



## Canadian agriculture crucial during COVID-19 crisis

APAS highlights urgent need to embrace opportunities and ensure stability within Canadian agriculture during COVID-19 pandemic

**March 18, 2020 (Regina, SK)** – The Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS) is calling attention to the role that Canadian agriculture can and must play during the economic disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Saskatchewan farmers are not shutting down,” said APAS President and farmer Todd Lewis. “Farm families are hard at work every day to ensure a stable supply of quality food for Canadian and international customers. People around the world will continue to rely on our products, and we will continue to operate while other sectors slow down. However, as an industry that supports one in every eight Canadian jobs, farmers need assistance from governments and industry partners to make sure we can continue to do our jobs.”

Lewis pointed out that producers are facing considerable uncertainty about cash flow heading into spring seeding. “Our members are about to invest billions of dollars into this year’s crop, and recent weather, trade, and transportation disruptions have stretched our financial capacity to the limit. We need the government and financial industry to assist us to make that investment possible,” Lewis explained. He welcomed the federal government’s announcement of relaxation of regulations on financial institutions to increase liquidity and called for banks and credit unions to work with producers on cash flow issues.

Lewis also highlighted that many employment opportunities will be available in agriculture this year. “Many producers have relied on international seasonal labour to do essential work on Canadian farms, but it appears that workers may not be available this season due to border closures. People that have lost their jobs during the COVID-19 crisis need to be connected to agricultural work that urgently needs to be done. APAS and other agricultural groups need to engage with everyone that can help connect potential workers with employment opportunities.”

Lewis concluded that APAS is also focused on supply chain issues in transportation and food processing. “Whether it is transport of products to export markets, or availability of farm inputs or processing capacity, Canadian farmers depend on a fully functional transportation and supply chain. For the sake of maintaining a stable food supply globally, we all have to ensure there are no further disruptions to Canadian agriculture.”

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For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact:

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**Background:** APAS is Saskatchewan’s general farm organization – formed to provide farmers and ranchers with a democratically elected, grassroots, non-partisan, producer-run organization based on rural municipal boundaries. As the united voice of thousands of agricultural producers and ranchers in Saskatchewan, we strive to represent the views of a wide variety of agricultural stakeholders in order to form comprehensive policies that can benefit all sectors of society. APAS is a member of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture.