

Conversations at the farm gate: Minister MacDonald meets with Team Alberta Crops

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Team Alberta Crops welcomed the federal Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, the Honourable Heath MacDonald, and senior officials from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada for a farm tour and roundtable discussion on the opportunities and challenges facing Alberta crop producers. The visit on July 6 marked the second year that Team Alberta Crops has facilitated on-farm engagement with the Minister.

Hosted by Alberta Canola Director Jeff Frost during Calgary Stampede week, the visit brought together representatives from Alberta's crop and beekeeping organizations to showcase modern farming operations and provide direct feedback on policy issues affecting producers across the province.

The morning began with a tour of Frost's grain handling, storage and drying facilities near Olds. As guests moved through the bin yard, Frost explained how investments in on-farm infrastructure can help producers manage crop quality, reduce risk, and improve marketing opportunities. The tour offered a firsthand look at the significant capital required to operate a modern grain farm and served as a natural starting point for broader discussions about farm competitiveness and profitability.

Succession planning quickly emerged as a key topic. Representatives spoke about the importance of policies that support intergenerational farm transfers, improve access to capital for young farmers, and encourage entrepreneurship within Canadian agriculture.

Attendees emphasized that ensuring family farms can successfully transition between generations is essential to maintaining a strong and productive agricultural sector.

As the tour transitioned into a roundtable discussion, participants spoke about the importance of maintaining competitiveness and resiliency within the agriculture sector. Business Risk Management programs, including AgriInsurance and AgriStability, were highlighted as essential tools for helping producers manage risk and adapt to increasingly unpredictable growing conditions.



Minister MacDonald spoke with producers, including APG Zone 2 Director Joe Rowbottom (second from left) at Jeff Frost's operation near Olds, AB. (Photo courtesy of Alberta Grains)

Representatives also emphasized the need for continued investment in agricultural research and innovation, including plant breeding, agronomy and producer-driven science. Discussions touched on seed and regulatory modernization, access to crop protection tools, and the importance of ensuring producers can adopt new technologies and crop varieties quickly and efficiently.

Trade, market access, and transportation infrastructure were also key themes. Participants stressed the importance of maintaining reliable export opportunities, strengthening



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supply chains, and investing in critical infrastructure that supports Canada's position as a trusted supplier of agricultural products around the world.

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By combining an on-farm tour with direct policy discussions, the visit provided an important opportunity for federal decision-makers to see firsthand how national policies affect producers at the farm gate.

The discussions reinforced the importance of maintaining a competitive, innovative, and productive agricultural sector to support Alberta agriculture and Canada's broader economy. 

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