

# Regional Meeting Summary January 2018

## Manitoba Commodity Organization Amalgamation – Member Consultation

The purpose of these meetings/presentations was to gather feedback on the initial proposal that was developed by the steering committee. The following is a summary of the main comments raised at the meetings. These comments will now be addressed by the steering committee as part of the next steps in the process.

### Feedback Survey Summary:

The following is a summary of the short survey that was handed out during the meetings & presentations held in January 2018. Please note:

- The survey was used to gather an initial indication and feedback from members; this not a statistically accurate survey of all members
- The survey was filled out by anyone in attendance at the meeting; some attendees did not fill out the survey because they needed more details before making a decision

#### 1. Do you support the amalgamation of the five producer organizations?

Date	Location	Yes	Yes, with changes	Not Sure	No	Total
Jan. 10	St. Jean	1	4	2	14	21
Jan. 11	Dauphin	4	3	1		8
Jan. 12	Stonewall	7	8		1	16
Jan. 16	Brandon	14	3	3	7	27
Jan. 30	Brandon	7	5		1	13
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>33</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>Percent</b>		<b>39%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>100%</b>

66%                      73%

#### 2. What do you think of the timeline of the amalgamation process?

Date	Location	Too Slow	Appropriate	Too Fast		Total
Jan. 10	St. Jean		5	12		17
Jan. 11	Dauphin		2	2		4
Jan. 12	Stonewall		13	3		16
Jan. 16	Brandon	1	17	4		22
Jan. 30	Brandon	2	7	3		12
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>24</b>		<b>71</b>
<b>Percent</b>		<b>4%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>34%</b>		<b>100%</b>

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## Website and Email:

A temporary website ([www.mbcrops.ca](http://www.mbcrops.ca)) was set up to share information. The website received 348 visits from 249 unique users between Dec, 11 2017 and Feb 6, 2018.

A feedback email address was set up ([rob@mbcrops.ca](mailto:rob@mbcrops.ca)). Over a dozen emails were received with comments and suggestions. The feedback was a mix of both positive/supportive and negative comments.

## What we heard:

Some of the comments written on the feedback forms collected at the meetings include:

- Keep going, needs to proceed
- Good meeting
- Don't forget the grassroots views
- Good luck
- More talks between current Boards
- Thanks for asking members, good conversations resulting from this

The main topics discussed during the meetings are as follows:

### Small Crops Representation

- **Smaller Acreage Crop Focus** - Concern about smaller crops getting lost, less focus to make progress on those crops, small crops will get not get the attention they deserve
  - On the contrary, some comments that this will be good for the smaller acreage crops because they will get “subsidized” by the bigger crops (barley example)
- **Crop Representation** – Concern that over time not all crops may have a Board member who grows that crop, so that organization will need to ensure there is a way to get input from farmers on each crop
- **Research Decisions** - Clarification about how research investment decisions will be made; need to ensure that each crop will continue to have research investment

### Directors and Representation

- **Director Workload** - Concern about farmer Director workload; how will all of the work will be handled by the Directors; meeting workload for Directors will go up
- **Active farming Directors** – Question raised that active farmers should be involved in the board, not just those who have time/retired or are “professional directors”
- **Board Term Length** – Comment that having Board term lengths is needed to ensure renewal of the Board, but that the current proposal of 3 terms of 4 years is too long
- **Regional Representation** – Concern that the over time not all crops will have a Board member who grows that crops; suggestion that the new organization have districts to ensure representation from around the province
- **Young Farmer Directors** – Concern about attracting young farmers to be directors will be more difficult; it has been easier to start out on the Board of a smaller organization, this will be “too big”, “too hard to get elected” or may be “intimidating for young farmers”

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#### Other Comments

- **Proposal Needs More Detail** - Comment that not enough financial information and budget to make a decision, current proposal is too “high level” and needs more detail; needs to know more about the possibility of what might be lost with this change; make the full proposal available with enough lead time to decide
- **Levy Refunds** - Comment about an increased potential for levy refunds with an amalgamated organization; request that a farmer should be able to refund levy from a specific crop but not all crops within the organization
- **Wheat and Barley** - Comment that wheat and barley are different and should not be part of the amalgamation; makes sense for the other 4 organizations but not for wheat/barley
- **Organization Size/Cost** – Comment that “staff specialists” mentioned in the proposal will add cost; the steering committee should be careful not to build a “bureaucracy”
- **Corporate Involvement** – Question raised about whether this has been driven by companies/corporate involvement? No, this has only been farmer driven only, there has been no company involvement at all in these discussions
- **Election Method** – Suggestion that the election process be a combination of mail-in plus in-person (not just in-person voting at AGM)
- **Levy Rate** - Question about levy rate going down – if the organization will be more efficient then shouldn't the levy be lower?
- **Non-refundable Levy** - Comment raised about non-refundable levy; some expressed support but recognized that it is a difficult decision / lengthy process