



# Growing Forward

## Participant Report

Ministerial Consultation Session with Alberta Stakeholders  
Friday, November 9, 2007  
Royal Executive Inn (Nisku)

Thank you for participating in Minister Groeneveld's Growing Forward Consultation Session on November 9, 2007. We appreciate that you took time out of your busy schedules to provide input into the development of Growing Forward.

This was the second Growing Forward consultation session hosted by Minister Groeneveld. At the first session held March 9, 2007, participants had the opportunity to describe the characteristics of a successful industry in 2015, and then use those characteristics to identify outcomes that would have to be achieved to result in this 2015 vision. The session resulted in the development of six desired outcomes that would guide Alberta's input in the development of the Growing Forward framework.

On June 29, 2007, the Ministers of Agriculture met, and Minister Groeneveld used the information gathered from the industry consultation. At the June meeting, Ministers agreed in principle to the vision, guiding principles, and the three policy objectives of Growing Forward:

- A Competitive and Innovative Sector;
- A Sector that is Proactive at Managing Risks; and,
- A Sector that Contributes to Society's Priorities.

Since June 2007, federal-provincial-territorial officials have been working on defining national policy objectives and outcomes in preparation for upcoming bilateral negotiations. In order to determine Alberta's negotiating position and priorities, Minister Groeneveld felt it was important to bring the Alberta stakeholders together again for input.

Over one-hundred and forty participants were invited to participate in the second consultation session held on November 9, 2007; sixty eight of the invited guests were able to attend.

The purpose of the November 2007 session was twofold: to provide an update on development of the Growing Forward framework, and for you to provide Minister Groeneveld with your opinions on the priority outcomes and program directions Alberta should take in the multilateral and bilateral negotiations.

The exercises, as well as information from the small group discussions, will be used in conjunction with the work being done by the Ministry's staff. It will form the basis for Alberta's negotiating position and will assist in determining the possible program directions that may be pursued under the three Growing Forward policy objectives.

The results of the small group discussions and exercises have been summarized.

## Small Group Discussions:

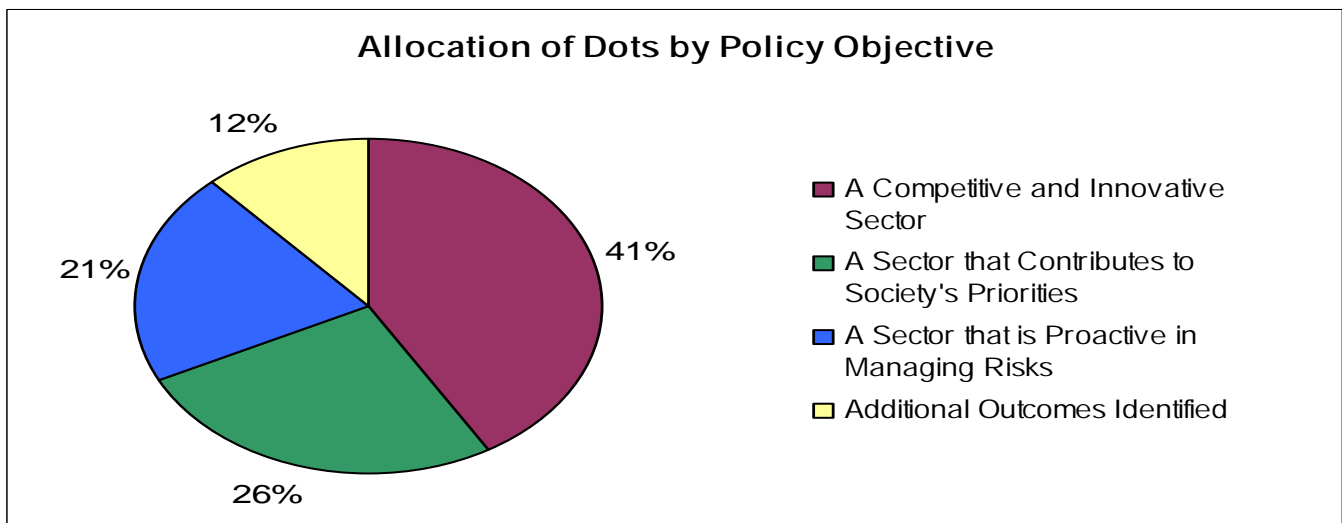
During these discussions, each group was encouraged to review the key outcomes for Alberta and the possible directions. Here is a summary of what we heard:

- Regulatory Environment:
  - Work towards harmonizing and streamlining regulatory environment (inter-provincially and internationally).
  - Take a local/provincial/federal and industry strategic approach to implementing policies and regulations that protect and enhance, instead of being cumbersome.
- Market Access and Trade:
  - Identity, develop and access markets through a partnered national and/or regional strategy that is flexible to changing markets.
  - While adhering to World Trade Organization parameters, we need to leverage the international advantage for our already high standards by removing inter-provincial trade barriers; allowing us to be regionally competitive and taking a Team Canada approach.
  - Branding is an important way of distinguishing our product in an ever-increasing global world.
- Research, Development and Innovation:
  - Use market-driven incentives to encourage risk-taking, as innovation is essential for sustaining, driving, and diversifying the industry.
- Roles of Industry and Government:
  - Industry-wide, industry-driven integrated approach to partnering with government, including the municipal government.
  - Consulting should be ongoing (throughout lifetime of Growing Forward) and should be both external and internal.
- Human Resources:
  - Access to labour is a primary concern; a range of opinions were expressed from the importance of knowledge and skills in 21st century; to a greater use of productivity and investment in machinery and equipment.
- Value-chains:
  - Full chain is valuable, and communication between and amongst members needs to be encouraged. Need to give incentives to move away from primary-only.
- Risk Management:
  - Producers have a responsibility to manage their risk, but government needs to provide some responsive tools to help them mitigate the risks.
- Funding:
  - Funding needs to give Canadian producers a competitive advantage, so it should be targeted and readily available for producers.
- Other:
  - "Outcomes are still too reactive. Need to make them more proactive."
  - "Growing Forward is our core foundation through to a Canadian wide barrier-free environment, which will lead to a comprehensive market-driven trading environment."

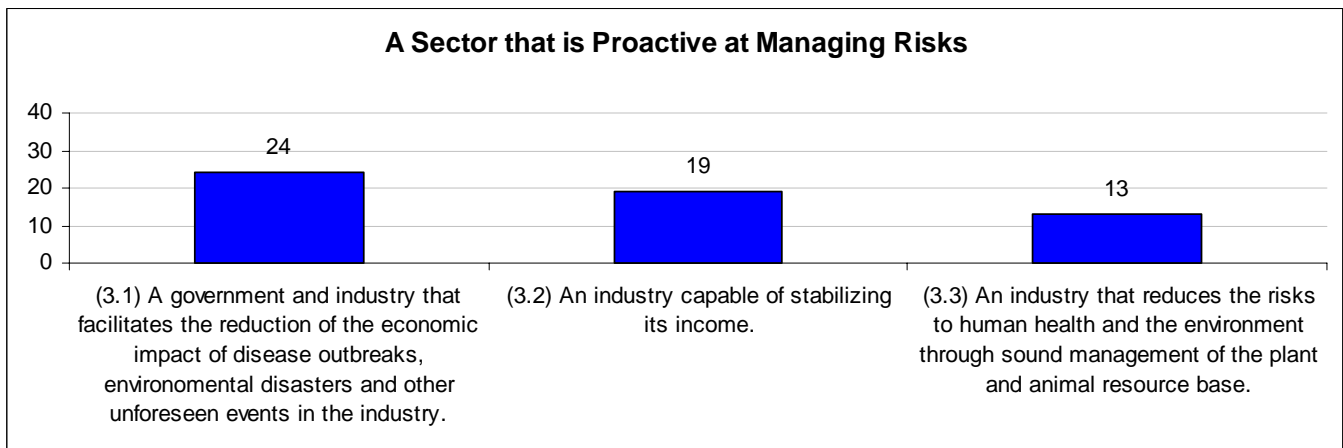
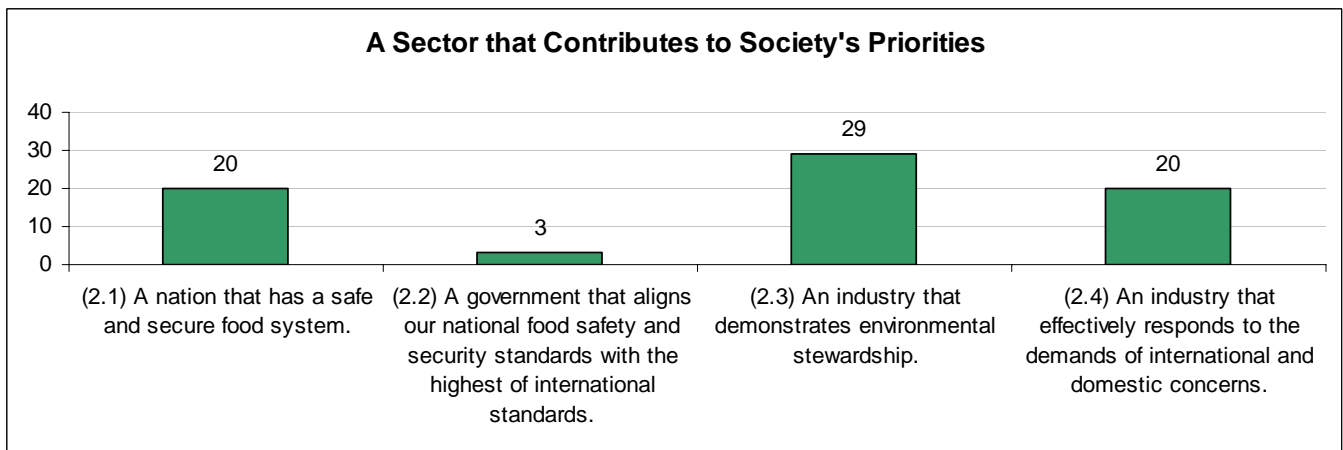
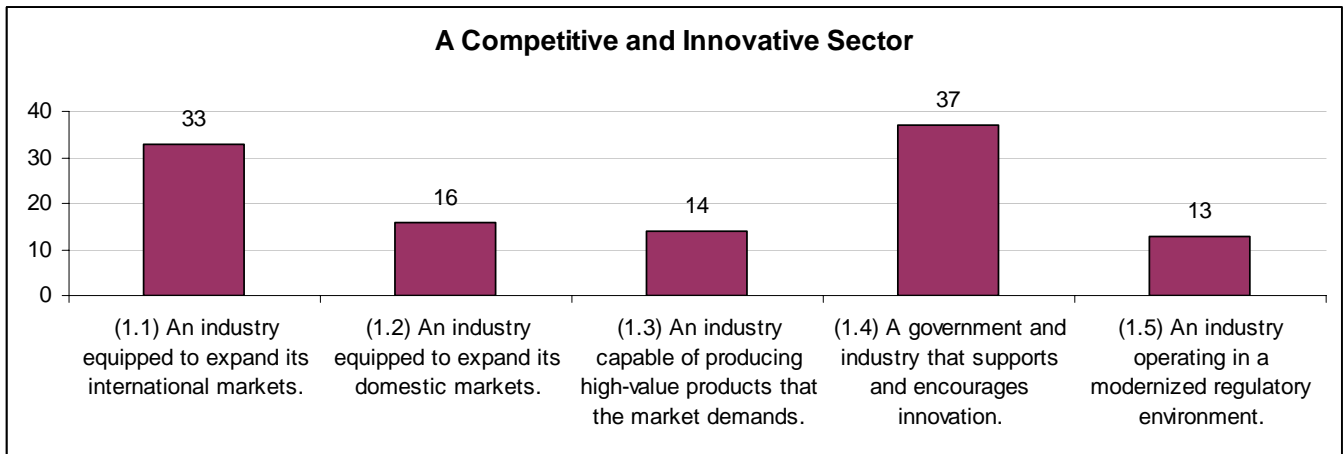
Prioritization of Outcomes:

Twelve possible outcomes were presented to the participants, and an additional two outcomes were added as a result of the small group discussions. Participants were asked to prioritize the outcomes, and each participant was given five dots to place beside the outcomes that they felt were the most important to the future success of the industry in Alberta.

Outcome Statement (Objective.Outcome)	Number of Dots	Rank Order
A government and industry that support and encourage innovation (1.4)	37	1
An industry equipped to expand its international markets (1.1)	33	2
An industry that demonstrates environmental stewardship (2.3)	29	3
A government and industry that facilitates the reduction of the economic impact of disease outbreaks, environmental disasters and other unforeseen events in the industry (3.1)	24	4
A nation that has a safe and secure food system (2.1)	20	5
An industry that effectively responds to the demands of international and domestic concerns (2.4)	20	5
An industry capable of stabilizing its income (3.2)	19	7
Labour and Human Resources (4.2 – <i>additional outcome</i> )	17	8
An industry equipped to expand its domestic markets (1.2)	16	9
Automation (4.1 – <i>additional outcome</i> )	15	10
An industry capable of producing high-value products that the market demands (1.3)	14	11
An industry operating in a modernized regulatory environment (1.5)	13	12
An industry that reduces the risks to human health and the environment through sound management of the plant and animal resource base (3.3)	13	12
A government that aligns our national food safety and security standards with the highest of international standards (2.2)	3	14



Below is a breakdown by policy objective, to show the numbers of dots received by each of the outcomes.

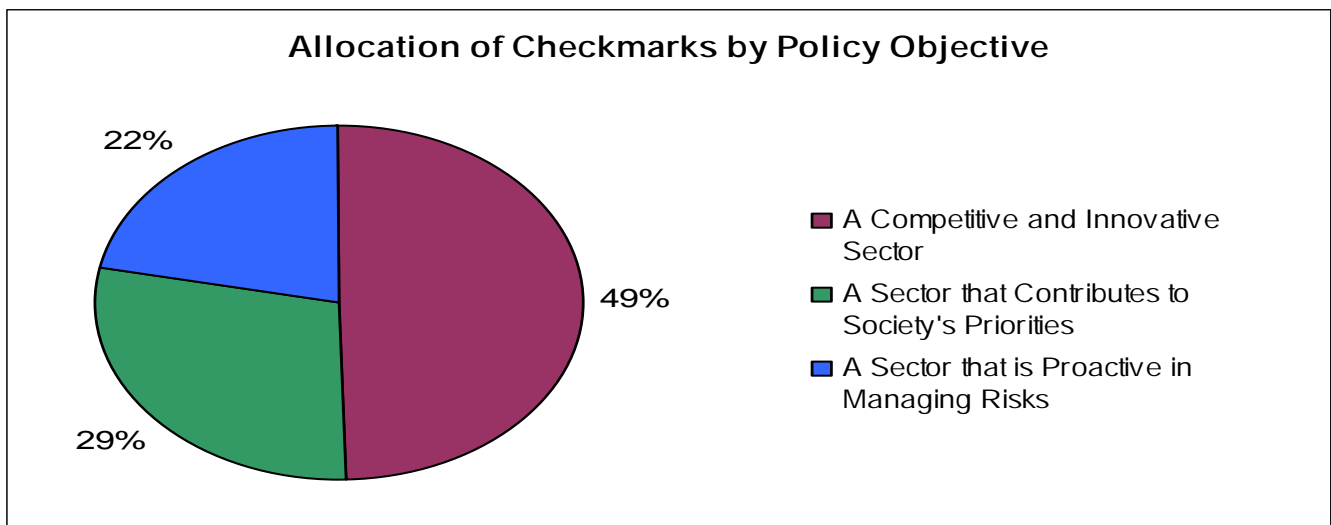


## Prioritization of Directions:

Thirty-nine possible directions were presented to the participants. Each participant was asked to select up to ten directions that they felt would have the greatest positive impact on their sector.

Possible Directions (Objective.Outcome.Direction)	Number of Times Selected	Rank Order
Facilitate the development of a business environment that encourages and supports industry competitiveness in the global marketplace (1.1.1)	22	1
Facilitate the development of a regulatory environment that is responsive to the innovative culture in the industry (1.5.2)	22	1
Facilitate the creation of a business environment that allows the market to recognize and/or reward producers for ecological enhancements that go beyond environmental protection (2.3.4)	21	3
Assist industry businesses willing to take calculated risks through improved access to capital, financial incentives and/or tax incentives (1.4.3)	20	4
Work with industry and the federal government to remove international market access restrictions (1.1.6)	19	5
Work with the federal government and other provinces to remove all remaining inter-provincial trade barriers (1.2.4)	19	5
Encourage the actions of industry that increase consumer and public confidence (2.3.3)	18	7
Encourage industry in meeting the demands of domestic and international consumers (2.4.2)	18	7
Facilitate the development of a business environment that encourages and supports industry competitiveness in the domestic marketplace (1.2.1)	17	9
Encourage the development of new and differentiated products (1.3.1)	17	9
Encourage producers to be responsible for their own actions (3.2.1)	17	9
Enhance the safety of food processing and production practices (2.1.1)	16	12
Preserve and protect the resources used in agricultural production (2.3.1)	16	12
Develop effective and coordinated response mechanisms (3.1.2)	16	12
Facilitate the development, implementation and verification of environmentally sound management systems at the business level and community level, to achieve measurable environmental outcomes (2.3.2)	15	15
Work with the federal and provincial partners for continual development of risk programs (3.2.5)	15	15
Assist industry in attracting and retaining workers (1.1.4)	14	17
Encourage industry due diligence in the prevention and mitigation of animal and plant disease outbreaks (3.1.1)	14	17
Increase producer use of scientific knowledge, emerging technology and best practices to manage risk (3.3.1)	14	17
Facilitate innovation within the industry (1.4.1)	13	20
Encourage industry in turning research results into commercial opportunities (1.4.2)	13	20
Reduce the economic impact to the industry due to disease and other incidental outbreaks (2.2.2)	13	20
Encourage industry to seek out strategic international market access opportunities (1.1.2)	12	23
Facilitate improvements in labour force productivity through the use of technology, automation and innovation (1.1.5)	12	23

Possible Directions (continued)	Number of Times Selected	Rank Order
Assist industry to defend itself against unfair trade challenges (1.1.7)	12	23
Protect human health through sound management of the plant and animal resource base (2.1.2)	12	23
Facilitate improvements in labour force productivity through the use of technology, automation and innovation (1.2.3)	11	27
Improve infrastructure and surveillance/traceability networks (3.3.2)	11	27
Facilitate the formation of new value chains and cooperation between value chains (1.3.2)	10	29
Work with the federal government in the development of the national strategy (2.2.3)	10	29
Increase information, knowledge, skills and management capacity the industry requires to succeed in complex global marketplaces (1.1.3)	9	31
Assist industry in attracting and retaining workers (1.2.2)	9	31
Facilitate the development of information systems that allow quick access to enable quick responses (3.3.3)	8	33
Federal and provincial coordination in the development of policies and standards that bring Canada in line with international standards (1.5.1)	7	34
Gather and disseminate competitive intelligence on international and domestic markets (2.4.1)	7	34
Inform producers how to minimize risk and create tools and systems for their use (3.2.2)	7	34
Minimize the occurrence and extent of enterprise risk (3.2.3)	6	37
Encourage producers to use BRM tools and systems that are readily available (3.2.4)	6	37
Gather competitive intelligence on international standards and regulations (2.2.1)	3	39



### Next Steps:

The transition from the Agricultural Policy Framework to Growing Forward will begin on April 1, 2008. It is expected that the new suite of BRM programs will be ready to implement by that time. As for the non-BRM programs, it is anticipated that they will be developed over the next six months with new programs beginning by October 1, 2008. Full program implementation is expected by April 1, 2009.

All Growing Forward programs and initiatives will be developed around the three policy objectives. It is anticipated that programs will be grouped into delivery suites based on several factors, including the method of program delivery and the primary client base. There are similarities between the proposed suites and the three Growing Forward objectives, though some programs will likely support multiple objectives due to the integrated design of Growing Forward:

- Innovations and Competitiveness Suite;
- Best Practices Suite; and,
- Business Risk Management Suite.

Ministry staff anticipate the need to bring the Alberta stakeholders group together again in the spring of 2008. At that time there should be significant progress made towards the development of the Growing Forward programs and initiatives that will be delivered in Alberta.

If you have any questions or comments regarding the November 9, 2007 session or about Growing Forward in general, please contact Marcia Hewitt-Fisher at (780) 427-3315, toll free by first dialing 310-000, or by e-mail at [marcia.hewitt.fisher@gov.ab.ca](mailto:marcia.hewitt.fisher@gov.ab.ca).