



CPC Addresses Debt with Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food

May 4, 2017 (Ottawa, ON) Representatives from the Canadian Pork Council (CPC) were in Ottawa today to address the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food about debt and its effects in the agriculture sector.

Hans Kristensen, a New Brunswick hog producer and the Maritime representative of the CPC's Board of Directors, spoke on behalf of the council, outlining some of the challenges facing the Canadian pork industry and their impact on producers' bottom line. These challenges include interruptions in market access, feed costs, the Canadian dollar, hog prices, carbon taxing and global economic issues that affect the competitiveness of the hog sector.

"Producers have benefited from a relatively stable price over the past few years due to the PED virus that interrupted production in the U.S. but our members have told us that the increased revenue was mainly used to service their debt, pay for increased cost of biosecurity protocols and adjust to other fluctuating costs," Kristensen said.

There are solutions, including improving the trading climate and competitiveness of Canadian pork by strengthening the technical support to exporters and quickly solving issues disrupting the normal flow of trade. Other solutions include improving hog producers' access to risk management tools such as hedging, AgriInvest and AgriInsurance and updating the Canadian Agricultural Loans Act (CALA) program to reflect commercial farm sizes and more complex farm structures.

"The repercussion of several years of difficulty in the hog sector is the availability of credit," Kristensen said. "Government can help producers become more efficient by partnering with producers to invest in the construction of new and efficient barns and on-farm upgrades. High-performance facilities can improve animal performance, reduce environmental footprint and decrease the impact of seasonal variability through unit design, construction, control and monitoring.

"The Canadian pork sector has reached a point where, if it is to continue to grow, it must attract a significant level of investment in both infrastructure and people," he added. "Attracting this investment will require governments to continue to partner with producers in addressing the risks that limit progress."

The CPC serves as the national voice for hog producers in Canada. A federation of nine provincial pork industry associations, the organization's purpose is to play a leadership role in achieving and maintaining a dynamic and prosperous Canadian pork sector.

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