

MANITOBA BEEF PRODUCERS

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Statement

For immediate release

October 2, 2019

Manitoba Beef Producers' Statement re: Modernization of Manitoba's Agricultural Crown Lands Leasing Program

Manitoba Beef Producers (MBP) is engaging with the provincial government about the effects of its recently-announced changes to the Agricultural Crown Lands (ACL) Leasing Program on beef producers and it is seeking desirable outcomes for the industry.

"Many producers rely on predictable and affordable access to Crown land leases as a major part of their operations, particularly in areas of the province where there is limited access to deeded land," said MBP President Tom Teichroeb. "During the consultative process we identified key producer and industry priorities when it comes to the future direction of the ACL program and we are continuing to advance those priorities."

Among the changes being made to the ACL program MBP believes will be beneficial to the beef industry include:

- Allocating ACL leases via an auction system, which is a less complicated and more transparent process;
- A commitment to promoting compliance and using enforcement where needed to ensure the lands are being utilized for the intended purpose; and,
- The removal of the 4,800 Animal Unit Month cap per leaseholder for forage leases, a practice that has been restrictive and which did not necessarily take into account the increasing size of operations overall.

MBP has firm positions on several matters raised during the consultative process around the modernization of the ACL Program and it is continuing to pursue their inclusion in the government's policies. They include:

- The continued ability for producers to be able to utilize family transfers and unit transfers;
- Allowing existing lease holders to have the first right of renewal upon expiry of their lease if they can demonstrate that they still meet the program terms and conditions. Access and predictability are essential to long-term planning related to livestock operations;
- Having a rental rate formula that is fair, easily understood, recognizes market conditions and does not place an undue financial burden on the producers during the transition to the new formula; and,
- The right to informed access whereby those wishing to access ACL would need to notify the lease or permit holder prior to entry. This is important to address concerns related to potential biosecurity issues, and also to help protect livestock, people and the environment.

MBP believes that if the beef cattle sector is to grow it is essential agricultural Crown lands be allocated, priced and managed in the most predictable and transparent manner possible. This will help ensure their use is both effective and efficient for producers, and also help meet the stated objectives of the ACL program which include supporting the sustainable expansion of the livestock herd in Manitoba, contributing to ecological goods and services, and providing mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

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Manitoba Beef Producers is the exclusive voice of the beef industry in Manitoba, representing 6,500 producers across the province. MBP's mission is to represent all beef producers through communication, advocacy, research, and education—within the industry and to governments, consumers and others, to improve prosperity and ensure a sustainable future.

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