



Box 17
Deleau, Manitoba
ROM 0LO

July 18, 2022

Minister Derek Johnson, Minister of Agriculture
165 Legislative Building, 450 Broadway
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8
Email: minagr@leg.gov.mb.ca

Dear Minister Derek Johnson:

Re: Veterinary Shortage in Manitoba

We, National Farmers Union (NFU) in Manitoba, are writing to you, the Provincial Minister of Agriculture Hon. Derek Johnson, on behalf of the farmers in Manitoba. The National Farmers Union is a direct-membership organization made up of Canadian farm families who share common goals. The NFU in Manitoba addresses local Manitoba farm issues, and has identified the need for continuing farm animal care by Manitoba Veterinarians as a concern.

We write this letter jointly with the Manitoba Veterinary Medical Association because as farmers we recognize the need for trained veterinarians to be assisting with farm animal care in Manitoba, so that both farmers and veterinarians may earn a decent living wage.

The National Farmers Union is very concerned by gaps in access to veterinary care throughout Canada. Veterinarians play an essential role in food animal farming. While the National Farmers Union believes that a multifaceted approach will need to be taken to address access to care issues, it is clear that any attempts to address this issue will not be successful if there is a shortage of veterinary professionals.

The National Farmers Union in Manitoba supports the Manitoba Veterinary Medical Association's request that the Manitoba Government fund an additional 10 seats at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine in Saskatoon. We recognize that the Province of Manitoba has a duty to help with the training and provision of Veterinary services and has the structure and capacity to help farmers and our veterinarians. The stark situation is urgent for both the Veterinarians and for Farmers, we need each other if the Province of Manitoba is to improve.

The National Farmers Union in Manitoba also hopes to work collaboratively with the Manitoba Veterinary Medical Association, the Manitoba Government, and other concerned citizens as we look forward to the coming decades to ensure that we have a model for family farming in Manitoba.

(over...)

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Des communautés solidaires et des politiques sensées pour une agriculture durable.

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The mandate of the National Farmers Union

- to promote the betterment of farmers in the attainment of their economic and social goals;
- to conduct projects for the benefit of farmers in the development of markets for and marketing of farm products;
- to achieve the reduction of costs and other measures designed to increase the economic benefits of farming;
- to conduct educational and research projects for the benefit of farmers;
- to promote and secure legislation and other forms of government action for the benefit of farmers;
- to promote a higher standard of community life in agriculture; and
- to provide services for its members consistent with its objects and work jointly with any other person or organizations for the attainment of its objects.

The National Farmers Union is a farmers' voluntary farm policy voice both on Provincial and Federal agriculture concerns. The NFU was formed in Winnipeg in 1969 by the then provincial Farmers Unions. The NFU is a strong voice for farmers concerns, particularly addressing ways that the price gap between what the farmer receives for products and the price of food on the store shelf, which has increased while the number of farmers and the farmer Net Income has been declining, can be addressed. That gap trend is at the root of many policy concerns. All farmers, no matter what they raise, are in need of better support programs. NFU farmer policy is directly from the Family Farm NFU Membership and is voted upon by the democratic structure of the NFU. It is the NFU farmers' analysis and goals which is the strength of the NFU following the evidence and the needs for the interests of farmers who are the creators of food and wealth.

Thank you, Minister Derek Johnson, for your attention to this issue of Veterinarian services for all Manitoba.

Sincerely,



Ana Fyk, National Farmers Union in Manitoba Coordinator
ph. 204 590 9178



Ian L Robson—National Farmers Union in Manitoba Board member
ph. 204 858 2479

cc: Minister Jon Reyes, Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Immigration
Email: minaesi@leg.gov.mb.ca

Corey Wilson, Executive Director, Manitoba Veterinary Medical Association
Email: registrar@mvma.ca