

Budget Paper B: Agriculture

The following policy points are presented for consideration and further development in order to further support Manitoba's farming community.

Improve School Food Structures

To both require a local food component and educate students on where their food comes from. In doing so, the practice of farming will be exposed as an honest and credible occupation option for them. See Food Security Chapter in the APB.

Review and Improve Current Land Acts

Like the Agriculture Land Owners Act to better serve young and new farmers. Goals include curbing land ownership by investment acquisitions and ensuring that farm land inflation rate is curbed.

Agriculture Crown Land

Re-institute the point system on new Agriculture Crown Land Leases, so that new farmers and local farmers still have a say versus the highest bidder system. The time frame for renewal would be 20 years from the current change from 50 to 15.

Better Provincial Insurance Models

The government would roll out a respectable Manitoba Agriculture Services Corporation

(MASC) insurance program that is more readily available to direct market farms particularly in vegetables and local food production so that loss of production to weather and extreme events will not cause passionate farmers to keep farming. In Manitoba we have one of the best provincial insurance programs in Canada but there is work that can be done to give smaller scale farmers the assurance they need that when times are tough, their initial cost of production will be paid for.

Farm Regulation Improvements

Recognitions and a process would be funded to assess the range of needs required by farm types. It would focus on understanding the needs not just by type but by scale. The goal would then be to assess and address regulation concerns based on scale and true effectiveness. The goal would be to ensure safety, to keep regulation in the hands of government while realizing that smaller scale should not have the same types of regulation burdens as larger scale farms.

Manitoba Online Farm Training Programs

Even though many farmers have been active and many new farmers have gained experience,

having a strong across the board training option that all farmers can access gives a better option for rural peoples who may not be able to get to large town centres. As we gain new knowledge in better farm practices that can curb climate change mitigation and adaptation, as we gain more knowledge.

A Diversity of Voices

The Government of Manitoba would amend the Agricultural Producers' Organization Funding Act to allow Stable Funding to be available to more than one General Farm Organization.

This would allow for a better diversity of voices. This act has squashed the ability for a diversity of farm voices to be heard in the farm industry by allowing only Keystone Agricultural Producers to access check-off dollars from farmers and not giving them a choice to self-fund organizations like the National Farmers Union in Manitoba through similar means.

Local Food Tax Credit

A local food credit of 2 per cent would be made available to both vendors who sell local food and farmers who produce and sell local food.