

June 18, 2015

Manitoba News Release: Province Announces Consultation Schedule for Agricultural Risk Management Task Force

PROVINCE ANNOUNCES CONSULTATION SCHEDULE FOR AGRICULTURAL RISK MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE

Manitoba farmers and other agricultural stakeholders are invited to provide their input about agricultural risk management programs at a series of upcoming public consultations or through an online questionnaire, Agriculture, Food and Rural Development Minister Ron Kostyshyn announced today.

"The task force appointed earlier this year is making good progress and we now want to hear directly from those most affected by agricultural risk management programs and climate-related challenges," said Minister Kostyshyn. "This is important work that will guide our government's direction in the years to come and the task force provides the best platform to hold discussions with industry stakeholders and the public."

The minister noted Manitoba farmers have said existing business risk management programs do not adequately address the risks that arise from climate-related challenges such as spring flooding and excess rainfall.

"We are following through on our commitment to review existing programs and consider options that will be more predictable, comprehensive and sustainable for farmers and governments," the minister said. "I look forward to hearing from Manitobans as part of the task force's work."

The Agriculture Risk Management Review Task Force will focus its consultations on the ability of current programs to protect and provide a foundation for Manitoba's agriculture industry as it deals with a changing climate, Minister Kostyshyn said. Seven public consultations have been scheduled:

- * Melita, Town Hall, July 9, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.;
- * Swan River, Westwood Inn, July 13, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.;
- * Dauphin, St. Viator's Roman Catholic Church, July 14, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.;
- * Arborg, Arborg Bifrost Community Centre, July 20, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.;
- * Portage la Prairie, Canad Inns Destination Centre, July 21, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.;
- * Beausejour, Sandy-Salteaux Spiritual Centre, July 27, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.; and
- * Morris, Morris United Church, July 28, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

Written submissions will be accepted until Sept. 30 and should focus on gaps or challenges with current risk management programs and any adjustments or alternatives to current programs that could be considered, the minister said. An online questionnaire will also be available. The questionnaire and additional information on how to send written comments will be posted online shortly in the Quick Links section at www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture.

The task force has been asked to review the ability of current tools to effectively manage risk and identify gaps. They have also been asked to identify new policy and program opportunities that may advance the ability of the agriculture sector and government to manage risk issues and the economic effects of a changing climate.

The task force's members are Bill Uruski (chair), Derek Brewin, Doug Chorney, John DeVos, Frieda Krpan and Goldwyn Jones.

A final report with recommendations will be submitted to government by the end of the year, the minister said.

For more information on Manitoba's agricultural programs and services, follow the Twitter account at www.twitter.com/MBGovAg.