



115 YEARS

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## ADVOCACY REPORT

**YOUR VOICE FOR CHANGE**

Over 50,000 copies of this Advocacy Report are distributed to UFA members and customers, tackling issues important to UFA members and customers such as Fertilizer Emission Reduction Targets, Red Tape Reduction and Innovation in Agriculture.

*We encourage you to read on and learn how UFA is advocating with various levels of government.*



# UFA IS ONE OF CANADA'S LARGEST AND MOST DYNAMIC AGRICULTURAL CO-OPERATIVES WITH OVER 120,000 MEMBERS.



Welcome to UFA's 2024 Advocacy Report. UFA is one of Canada's largest and most dynamic agricultural co-operatives with over 120,000 members. Our business network provides products, services and solutions to farmers, ranchers, members, consumers and commercial customers in Western Canada. As a co-operative, our members guide our decision-making and are rooted in the heart of all we do. As a result, one of our main priorities is to advocate on behalf of our members on legislative, regulatory and funding decisions that directly impact your business operations, economic livelihood and the communities where you live.

In an ever-changing industry and regulatory environment, it is important that UFA moves parallel with government as key decisions are being made, and most importantly, that your interests are part of the conversation. Through advocacy, partnerships, awareness and education we are here to carry our members' collective voice on key issues that affect agriculture and agricultural business - today and into the future.



## FERTILIZER EMISSION REDUCTION TARGETS

**Reducing fertilizer emissions in the agricultural sector across Canada was introduced as a key priority for the Government of Canada in 2022. This priority continues to be a major area of focus for the agriculture sector in 2024. The focus of a national target to reduce absolute levels of greenhouse gas (“GHG”) emissions arising from fertilizer application to 30% below 2020 levels by the year 2030 is not without great concern.**

Farmers already are extremely responsible with fertilizer application, due to the significant cost of crop inputs, and there is not a farmer that we know of that spends more on fertilizer than they have to. The Government of Canada must acknowledge that the market already provides a mechanism to discourage fertilizer application, and that responsible fertilizer application is necessary to maximize crop production to feed a rising global population. In short, food security should be a priority.

UFA is advocating that the proposed absolute reduction in levels of GHG emissions does not make sense in light of the greater world-wide concern of food security, and that market mechanisms already exist to discourage fertilizer use. Through our advocacy efforts and involvement with various likeminded associations, UFA will be doing its part to educate government officials on your behalf that the right programs and incentives are in place to ensure best practices apply to fertilizer use, such as the 4R Stewardship, and that government regulation in this area could negatively impact crop production.



## INNOVATION IN CANADA AND ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURE SECTOR

There is a dire need for government support at the provincial and federal government levels to help develop and implement innovative solutions in practices, processes and new technologies in the agriculture and agri-food sector to increase productivity. This is essential as our industry faces realities of variable weather, labour shortages and the need to secure food with a growing global population.

Not only will the development and application of these innovations help solve many of the sector's issues, it will also provide our producers with a competitive edge in production and market access.

However, uncertainty and unacceptable risk are the primary challenges associated with supporting innovation and the adoption of new technology. The provincial and federal governments need to play a role in de-risking solution adoption by streamlining funding support/grants direct to producers and organizations that can facilitate producer technology adoption.

Producers need pathways to mitigate the risk of technology adoption at scale. Progress can be made through government participation at the producer level, alongside evidence-based solutions and trusted providers. Enabling producer participation and corporate support with funding that effectively and easily reduces on-farm risk is paramount.





## **INVESTMENT IN BUSINESS RISK MANAGEMENT (BRM)**

Without effective and efficient BRM programs, farmers and ranchers risk being uncompetitive and the ability to invest in their operations is reduced. External factors, such as increasing cost of inputs, market access issues and extreme weather, continue to demonstrate the need for updated and adequately-funded BRM programs. BRM programs need to be continuous and adaptable to an ever-changing industry, particularly in looking at BRM programs to mitigate risk in farmers adopting innovation and technology to reduce on-farm emissions and drought relief.



## **NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL STRATEGY**

With the announcement of the Government of Canada's National Sustainable Agricultural Strategy, it is critical that the voice and input of farmers continues to be heard. Significant adjustments to the strategy need to be made and UFA will be proactive in providing practical policy recommendations that make sense for our members and our industry partners. Primary input needs to be taken directly from farmers and ranchers across Canada and not shadowed by the influence of third-party organizations with a single motive or intent that does not benefit the agriculture industry as a whole.

While UFA supports a strategy that aims to create sustainable growth in the agriculture sector, increased regulations on farmers and ranchers is not the answer. The main goals should be quite the opposite, to reduce regulatory burden for farmers and find solutions that include their assessments, focused on sustainable development and policies and programs that can be adopted on farm.

Specifically, incentives for large and small operations need to be long-term and should consider the cost of adoption, return on investment and the ecological goods and services provided.



## ELIMINATION OF DYED FUEL

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**UFA is committed to working with the Alberta government and industry partners to develop recommendations that will streamline, eliminate and alleviate burdensome regulations that impact our co-operative and our members' ability to operate. One such burden that has yet to be recognized by the Government of Alberta is the requirement to dye farm use fuel.**

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The current requirements to dye off-road and farm-use diesel and gasoline are obsolete and pose significant and ongoing economic, environmental and competitive challenges.

The administrative costs of this program to UFA are significant, and the removal of the requirement to dye fuel would result in significant cost savings to UFA and ultimately reduce costs for our membership.

We believe current enrolment and renewal standards for the Alberta Farm Fuel Benefit (AFFB) Program are sufficiently stringent to deter intentional misuse of the benefit and alternative government safeguards should be considered. Other provinces have successfully implemented programs to eliminate the requirement to dye fuel and so should Alberta.





## MANDATORY ENTRY LEVEL TRAINING (MELT)

Drivers seeking a Class 1 (tractor-trailer) licence are required to complete Mandatory Entry-Level Training (MELT) to apply for their commercial driver's licence. Training includes a government-mandated number of training hours for in-class, in-yard and in-vehicle modules with standardized curriculums taught at all licensed Alberta driver training schools.

Currently, the agriculture sector faces challenges with the costs and practicality associated with obtaining a class 1 licence in Alberta. Costs for training range from \$10,000 to \$12,000 per student, which makes it financially burdensome for producers. While road and vehicle safety should remain a top priority in our province, UFA, along with other organizations in the agriculture community, believe that cost modifications to the training program need to be created through cost reduction incentives or different pricing based on the driving intensity of the industry one is in.



