

Quote: 283512

7/4/2024

Ms. Brenda Knight
Chair
Agricultural Service Board Provincial Committee
Box 580
Cardston AB T0K 0K0

Dear Ms. Knight:

Thank you for your letter regarding the resolutions passed at the 2024 Provincial Agricultural Service Board Conference in January 2024.

With regard to Resolution 2-24: Compensating Producers for Ecosystem Services, the Government of Canada understands the importance of recognizing past stewardship actions and supports the principle that environmentally positive measures should be recognized.

For example, the \$250 million federal-provincial-territorial cost-shared Resilient Agricultural Landscape Program uses an ecological goods and services payment approach to incentivize producers to conserve and enhance the resilience of agricultural landscapes through the adoption of on-farm land use and management practices such as maintaining and restoring grasslands and wetlands; piloting innovative agriculture practices; and enhancing riparian and on-farm wildlife area. The program was designed to give provinces flexibility in program implementation to account for regional differences.

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Through financial support and the provision of scientific expertise, the Government is supporting industry-led assurance systems such as the Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef, the Certified Sustainable Beef Framework, the Dairy Farmers of Canada's proAction and the Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Crops.

These systems provide a possible mechanism to recognize current and past environmentally positive measures being taken by the sector. For example, the Farm Credit Canada sustainability incentive launched in 2022 provides annual incentive payments to eligible customers who meet the program partners' sustainability program requirements. Program partnerships include the Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef, McCain Regenerative Agriculture Framework, Cargill RegenConnect, Dairy Farmers of Canada, Lactanet and Ducks Unlimited Canada. Farm Credit Canada continues to look for partnership opportunities with additional industry-led sustainability initiatives.

Rewarding early adopters for past actions was a common theme throughout the extensive consultations with the sector in 2023 as part of informing the development of the Sustainable Agriculture Strategy. Together with the sector, the Strategy could assist in exploring ways in which early adopters could be further recognized.

With regard to Resolution E1-24: Support for the Export of Live Horses for Slaughter, the Government of Canada has committed to banning the practice. This was reflected in the Prime Minister's mandate letter to my predecessor. This is a complex issue over which the Canadian public has expressed deep concerns, which the Government remains committed to addressing. Bill C-355, *Prohibition of the Export of Horses by Air for Slaughter Act*, has been introduced by a private member and the Government is carefully studying the contents of this bill.

The Government is aware of the valuable contribution of the horse industry to the Canadian economy. It also recognizes that horse slaughter is an integral end-of-life option and an important animal welfare approach for horses in Alberta. Please be assured that the federal government takes its responsibility seriously when considering the potential for unintended consequences of any policy decision

that may impact the horse industry. My officials have engaged in consultations with industry members, provincial governments, animal welfare advocates and scientific experts to better understand the sector and the full implications of a ban on producers. As Bill C-355 moves through the parliamentary process, the Government will work to identify and minimize unintended consequences.

The perspectives and insight provided by industry stakeholders have been important considerations in our review of the bill. They have informed and will continue to inform the Government's decision making on this issue.

I thank you for bringing the resolutions that are directed to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and the Pest Management Regulatory Agency to my attention. I have taken the liberty of copying the Minister of Health, the Honourable Mark Holland, on this response to ensure his department is aware of the resolutions that fall within his jurisdiction. I have also taken the liberty of sharing our exchange with my colleague, the Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, for consideration.

I trust that this information will be of assistance. Again, thank you for sharing your concerns on these important matters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lawrence MacAulay". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lawrence MacAulay, PC, MP

c.c.: The Honourable Mark Holland, PC, MP
The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, PC, MP