

June 28, 2022

Hon. Derek Johnson
Minister of Agriculture
minagr@leg.gov.mb.ca

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

Re: Veterinary Shortage in Manitoba

Dear Minister Johnson and Minister Reyes:

Manitoba commodity groups are writing to express our concern about the shortage of veterinarians in the province. Based on a survey from the Manitoba Veterinary Medical Association 68 FTE veterinarian positions remain unfulfilled. This deficit is expected to increase given the large number of veterinarians approaching retirement.

Manitoba veterinarians play an integral role in the health and safety of livestock. Veterinarians are critical in treating animal diseases and injuries. Their role is also vital in maintaining public health as it relates to recognizing zoonotic threats and diseases. This includes coronaviruses (e.g., Porcine epidemic diarrhea virus), BSE, Foot-and-Mouth disease, Avian Influenza, Blastomycosis, Lyme disease, West Nile Virus, fibromuscular dysplasia and rabies.

The current shortage of veterinarians is currently being felt by livestock producers. Livestock producers are already encountering delays in care through longer wait times and fewer veterinarians are able to accept new clients. An insufficient supply of veterinarians can impact animal welfare and limit the ability to manage contagious and infectious disease. Ultimately, this can impact the health and sustainability of livestock operations in Manitoba. For producers this is concerning given the size of the livestock sector and the \$2.78 billion contributed to the Manitoba economy in 2021.

To address this shortage Keystone Agricultural Producers, Dairy Farmers of Manitoba, Manitoba Pork, Manitoba Egg Farmers, Manitoba Beef Producers, Manitoba Forage and Grassland Association, Manitoba Turkey Producers, Manitoba Sheep Association, Manitoba Bison Association and Manitoba Chicken Producers recommend:

- Increasing the number of subsidized Manitoba seats at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine from 15 to 25 seats beginning in 2023.
- Implementing measures to ensure students studying veterinary medicine return and remain in Manitoba.
- Decrease the wait time for qualified foreign veterinarians to practice in Manitoba.
- Expand the role of veterinary technicians that would reduce the demand on veterinarians.

We look forward to your response. Please reach out to any of the commodity groups if you require more information.

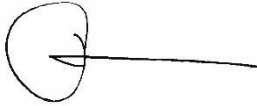
Sincerely,



Bill Campbell
President, Keystone Agricultural Producers




David Wiens
Chair, Dairy Farmers of Manitoba



Rick Préjet
Chair of the Board, Manitoba Pork Council



Cory Rybuck
General Manager, Manitoba Egg
Farmers



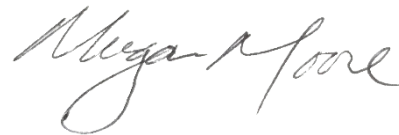
Tyler Fulton
President, Manitoba Beef Producers



Larry Wegner
Chair, Manitoba Forage and
Grassland Association



Mike Reimer
Chair, Manitoba Turkey Producers



Morgan Moore
Chair, Manitoba Sheep Association



Robert Johnson
President, Manitoba Bison Association



Jake Wiebe
Chair, Manitoba Chicken Producers