



# POLICY AND PLATFORM

*Manitoba Beef Producers*

## Re: Provincial Election 2011 – Questionnaire Response

### **Provision of Public Goods**

Manitoba Liberals believe that producers deserve the real value of their products and maximizing the opportunities is a key element of our agribusiness strategy.

Manitoba Liberals have long been promoters of value-added agricultural initiatives, particularly those related to the development of the functional foods and nutraceuticals. Manitoba Liberals see these initiatives – many of which involve intensive research and development – as being a key way of strengthening and diversifying our economy.

Accordingly, Liberals pledge to work closely with producers, agribusinesses, municipalities, universities, and with economic development organizations to develop and implement an aggressive strategy to attract and build these industries in Manitoba. We also support returning the responsibility for delivery of the Verified Beef Program to producers and, if elected, will help ensure that public good programs are designed in cooperation with industry.

### **Water Management**

Manitoba Liberals support the development of a comprehensive provincial water management strategy that involves the federal, provincial and municipal governments and the agricultural sector.

This strategy should be all-encompassing, including drainage, retention, irrigation, and other water-related issues and be adequately funded on an ongoing basis. Until the development and implementation of such a strategy, the Manitoba government must participate in measures to prevent damage to farmland that is caused by untimely flooding.

Liberals encourage a strong role for Conservation Districts in the development and implementation process of a provincial water management strategy. This strategy should accommodate regional differences and localized concerns.

Water storage is as important as drainage. The Deerwood project on the South Tobacco Creek is a model for what can be done elsewhere. The economic and environmental opportunities need to be assessed together with the need to prepare for the effects of climate change.

To couple water storage and improved drainage, Liberals will expand the provincial efforts to improve water management with the understanding that improved water management can have a major impact in decreasing the risk to farmers from periods of excessive wet or dry weather. Tile drainage has been used very successfully in parts of Manitoba to improve drainage, reduce risk, and improve crop yields. Liberals will look at programs to better support the use of tile drainage in Manitoba, along the lines of initiatives that have been used with considerable success in Ontario; and to ensure that the environment is not compromised, the legislation will include a provision that there will be no net loss of wetlands.

### **Strong Science Based Regulations**

Manitoba Liberals strongly support basing environmental and health legislation and regulations on peer reviewed science, and are committed to effective consultation with the Manitoba Beef Producers prior to enacting any new legislation and regulations.

### **Manitoba Cattle Enhancement Council**

We are committed to work closely with Manitoba Beef Producers and the Manitoba Cattle Enhancement Council to ensure producers enjoy a secure and prosperous livelihood; and require the Manitoba Cattle Enhancement Council to submit public annual accountability reports and financial records as requested by the MCPA in a 2009 resolution.

### **Animal Health**

Manitoba Liberals will work with the Manitoba Beef Producers to ensure they are fully compensated when they are required to test herds as part of the TB eradication program, although we need more consultation before committing to full cost compensation; our support is towards better compensation at this time.

Additionally, the appointment of a TB Coordinator is something we can give initial support towards, but with more consultation to determine the level of support for this position.

We fully support Manitoba Agriculture Food and Rural Initiatives managing the TB eradication programs.

### **Business Risk Management**

If elected, Manitoba Liberals will make significant financial commitments to ensure that disaster assistance programs are modernized, and providing beef producers access to insurance program. We will implement a price and basis insurance program for the cattle industry in Manitoba similar to other provinces as requested by the MCPA in a 2009 resolution.

**Environmental Initiatives**

Manitoba Liberals believe that environmental regulations and policy must be based on strong, peer reviewed science, and we will make significant financial commitments to ensure all of Manitoba's beef producers have equitable access to funding for environmental initiatives.

We are committed to working closely with Manitoba Beef Producers to ensure producers retain control for the delivery of environmental stewardship programs, and to build new environmental policy, regulation and legislation.

**Herd Protection Initiatives**

Manitoba Liberals will make significant financial commitments to protect herds from problem predators and compensation for predation losses.

**Crown Land Management**

Manitoba Liberals recognize that many in the agricultural sector have rented and been good stewards of Crown Lands for a long period of time as part of their agricultural operations.

Liberals will pursue a policy similar to that recently followed by Saskatchewan and will work with the Manitoba Beef Producers to reduce the red tape and allow them the option of purchasing these lands. We also support the principle of "consent" before the public accesses Crown Land.