

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Meb Gilani	403-899-8060
VICE CHAIR	
Susan Schafers	780-722-3238
EFC DIRECTOR	
Joe Kleinsasser	403-653-4480
EFC ALTERNATE	
Beatrice Visser	780-674-6297
DIRECTOR	
John Hofer	403-641-2030
DIRECTOR	
Byron Toews	403-389-4404

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## Board of Directors Update

Your Egg Farmers of Alberta (EFA) Board of Directors recently completed its annual strategic planning session with the EFA staff, to set the direction for EFA in 2017 and beyond. We reaffirmed our belief in the organization's vision and mission statements, as well as the four pillars that act as the overarching key result areas, under which everything EFA does fits: Healthy Birds, Healthy Eggs, Healthy Farms, and Healthy Communities.

The purpose of the strategic planning session is to set goals for EFA to achieve, over the next 1 to 5 years. The EFA staff will develop an operational plan for 2017, which is meant to be a roadmap of projects and initiatives to ensure the organization achieves the goals we have established. To help egg farmers better understand the outcome of the strategic planning session, a highlight from each pillar has been identified:

**Healthy Birds:** Working to ensure that approved methods for euthanasia are utilized on egg farms.

**Healthy Eggs:** Working to eliminate multiple-species production in the same building.

**Healthy Farms:** Develop a sustainable model for adult farm safety education in Alberta.

**Healthy Communities:** Giving back to the communities we call home, thanks to increased engagement by Egg Ambassadors.

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## **EFA Vision Statement**

**Healthy Food, Healthy Farms,  
Healthy Families.**

## **EFA Mission Statement**

**Cultivating a sustainable egg  
industry together with farmers,  
consumers and other stakeholders.**

## **EFA Office Hours**

Our office will be closed **Friday,  
November 11** for Remembrance  
Day.

## **Egg Price Update**

Effective August 14, 2016:

### **Grade A**

X Large	\$2.080
Large	\$2.080
Medium	\$1.850
Small	\$1.480
Nest Run	\$1.959
Pee Wee	\$0.270

**Grade B** \$0.750

**Grade C** \$0.150

*From the minimum paying price,  
processors can only deduct charges  
as authorized by the EFA Board.  
Farm-gate pickup rates were set in  
August 2010 and no increase in  
individual freight rates have been  
approved since that time.*

## **Field Statistics Update**

Here's an update on how Alberta farmers are doing with their on-farm programs so far this year:

- 120 SC-SC Layer evaluations have been completed in 2016
  - Alberta's average score: 98.98%
  - 91 Alberta farmers have scored a perfect 100% rating
- 123 Animal Care Program evaluations have been completed in 2016
  - Alberta's average score: 99.83%
  - 109 facilities have received a rating of 100%
- 73 SC-SC Pullet evaluations have been completed in 2016
  - Alberta's average score: 99.13%
  - 43 Alberta Pullet Growers have scored a perfect 100% rating
  - 11 pullet growers are newly accredited in the SC-SC Pullet Program

EFA would like to thank farmers for their commitment and hard work each and every day to ensure that safe, quality eggs are produced humanely.

## **Special Programs Lease Update**

EFA's Special Programs Lease was introduced as an incentive to encourage farmers to adopt beneficial production practices, including: moving to all-in, all-out production, adjusting flock placements to periods of lower egg demand and moving production to dedicated production facilities for the regulated egg industry. There have been two adjustments to the policy to create more flexibility for farmers who are interested in applying for special programs leases:

- Farmers who currently have flock changes in March, April, October, November or December (high demand months) can move their flock placement to January for a 5% incentive or to May for a 2% incentive. Previously, those producers placing in March or April only had the option to move to a May placement, and placements late in the year only had the option to move to January. This change allows for more flexibility as farmers look to adjust their flock cycles to better meet the supply needs of the egg industry.
- Farmers who qualify for a special program lease, but do not have the capacity to place the lease, can now defer use of their lease for up to two years from the approval date and/or lease out the quota incentive through the quota leasing pool. This change allows those farmers who are looking at building a new facility within the next two years to take advantage of the special incentive program but hold off the use of their special program lease until it can be used in their own barn.

If you are interested in applying for the Special Programs Lease, you can view the policy and application form on the producer website, or you can contact Erin Johnson at the EFA office.

## Producer Website Update

In 2017, EFA is planning to update the producer website, with the goal of providing even more helpful, quality information and resources that matter to egg farmers. EFA wants to hear your ideas on how to make the producer website better. Submit your comments to Christina Robinson at the EFA office (christina.robinson@eggs.ab.ca).

Visit EFA's producer website:

[www.albertaeggproducers.ca](http://www.albertaeggproducers.ca)

## EggNotes Subscription Info

Do you know someone who wants to subscribe to *EggNotes*? Simply have them send their name, company or organization, fax number and email address to: [info@eggs.ab.ca](mailto:info@eggs.ab.ca)

Now it's even easier to subscribe to *EggNotes*! Check out the Publications page on the EFA website to sign-up for a subscription, read the current issue, and even read past issues:

[www.eggs.ab.ca/about/publications](http://www.eggs.ab.ca/about/publications)



## Policy on Multi-Species Barns

EFA's On Farm Food Safety Policy now requires that all layer and pullet facilities for registered producers are dedicated to the regulated egg industry, housing only pullets or layers, by January 1, 2020. As of the deadline, this will be a mandatory license requirement.

Since 2012, EFA has taken a number of steps to educate farmers on the risks of having poultry housed in close proximity to other species and to encourage the best practice of having only one type of poultry in your barn. Given the increased biosecurity risk, and the lack of CEIRA insurance coverage in facilities that are not dedicated to the regulated egg industry, EFA has established a process to phase out multi-species production facilities. If you currently have a multi-species production facility in use, here are the dates you need to be aware of as this policy is phased in:

January 2017:

- All new production facilities for pullets and layers must be dedicated to the regulated egg industry.
- For existing multi-species facilities, farmers must submit a written plan before January 15, 2017 explaining how they will be phasing out multi-species barns.

January 2018:

- Any producers who are SE positive and have production facilities that are not dedicated to the regulated egg industry must switch to dedicated production facilities before repopulating their barn.

January 2020:

- Requirement of license to have pullets and layers housed in production facilities dedicated to the regulated egg industry.

In order to enforce the policy and deadlines to phase out multi-species production facilities, a staged approach with increasing penalties will be used – similar to those used to enforce mandatory requirements in the SC-SC program and Animal Care Program. If you would like to learn more about this process, you can review EFA's On Farm Food Safety Policy (OPP 8.3) on the producer website, or by contacting the EFA office.

## SC-SC Element for Cats Update

The element in the Start Clean – Stay Clean Layer and Pullet programs prohibiting cats, dogs and other animals from accessing barns has been put on hold while EFC works to develop guidelines that will help farmers using cats for pest control to manage the risk of introducing SE into the barn. While this element is on hold, all farmers will receive full points on this element. The element will remain suspended until the guideline has been developed and consultation from the provinces has been completed.

## About EggNotes



*EggNotes* is the official newsletter of the Egg Farmers of Alberta.

Submissions should be sent to:  
[info@eggs.ab.ca](mailto:info@eggs.ab.ca)

Submission deadline for the next issue of *EggNotes*:  
**December 2, 2016**

Watch for your next issue:  
**December 16, 2016**

## “Yolk” of the Month

*Guaranteed to crack you up!*

Q: How do monsters like their eggs?

A: Terri-fried!



## Upcoming Events

**October 26**

Loose Housing Workshop (Airdrie)

**November 1**

EFA Board Meeting (Calgary)

**December 7**

Colony Elders Meeting (Calgary)

**December 8-9**

EFA Board Meeting (Calgary)

## Protecting Your Information

EFA is committed to protecting the personal information entrusted to us by farmers, industry partners and employees. We have a personal information protection policy that outlines the principles and practices we follow to protect your personal information. We have recently reviewed and updated our information policy, here are highlights from the updated policy:

- If a grader or hatchery would like EFA to release information about a producer, written authorization from the quota holder is now required. Authorization letter templates are available from EFA upon request.
- An organization holding a financial interest or appointment of attorney on quota can confirm the farm's quota amount, but any further release of information requires written authorization from the quota holder.
- If EFA is sharing information with a partner for the purposes of completing a project, an agreement is to be in place to protect EFA's information such as a project agreement, information sharing agreement or confidentiality agreement.
- EFA will not give personal information to businesses wishing to sell their products or services for financial gain. Advertising in *EggNotes* is available for those wishing to connect with our farmers.

To learn more about EFA's Personal Information Protection Policy, you can view it on the producer website under Information Center, EFA's Policies.

## Leasing Pool Update

EFA was pleased to launch the second round of the quota leasing pool in August. The deadline for applications to lease from, or opt out of the pool, was September 23, 2016. EFA staff reviewed all of the leasing applications and confirmed leasing pool amounts for the 2017/2018 pool on October 14<sup>th</sup>. If you applied to lease from the pool and have not yet received your confirmation, please contact the EFA office for your details.

In this second round of the leasing pool, 71 producers applied to lease 311,111 layers of quota with start dates between April 10, 2017 and May 27, 2018. There were 264,472 layers of quota available to lease through the pool with 97,475 layers committed to grandfathered leases and 166,997 layers available for the general leasing pool. Quota in the general leasing pool was allocated on a pro-rata basis, calculated on the amount of quota producers applied for, to a maximum of 7% of the pool (18,513 birds). One producer hit the 7% cap, while all other applications for quota from the general leasing pool were satisfied at a rate of 78%. Compared to the 1<sup>st</sup> round of the quota leasing pool earlier this year, the second pool had requests for 83,181 more birds, showing an increase in capacity in the province. The number of birds available in the pool increased by 55,681, thanks in part to the implementation of the utilization allowance. Payment invoices for leases through the quota leasing pool will be sent out in early 2017, and will be due starting on April 15, 2017.

## **EFA Staff Updates**

Jean Symborski, Marketing & Social Media Coordinator, is no longer with EFA. Please direct any marketing or social media related inquiries to David Webb.

EFA has hired a Business Manager, Kari Buijs, who will be taking on tasks related to quota management, data management, statistical analysis and the industrial product program.

Kari Buijs is pleased to start the next chapter of her professional career with the Egg Farmers of Alberta. She received her CGA designation in 2008. Her previous work experience has been with an exhibit supplier, an architecture firm, and a pipe coating facility. She has had a love for numbers since junior high. Her initial appeal to math was that it was either right or wrong. Although accounting wasn't her first choice out of high school, it was ultimately the best fit.

She has been married for 15 years to her wonderful husband Jason. They have three school aged children that keep them busy with hockey, piano, and soccer. They enjoy camping, hiking, watching movies, traveling and playing board games. The family also has a 10-month old puppy and a rabbit.

In her spare time, she enjoys working in the garden, reading fiction, cooking, walking and helping Jason on home renovations.

## **Serology and Salmonella Project Update**

*By Dr. Darko Mitevski, Poultry Health Services*

Poultry Health Services (PHS) has partnered with Egg Farmers of Alberta on a project that has required us to visit several egg farms across Alberta. For those farmers that are already participants in this project, we thank you very much for your efforts. For those who have heard about it but did not decide to participate, or are unfamiliar with this project, you may learn a few things for the first time by reading this material.

The project in question is focused on two basic things: testing blood samples, and using vaccine to protect flocks against salmonella infections.

Blood samples are collected by EFA Field Service Coordinators, from flocks that are of various ages. PHS then tests the blood samples and evaluates whether vaccines were given properly, and also determines if flocks are protected. We can also use the samples to potentially diagnose some diseases that cause a drop in egg production.

Vaccine given to protect flocks from various types of Salmonella is called "autogenous", meaning the vaccine is produced by using Salmonellas from infected Alberta farms. Vaccine is injected in the breast of each hen when they are pullets. We hope that this vaccine will reduce the number of flocks with Salmonella problems, to ultimately help ensure that the industry is providing safe, fresh eggs for the consumers.

Another aim of this project is to address problem flocks that experience a significant drop in egg production. If you have such problems, please submit live and dead birds to our lab. Some diagnostic tests will be free of charge. If you would like any additional information about this project, please call either PHS or the EFA office.

## **Growing Forward 2 Food Safety Program**

The Growing Forward 2 Food Safety System program is still open, and has funds available for farmers making investments in their on farm food safety programs.

To qualify, farmers must be part of an on farm food safety program, which all registered egg farmers are, under the Start Clean – Stay Clean program. Farmers are eligible for reimbursement of 70% of expenses that enhance on-farm safety, up to a maximum of \$5,000.00. Examples of expenses that could qualify include gravel for around your barn, hot pressure washers for cleaning your facility, pest control equipment, etc.

Funding is available on a first come, first serve basis. To apply for funding visit [www.growingforward.alberta.ca](http://www.growingforward.alberta.ca) and look for the Food Safety Producer Program or call 310-FARM.

## **Reminder: AB Agriculture Survey**

EFA would like to remind Alberta egg farmers about a survey that Alberta Agriculture and Forestry has contracted MDB Insight Inc. to conduct related to industry labour. Primary producers and agri-food processors are being asked to share their labour challenges and needs over the next 12 to 36 months by completing a short online survey. Please call 1-866-508-1441 for more info, or to complete the confidential survey by phone.

The survey can be found here: [www.forumresearchonline.ca/survey/intweb.dll/project/cawi//mdbi\\_cawi](http://www.forumresearchonline.ca/survey/intweb.dll/project/cawi//mdbi_cawi)

## **Reminder: CEIRA Survey**

EFA would like to remind Alberta egg farmers about a survey that CEIRA circulated to all subscribers last spring. The short survey can be completed online. CEIRA appreciates everyone who takes the time and effort to complete the survey. Input from the membership is highly valuable and ensures that any changes made are based on feedback from subscribers.

The survey can be found here: [www.surveymonkey.com/r/ceira\\_2016\\_subscriber\\_survey](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ceira_2016_subscriber_survey)

CEIRA plans to include a report on the survey in their upcoming fall newsletter.

## **Research Update**

EFA has initiated a project with Alberta Agriculture to help fill gaps in information related to the costs and benefits of using manure belt dryers in Alberta.

As a result of social pressure associated with climate change and social license, egg farmers have been encouraged to reduce emissions and improve the welfare of their birds. Ammonia emissions from manure can negatively impact air quality in the barn and the environment. Various research has shown that drying the manure, to maintain a minimum moisture content, can significantly decrease ammonia emissions and may have other stewardship benefits such as preserving the nutrient quality of the manure. Outstanding questions about manure belt drying in Alberta include:

- How effective are the systems with their current set up?
- Are there best practices for operating systems that can be recommended to increase effectiveness and efficiency?
- What moisture content is typical in Alberta with and without drying?
- What is the impact of drying in aviary systems?
- How much energy is used in drying, and does the benefit of Nitrogen retention exceed this cost?
- Given above, should manure drying be included in Growing Forward 3 funding?
- What extension activities related to storage and application would help support the benefits of manure drying?

The goal of the project is that egg farmers in Alberta will better understand all the benefits and challenges to adopting manure drying systems. The variables that help to minimize ammonia release and retain nutrients in the manure will be investigated to evaluate their significance. The project will look at what the economics and net environmental impacts are for drying systems in Alberta conditions to help inform egg farmers on sustainable practices.

Egg farmers that have manure belt dryers may have already been contacted to complete a brief phone survey. The next step of the project is to collect manure samples on a sub-set of those farms, and then conduct a pilot study in two barns. Jesse Vandenberg and Lynda Miedema are leading the project for Alberta Agriculture and may contact those who agreed to a follow up phone call to see about willingness to have Alberta Agriculture representatives on farm to collect manure samples.

If you would like more information about the project, please contact Jenna Griffin at the EFA office (403-250-1997 x. 129).

## Event: AgEx

EFA is proud to be a supporting partner of the Agricultural Excellence Conference, which is being held in Calgary, November 22-24, 2016. Brought to you by Farm Management Canada, this event brings diverse industry experts and stakeholders together from across disciplines, regions and production sectors, to share and explore beneficial farm management practices and insights with leading farm business thinkers.

The theme, “Plan & Prosper: Set the Course for Farm Success” focuses on planning as an essential element to farm business management. Conference-goers will come away from AgEx equipped with practical information and tools to enhance their farm business.

Agenda features:

- Plenary session
- Concurrent sessions
- The great debate: are we holding our farmers back?
- Panel discussion: managing risk in agriculture
- Roundtable discussion: towards the next ag policy framework
- Farm management initiatives showcase

Date: November 22-24, 2016  
Location: Sheraton Cavalier Hotel, Calgary

Visit [www.fmc-gac.com](http://www.fmc-gac.com), email [info@fmc-gac.com](mailto:info@fmc-gac.com), or call 1-888-232-3262 for more information and to register!

## Upcoming Flock Depopulations and Low Atmospheric Pressure Stunning

EFA has an update on the availability of Low Atmospheric Pressure Stunning (LAPS) equipment for your upcoming depopulation, which was brought to Alberta in 2014. LAPS is a large-scale piece of equipment for the humane depopulation of poultry, which does not involve carbon dioxide gas. Based on feedback from pilots on Alberta egg farms in 2015, EFA has spent the summer making improvements to the LAPS unit and process.

Upgrades to improve the efficiency of the LAPS unit were completed on October 7<sup>th</sup>. A final pilot run is scheduled for October 17<sup>th</sup>, to ensure that the changes perform as expected. If all goes as anticipated at that trial, EFA will open up access to the LAPS unit to all producers.

The cost to have the LAPS unit come to your farm will be \$0.05 per bird up to a maximum of \$500. Please note that this does not include disposal of birds or a catching crew. This subsidized fee will be used to cover cleaning and disinfection, labour of the equipment operator, and mileage and fuel of the trucking company that will haul the unit. At this time, EFA only has one LAPS unit, so service will be scheduled on a first come, first serve basis, and will be limited to flocks of 15,000 birds or less.

If you are interested in using LAPS for your depopulation, or if you have any questions, please contact Jenna Griffin at the EFA office (403-250-1197 x. 129 or [jenna.griffin@eggs.ab.ca](mailto:jenna.griffin@eggs.ab.ca)).

## EFC Website Update

Egg Farmers of Canada have relaunched their egg farmer’s website – [www.eggfarmers.ca](http://www.eggfarmers.ca) – with a new, easier to navigate design. The website ensures the breadth of industry issues and topics are well covered and addressed, so stakeholders and Canadians can engage with EFC and learn more about the Canadian egg industry.

The site fully integrates EFC’s social media channels to enhance their content development and visual storytelling. New articles and stories are published each week to discuss issues, insights and programs that are important to the farmers EFC represents.

**Healthy Eggs**

Chemicals used in the barn, such as those used for disinfectants, detergents and water treatment, should be stored away from eggs and hens. It is recommended that the storage is clearly marked, has locked doors, and that phone numbers and material safety data sheets are posted for emergency use.

**Healthy Birds**

Eggs with “wrinkled” tops can be caused by hen stress during lay. If you notice an increase in eggs with this trait, work to identify which part of the barn the eggs are coming from by examining your eggs before the belts run. Once you find the impacted area, observe the flock and environment to identify potential factors contributing to the hens’ stress.

**Healthy Communities**

In the August issue of *EggNotes*, an article was published that discussed the grand opening ceremony for the net-zero egg barn at Brant Colony. As an update to that article, a blog post has been published on the EFA website ([www.eggs.ab.ca/brant-colony-celebrates-grand-opening-of-net-zero-layer-barn](http://www.eggs.ab.ca/brant-colony-celebrates-grand-opening-of-net-zero-layer-barn)), which features a video about the net-zero barn. The video shares details about the project, including the goals and expectations for the barn itself, as well as what EFA and Alberta Agriculture and Forestry plan to do in terms of sharing the results with other egg farmers and agricultural stakeholders.

**Healthy Farms**

Question 3.2 of the Producer Environmental Egg Program (PEEP) speaks to manure storage capacity. The recommendation is that primary manure storage is permanent (i.e. has a base: clay liner or concrete pad) and there is 9-12 months or more capacity). Where that is not possible, the recommendation is that temporary manure storage be moved at least every seven months (i.e. after spring application).

EFA has heard from farmers that the benefit of moving the manure storage isn’t clear. The main goals associated with collecting and storing manure include: protecting surface water, and protecting groundwater. Producers who have manure storage piles away from surface water and are preventing runoff, have taken good steps toward protecting surface water. The purpose of moving the manure storage pile is to protect groundwater, which is a complicated thing to do!

Manure and manure nutrients can leach to groundwater on sites with coarse-textured soils, shallow depths to bedrock, and/or a shallow groundwater resource. Soil texture, geological formation and depth to groundwater significantly affect the degree of risk.

Factor	Explanation
Type of soil	Coarse-textured soils and soils with large cracks increase the risk of movement of water into the aquifer
Depth to the shallowest water table	Shallower water tables are more vulnerable
Depth to bedrock	Shallower bedrock can increase the risk of contamination. The upper surface of the bedrock is often highly fractured and conductive, and increases groundwater movement. It also acts as a conduit and moves water horizontally

For long-term manure storage, a site specific groundwater assessment is typically completed before construction to establish appropriate protection measures. This is typically not done with temporary manure storage (i.e. field storage). The easiest way to mitigate the risk is therefore to minimize the amount of exposure by reducing the time the nutrients have to penetrate the soil and reach a water table or bedrock. This can be accomplished by moving the location of storage after the pile is applied in the spring.

With the onset of fall, EFA also wants to remind farmers that application of manure on frozen or snow covered ground is not a recommended practice. In Alberta, more than 85% of the runoff comes from snowmelt. Application of manure on snow-covered or frozen ground increases the risk of nutrient transport from the field to neighbouring water bodies.

## **Alberta Egg Market Update**

The Nielsen retail sales data is available up to September 17, 2016 and indicates that in the latest 4-week period, 2.99 million dozen eggs were sold in Alberta; a 4.6% increase from the previous 4-week period (ending August 20<sup>th</sup>) and a 3.8% increase in sales compared to the same period in 2015.

Nielsen retail sales in the last 52 weeks are up 6.4% over the previous 52 weeks in Alberta, to 38.3 million dozen eggs. Specialty eggs (excluding Omega-3 eggs) have seen the largest sales growth in the last 52 weeks in Alberta; a 10.2% increase over the previous 52 weeks, to 3.0 million dozen eggs (7.9% of the total eggs sold in Alberta).

## **Volunteers Needed**

EFA is a proud member and supporter of the Classroom Agriculture Program (CAP), which has been helping to teach grade 4 students about agriculture since 1985. CAP is a fantastic opportunity for EFA's *Egg Ambassadors* to talk to kids about egg farming, and to help explain where their food comes from. If you are interested in learning more about CAP, please visit:

**[www.classroomagriculture.com](http://www.classroomagriculture.com)**.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact David Webb at the EFA office, to help plan your presentation and prepare for your school visit as a CAP volunteer!

## **New Safety Extension Program Coordinator Hired**

The Alberta Farm and Ranch Safety Extension Grant Working Group is made up of Alberta crop and livestock commissions. It was set up to oversee and direct the allocation of Growing Forward 2 (GF2) grant dollars for farm safety extension. The goal is to ensure a program is in place to provide farmers and ranchers with safety education and tools.

Recently, Donna Trottier was hired through the grant to take on the role of Safety Extension Program Coordinator. Donna will be responsible for the development and delivery of safety education and awareness for farmers across Alberta. This two-year contract position is being funded by the provincial and federal governments as part of GF2.

The plan for this funding is to create a model of farm safety education that can become the foundation of a long-term permanent structure with effective and stable programming. Donna is the perfect fit for this role because of her extensive background in agriculture, experience leading extension programs and her involvement in developing agriculture safety programs for the Canadian Agriculture Safety Association.

Donna will be responsible for developing farm and ranch safety programs and materials, removing gaps in training resources, delivering educational resources for farmers and ranchers—whether building and capitalizing on existing resources or developing new programs—and helping build a culture of farm safety. Donna will be working closely with the crop and livestock groups, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, the Canadian Agriculture Safety Association and private consultants to establish her project plan.

The Safety Extension Program Coordinator position will run on a two-year term and is fully funded by the GF2 grant, which is being administered by the Alberta Wheat Commission. The Alberta Farm and Ranch Safety Extension Grant Working Group will be overseeing Donna's activities and providing input and feedback on the activities of this program to ensure the grant dollars are being used for their intended purpose.

GF2 is a federal-provincial-territorial partnership with a mandate to drive an innovative, competitive and profitable Canadian agriculture and agri-food sector. Governments are fully committed to investing in programs that will achieve the best long-term results, consistent with available funding.