



What We Heard Report: Next Agricultural Policy Framework - Policy Statement

Stakeholder Engagement

March to April 2026

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Background

The Ministry of Agriculture held two information sessions in March 2026 to provide an update on the Next Policy Framework (NPF) and gather initial feedback from Saskatchewan agricultural stakeholder groups. Stakeholders were also invited to submit written input until the end of April 2026 to inform the development of the Ministerial Policy Statement, which will outline the vision, priorities and guiding principles for the NPF. It is expected the Policy Statement will be finalized at the July 2026 Federal-Provincial-Territorial Ministers' Conference in Halifax.

Proposed NPF Priority Areas

Stakeholders were generally supportive of the four proposed NPF priorities: Economic Growth and Competitiveness; Markets and Trade; Science, Research and Innovation; and Sector Resiliency. Feedback emphasized the need for a strategic, forward-looking framework that positions Canada as a global leader.

Stakeholders highlighted the importance of competitiveness in the current geopolitical climate, including maintaining access to existing markets and pursuing diversification. Science, research and innovation were identified as essential drivers of productivity and long-term sector growth. In addition, sector resiliency was recognized as a broad priority area that encompasses several important elements, including environmental stewardship and climate adaptation, public trust and plant and animal health.

Information Sessions

The first stakeholder information session was held on March 20, 2026, with 16 participants representing 12 stakeholder groups, followed by a second session on March 23, 2026, which included 13 participants from eight stakeholder groups. Stakeholders who participated in the information sessions are outlined in Appendix A.

Stakeholders stressed the importance of predictability, program stability and continuity between frameworks. It was noted that the current Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP) is highly prescriptive and stakeholders expressed a preference for greater regional flexibility in the next framework. It was also emphasized that there is a need to streamline reporting requirements to focus on meaningful indicators tied to sector productivity and competitiveness.

Written Feedback

The ministry invited written submissions to inform the development of the NPF Ministerial Policy Statement. A total of 28 responses (Appendix B) were received in response to three core themes:

1. Key Sector Issues:
 - Identify the three most critical challenges or opportunities that should inform the NPF's priority areas.
2. Emerging Trends and Future Considerations:
 - Identify emerging trends, risks or technological developments the NPF should anticipate over the next decade.
3. Barriers to Growth and Innovation:
 - Identify the most significant constraints limiting growth, productivity or innovation.

Key sector challenges and opportunities

Stakeholders identified several recurring themes, beginning with concerns about regulatory inefficiency and red tape. The need for a more predictable and streamlined regulatory environment that reduces delays and better supports innovation was emphasized. Feedback also pointed to aging infrastructure and transportation bottlenecks, including rail and port limitations, as barriers that undermine supply-chain reliability and global competitiveness.

Many responses stressed the importance of expanding value-added processing to capture more economic activity within the province and reduce reliance on raw commodity exports. Maintaining access to existing markets while pursuing diversification was also highlighted as increasingly important in a shifting geopolitical landscape.

Stakeholders reaffirmed that animal disease management and emergency preparedness remain high priorities, calling for stronger surveillance, response capacity and coordination. They also underscored the growing impact of weather-related risks, including extreme weather and biodiversity loss, and identified irrigation expansion and improved water management as key opportunities to strengthen productivity and long-term resilience. Ongoing pest pressures and challenges accessing pest control products were also noted, with regulatory uncertainty adding complexity to production planning.

Feedback underlined the importance of securing long-term research funding and investing in applied research to ensure innovations translate into practical tools for producers. Rising input costs such as land, fuel, fertilizer and equipment continue to erode margins across the sector.

Finally, stakeholders highlighted the importance of improved data systems and performance measurement to support evidence-based decision-making. There were suggestions for outcomes-based indicators, including measuring Canadian competitiveness relative to peer export nations, increased productivity across the agri-food value chain and increased value of goods sold from the agri-food value chain.

Emerging trends that should inform the development of the NPF

Stakeholders noted that evolving consumer preferences, including growing demand for sustainably-produced food, greater transparency and convenience are reshaping market opportunities and influencing how products must be positioned. They also emphasized the importance of sustained investment in ports, rail capacity and measures to mitigate labour disruptions to ensure reliable market access and supply-chain stability.

It was highlighted that artificial intelligence, automation and digital agriculture tools are rapidly transforming production systems and will play an increasingly central role in future competitiveness. At the same time, maintaining and strengthening public trust in agriculture remains a priority, with stakeholders underscoring the need to proactively address misinformation and support transparent communication.

A shortage of veterinarians, particularly in rural and large-animal practices, was identified as a growing risk to animal health, disease surveillance and emergency response capacity. Weather variability was also raised as an emerging trend, pointing to the value of adaptation and mitigation practices, along with the importance of soil health in supporting overall resilience.

Finally, respondents stressed that longer-term research funding cycles are essential to support complex, multi-year research projects.

Constraints limiting the growth of the sector

Stakeholders noted that limited support for new entrants and succession planning continues to constrain sector renewal, making it difficult for the next generation of producers. They also reiterated that regulatory constraints remain a significant barrier to growth, with complex, inconsistent or outdated requirements slowing investment, innovation and operational efficiency.

Participants highlighted that administrative burden and time-consuming reporting requirements add unnecessary pressure on producers and agri-businesses, diverting time and resources away from core operations. Access to capital was identified as an ongoing challenge, limiting opportunities for expansion, infrastructure upgrades and modernization.

Stakeholders expressed concern that program complexity reduces uptake and effectiveness, noting that eligibility rules, timelines and administrative requirements are often difficult to navigate.

Finally, respondents pointed out that high and volatile transportation costs continue to reduce competitiveness for export-oriented commodities and create uncertainty in supply-chain planning. Persistent skilled labour shortages across primary production and processing further constrain productivity and limit the sector's ability to grow.

Other key themes

The feedback received also touched on several additional points that fall outside the scope of the NPF Policy Statement. Stakeholders provided input on specific Sustainable CAP strategic initiatives and business risk management programs, as well as federally-attributed programs. This input will continue to inform ongoing NPF discussions as negotiations advance.

The ministry recognizes stakeholders' interest in future engagement opportunities to discuss program-specific feedback in more detail. These discussions will occur as work on the NPF progresses.

Conclusion and next steps

The ministry appreciates the feedback provided to inform the development of the NPF Policy Statement. All input received is considered as the ministry works to integrate Saskatchewan stakeholder perspectives into ongoing federal-provincial-territorial discussions to help shape a Policy Statement that reflects provincial priorities.

Building on this engagement, the ministry will proceed with future industry engagement sessions tentatively planned for winter 2026-27. These sessions will focus on a review of Sustainable CAP programming in Saskatchewan and early direction for the NPF. The ministry looks forward to continued collaboration with stakeholders as work on the NPF progresses over the next few years, leading to the implementation in April 2028.

Appendix A: Information Session Participants

Crops	Livestock	Other
Wheat Growers Association	Chicken Farmers of Saskatchewan	Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan*
Mustard 21	Saskatchewan Cattle Association	Irrigation Saskatchewan
SaskMustard*	Saskatchewan Beekeepers Development Commission	
Saskatchewan Forage Council	Saskatchewan Pork Development Board	
Saskatchewan Barley Development Commission	Canadian Bison Association	
SaskOats	Saskatchewan Cattle Feeders Association	
Sask Oilseeds		
Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission		
Saskatchewan Pulse Growers		
Saskatchewan Seed Growers		

*Some organizations attended both NPF information sessions.

Appendix B: Written Submissions Received

Crops	Livestock	Other
SaskCrops	Saskatchewan Bison Association	Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan
SaskOrganics	Chicken Farmers of Saskatchewan	Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities
SaskOats	Saskatchewan Cattle Association	Canadian Credit Union Association
Saskatchewan Forage Council	Sask Pork	Mosaic
Saskatchewan Pulse Growers	SaskMilk	Sask Young Ag
Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association	Individual Producer	Irrigation Saskatchewan
Sask Oilseeds	Animal Health Canada	ALUS Canada
Saskatchewan Stock Growers Foundation		Croptimistic Technology Inc.
Wheat Growers Association		Miry Creek Irrigation District
Individual Producer		Saskatchewan Farm Stewardship Association
		Farm and Food Care