rely on off-farm income to survive.

We believe that we must restructure our agricultural markets to sustain farming and provide farm families with a fair share of the consumer food dollar. We want to expand local small-scale agriculture and support a rapid transition to organic agriculture rather than subsidizing costly agro-chemicals, industrial food production and genetically modified crops.

The Green Party would ensure that supply management systems provide stable domestic markets, viable farm income and permit unregulated production by smaller and family farms that sell to local markets.

3. Transportation

Is your party satisfied that the revenue cap has successfully serve both the railway and the farm community? If elected, would your government commit to a mandatory, periodic review of freight rates and subsequently adjust the cap?

The Green Party of Canada understands that transportation costs are a rising concern for both farmers and Canadian consumers. Moreover they unfairly punish small farmers, further rewarding large corporate farms. In order to combat the rising costs of food production, a Green government would support local food economies by enabling local areas, without industrial scale agriculture, to develop area-specific food safety regulations meeting national standards without placing undue financial burdens on local farmers and food processors.

4. Producer Payment Security

If elected, what legislative or regulatory measures will your party take to ensure producers are protected in the marketplace?

With growing concerns over economic and climatic instability, a reliable domestic food supply is essential. Family owned and operated farms of small to medium size constitute the most reliable, high quality and economical food production system, now and into our uncertain future. The Green Party of Canada supports family farmers as environmental stewards and as efficient producers of nutritious food.

At the core of a Green agriculture policy is a commitment to ensure that Canadian farmers earn a stable living wage and have safe working conditions. This can be done by ensuring that farm support payments are farm-based (not production based) in order to encourage more farms and farmers. Moreover, the Green party is committed to a stable Canadian Wheat Board that will ensure the fair-trading of high quality Canadian grains. These solutions, coupled with a new emphasis on local food production and culinary tourism, provide the basis for a vibrant agriculture sector.

5. Environment

Farmers want a national Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) program to help them become better landscape managers. Will your government implement a national ALUS program as an environmental priority?

In order to maintain a strong agricultural sector it is necessary to preserve the land that is so essential to our food production. The present system necessitates the rampant abuse of resources; resulting in soil depletion, water contamination and unsanitary conditions for livestock.

The Green Party of Canada would move to provide farmers with the means to decrease their ecological footprint while being able to earn a living off their land.

Therefore a Green government would:

- Minimize the effects of climate change by encouraging farming methods that increase carbon sequestration and decrease water requirements, with financial rewards through domestic carbon trading.

- Introduce cost-shared programs to help farmers protect wildlife habitat areas and marginal lands, maintain water quality in streams, lakes and aquifers and retain and improve soil quality;

- Set up an Environmental Farm Plan Program to provide new funding sources for implementation at the farm level;

- Strengthen the Plant Protection and Health of Animals Programs with measures to ensure the integrity of farm food products

-Strengthen the role of the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) and extending the scope of its work, such as arresting soil erosion, to all of Canada.