

POLICY UPDATE

TRAINS, MARKET STRAINS & SUZUKI ORDEALS: PROMOTING TRUTH IN THE ERA OF FAKE NEWS

On any given day as a producer, you must deal with a whole lot of dung, figuratively and literally for some. The weather, breakdowns, logistics, pests, and markets are examples of where farmers try to actively manage their risk. Now pile on a railway crisis, another market access episode and an honorary degree for environmental activist David Suzuki. The latter issues are the hard ones for individual producers to manage for their risks, yet they can have a major impact on your operation and bottom line. Issues coming out of left field are much more difficult to manage and these are areas where the cropping sector continues to speak with one voice on your behalf.

Since the railroads have existed in Canada, so too have the criticisms from farmers. The past year is a near repeat of the 2013-14 shipping season with demurrage and contract execution risk once again eroding cash bids on the prairies and dollars in your jeans. Railcar orders - at times months behind - continue to strain international customer relationships and confidence, not to mention the Canadian brand due to the inability of grain to be delivered on time. APG has been actively working to ensure Bill C-49, the Transportation Modernization Act, includes appropriate amendments to ensure a balance of power can be struck between the two major railways and the captive shippers.

If only farmers were more than 2% of the population, like India, perhaps our voice would be deemed louder? Speaking of India, Canadian pulse growers seem to take another shellacking every month with subsequent tariffs, import restrictions or fumigation mumbo-jumbo rolling on. Our sector worked tirelessly to ensure that our political leaders were briefed and up to speed for diplomatic meetings and, once again, our market access issue is long forgotten by the majority of Canadians. Criminal records of the past and technicolour dream coats dominated the headlines, yet our hard work continues to right this monstrous market interruption.

Grain farmers remain the most trusted members of society in past and recent polls, yet our public trust is constantly under attack. The public mistrust and misunderstanding of GMOs, pesticides and conventional farming practices stems from influential people spreading unsubstantiated propaganda in this new era of fake news. The University of Alberta decision to grant one of those influencers an honorary degree stings the cropping sector, as the recipient continues to trumpet fallacies and mistruths around the safety of present day plant breeding and pesticides. The foundation that bears his name is also suing the Pest Management Regulatory Agency for registering neonicotinoids, and



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continues to perpetuate false claims of bee colony declines due to these commonly used seed treatments. Much of the agricultural science community in Alberta has protested the decision, so too has the cropping sector. The public trust of our conventional cropping systems is constantly under attack, yet commonly misunderstood. Sometimes it is best to let sleeping dogs lie, and other times

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the best course of action is to call for calculated measures. Team Alberta wrote a letter to U of A President Dr. David Turpin pointing out the irony in the U of A senate decision. Your crop commissions will continue to advocate for sound, robust science based methods for discovery and truth. Quaecumque vera. See our letter here: [www.albertapulse.com/wp-content/](http://www.albertapulse.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Open-Letter-to-Dr.-David-Turpin.pdf)

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All of these areas remain front and centre for your provincial board and key areas where advocacy from the cropping sector continues. APG staff and elected Directors keep on speaking with your best interests and pocket books in mind. From parliamentary

committee hearings on climate change to the important role technology plays in reducing emissions from our sector, rest assured that although producers are few, when we speak with a united voice, the public listens. They trust farmers. Let us leverage that trust to spread the truth.

***Nominate someone you know
for the 5th annual***

Industry Innovator Award

Entry Deadline: December 7, 2018

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<https://albertapulse.com/2018/04/nominations-open-for-2019-pulse-industry-innovator-award/>