

GEORGE MORRIS CENTRE

Welcoming Remarks

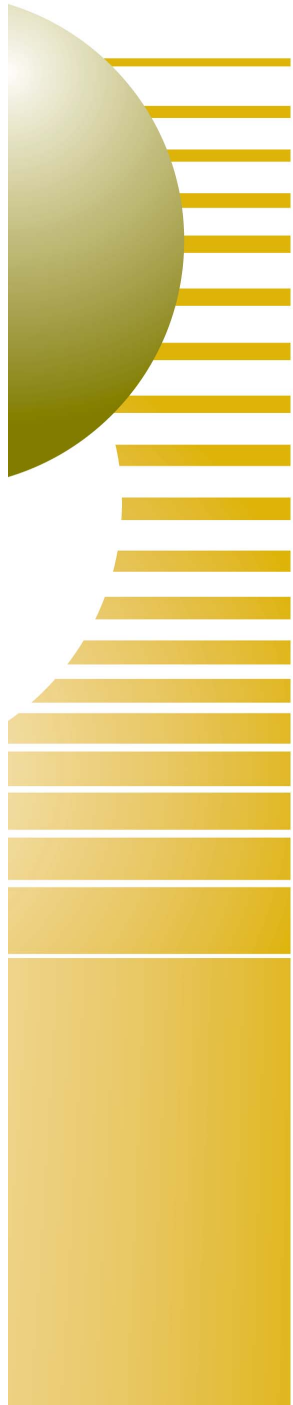
Al Mussell, PhD

Canada's Independent Agri-Food Think Tank



Observations

- *Moving Forward in a Volatile Environment*
 - Anticipating the future
 - Abrupt changes, extremes
- Contemporary significance
 - Canada and US renewing periodic agricultural policies
 - Past programs assume the market will move against farmers, with other elements essentially bundled in legislation
 - Only marginal changes contemplated



Observations

- Contemporary significance:
 - Remarkable, given changes in markets since *Growing Forward* and 2008 US Farm Bill
 - Still very farmer-focused, with food and environment as add-ons
 - Not consistent with recent and expected future volatility



Observations

- Changing and volatile views on domestic and foreign trade rules
 - Fear that downstream customers will turn against farmers- except when it “excessively” restricts individual freedom- CWB
 - But then not elsewhere – supply mgt
 - Bracketed by new multi-lateralism:
 - CETA and (perhaps) TPP; beyond bilaterals



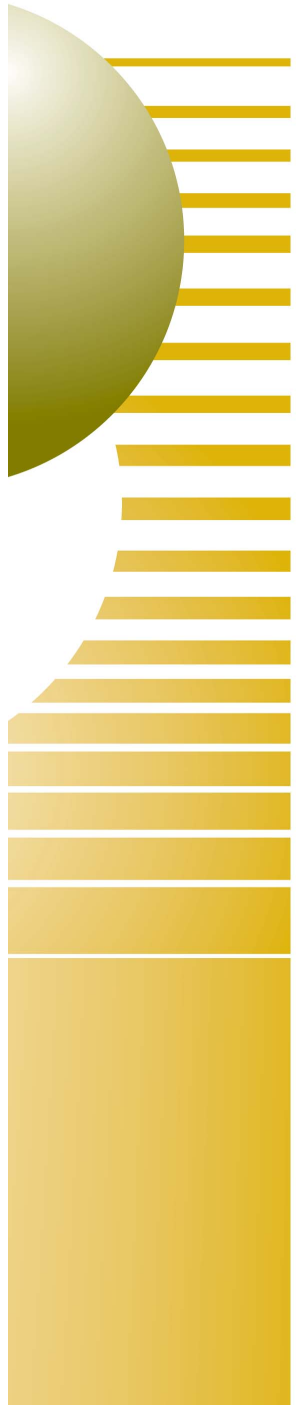
Observations

- More attention to the sector; many perspectives and disagreements
 - Policy guided by economic, social, and environmental considerations- but little sense of how to balance them
 - Diverging views on technology benefits vs. technology side effects/risks
 - Tendency for unilateralism on either side- “camps” that speak only to their own



Conclusion

- We need an improved policy debate and accessible dialogue
 - Farm and food issues are complex, important
 - No one has all of the answers
- This conference:
 - Facilitating informed discussion
 - Access to leading experts
 - Access to AAFC-funded research networks, Canadian experts
 - Professional dialogue



Neil Conklin, PhD

- President of the Farm Foundation in Washington, DC
 - Former Director of Market and Trade Economics, USDA
 - Chief Economist, Farm Credit Council
 - USDA-ERS
 - Office of Management and Budget
 - Faculties of Colorado State University, U of Arizona, Arizona State University
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*Working to develop a
more competitive and prosperous
Canadian agri-food sector.*

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