

Liberal Party of Canada  
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September 16, 2008

Kristen Lucyshyn  
Communications Officer  
Keystone Agricultural Producers  
203-1700 Ellice Avenue  
Winnipeg MB R3H 0B1

Dear Ms. Lucyshyn,

Enclosed, please find the Liberal Party response to your questionnaire.

For more information on the Liberal Party of Canada's vision for Canada, please take a moment to review our platform online at [www.liberal.ca](http://www.liberal.ca). This document provides details on Liberal goals and priorities.

On behalf of our Leader, Stéphane Dion, and the entire Liberal team, thank you for writing to identify the major concerns of your membership. We appreciate your interest in the Liberal Party's policies as they relate to the issues which affect you.

Sincerely,

Doug Ferguson, President  
Liberal Party of Canada



## **A Liberal Response to the Keystone Agricultural Producers**

### **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?***

The Liberal Party has always advocated a strong relationship with farmers and farm organizations. The best way to understand how issues affect our farmers is to have an ongoing dialogue. That is why our Leader, Stéphane Dion, announced the Opportunities in Agriculture Task Force.

The Task Force's goal was to find specific and practical measures to address both the challenges and opportunities facing Canadian farmers. The task force heard from more than two dozen national farm organizations as well as numerous local groups and dozens more of individual farmers and resulted in *Canadian Farmers: Targeted Actions for Results Report* which can be found at:

[http://www.liberal.ca/pdf/docs/080306\\_ag\\_tf\\_report\\_en.pdf](http://www.liberal.ca/pdf/docs/080306_ag_tf_report_en.pdf) .

With a specific focus on the crisis facing the livestock industry, the Task Force was part of an ongoing dialogue that the Liberal Party has held with Canadian producers. The included consultations this summer during which Mr. Dion listened to Canadians rural families about The Green Shift plan. As a result of this open process, the plan was updated to include \$400 million in Emissions Reduction Credits, a \$250 million Green Farms Fund and a \$250 million Green Fisheries and Transportation Fund.

### **2. Farm Input Prices**

***Fertilizer prices and the cost of other farm inputs continue to rise at an extremely fast pace. On behalf of our members, APAS, KAP, and WRAP have repeatedly called for a full investigation into chemical, fertilizer, and other 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?***

Both rising input costs and the lengthy regulatory process make it difficult for you to access chemicals and fertilizers. The Liberal Party is committed to streamlining the regulatory process to ensure that affordable chemicals and fertilizers are approved in a more efficient manner, leveling the playing field with

competitors who do not face those regulatory hurdles.

As well, the Liberal Party has always been committed to improving our risk management programs. The Conservative Party dismantled the advisory committees put in place by the former Liberal Government to improve these programs, preferring to impose their ideology rather than consult with farmers on how to make programs work better.

### **3. Transportation**

***Revenue cap reductions in the rail sector have been delayed, and farmers have been given no relief from overpaying for rail service. Recently-announced service reviews may take years, further compounding producers' frustration with the system while railways are receiving unprecedented returns on their investment.***

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

The Liberal Party recognizes the precarious situation farmers often find themselves in and understands the need for greater predictability of cost factors. If a review is expected to happen we would make sure it does happen without unreasonable delays and that the review is conducted in a fair and transparent manner. Farmers deserve a government that removes obstacles.

A liberal government would also consider serious review of the freight rates as way to help lighten the burden farmers carry.

### **4. Producer Payment Security**

***Bill C-39 was introduced into the last parliamentary session, and would have eliminated financial protection for farmers under the Canadian Grain Commission bonding requirements for grain buyers. It is extremely important that producers have a mechanism in place for their financial protection and security when delivering grains.***

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

The original Canadian Grain Act has stated that the Canadian Grain Commission's mandate is to "act in the interests of producers". The new bill, introduced by the Conservatives, removes that phrase and changes the focus of the Canadian Grain Commission (CGC) to value-added activities for the grain industry.

Refusing to provide any economic analysis for their proposal, the Conservatives fail to prove that their changes are made in the best economic interest of producers – just as they failed to do with regard to the Canadian Wheat Board.

The Liberal Party believes that the CGC can be improved in accordance with the Standing Committee recommendations – most of which have been ignored by this government.

## **5. Environment**

***The health of our environment is consistently listed as a top priority by Canadians. Farmers can deliver environmental services, but only if the right programs and incentives are put in place by government.***

***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?***

Under The Green Shift, a new Liberal government will provide \$900 million in green tax incentives to help the agriculture, forestry, trucking and fisheries industries invest in cleaner technology, reduce their carbon emissions and save money.

This includes \$400 million in Emissions Reduction Credits, a \$250 million Green Farms Fund and a \$250 million Green Fisheries and Transportation Fund.

Emission Reduction Credits will encourage and reward industries that are achieving verified reductions in non-energy greenhouse gas emissions. They will provide an immediate financial incentive for practices such as minimum-till farming and carbon storage.

The \$250-million Green Farms Fund will support research in, and provide rebates on, green farm technologies that reduce fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

Similarly, the new Green Fisheries and Transportation Fund would provide \$250 million in rebates and incentives for investments in technologies and upgraded equipment that reduce fuel consumption, such as anti-idling power devices for the trucking industry and on-shore power facilities for the fisheries industry.

In addition, the Liberal's Green Rural Credit will be worth \$150 for every rural Canadian tax filer, regardless of whether they currently pay any federal income tax, which will be paid up front and in full each year.