



## Where is ag platform in election?

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Agriculture is a solid contributor to the national economy, accounting for nine percent of the gross domestic product, 2.4 million jobs and \$26.5 billion in exports.

Clearly, agriculture is a national strength.

However, our federal party leaders have rarely mentioned agriculture in their campaigns, and it was absent in the first leaders' debate.

The Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan has asked federal leaders for a meeting, provided them with a copy of Saskatchewan producers' election issues and asked for clarity on each party's agricultural platform.

It is critical that farmers and ranchers ask questions of all parties to understand their respective positions on agricultural related topics permitting the voters to make an informed choice Oct. 19.

What issues need to be addressed?

The Canada Transportation Act Review is underway, and the incoming government will need to make decisions. Providing competition in a duopoly through maximum revenue entitlement is critical.

The maximum revenue entitlement has been established to ensure the railways receive a 20 percent return and provide grain shippers with a level of assurance that freight rates will avoid excessive cost hikes. There is no maximum revenue entitlement in the United States, and freight rates have increased by 80 percent over 12 years, compared to 2.4 percent a year in Canada.

Committing to a railway costing review is essential to ensure producers are paying a fair rate. Inter-switching rules, accountability, producer cars, short-line allocation and legislated shipper protection and service provisions need to be included in the amended CTA.

AgriStability, AgriRecovery, AgriInvest and AgriInsurance all need upgrading. Many parts of Saskatchewan are dealing with drought or continue to have too much moisture. Next year will be the year that tests the current farm risk management programs under Growing Forward 2. APAS believes better design, structure, resourcing and program efficiency are required.



Saskatchewan farmers are among the most efficient and are well positioned to take advantage of current and future trade agreements and emerging markets.

A key aspect to maintaining our international competitiveness is ensuring that producers operate at a cost of production equivalent to the U.S.

Rapid price increases for farm inputs such as seed, fertilizers, crop protection products and fuel make price parity in the North American market essential. A level playing field and streamlined process is required, and this requires federal government commitment.

Canada must treat water as a valuable resource to manage during times of drought and surplus. The exit of senior governments from this issue means local municipalities, organizations and producers need the appropriate resources and tools to effectively manage the resource. Collaboration and federal investment in water infrastructure is paramount.

Agriculture's unique workforce challenges require a mix of human resource development and immigration policies designed specifically for the agricultural sector. The Temporary Foreign Workers Program needs to be modified to help farmers and ranchers secure, train and maintain a workforce over an extended period of time.

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