

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)
National Union-Management Consultation Committee (NUMCC)
June 14, 2013
Minutes

Present:

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)

Suzanne Vinet	Deputy Minister
Tim Sargent	Associate Deputy Minister
Siddika Mithani	ADM Science and Technology Branch
Pierre Corriveau	ADM Corporate Management Branch
Greg Meredith	ADM Strategic Policy Branch
Rita Moritz	ADM Programs Branch
Jodi Redmond	ADM Communication and Consultations Branch
Gilles Saindon	Associate ADM Science and Technology Branch
Sandra Gagné	A/Director General, Operations Directorate, Market and Industry Services Branch
Rama Rai	Director General, Strategic Management Directorate, Information Management Services
Michael Whittaker	Chief Audit and Evaluation
Louise Sénéchal	General Counsel and Deputy Executive Director, Legal Services
Marco Valicenti	Corporate Secretary, Deputy Minister's Office
Michael Whittaker	Chief Audit and Evaluation
Caroline Dunn	Director General, Human Resources Directorate, CMB
Ceci O'Flaherty	Director, Labour Relations, Human Resources Directorate, CMB
Lucia Kuhl	A/Principal Consultant, Labour Relations, Human Resources Directorate, CMB

Agriculture Union (PSAC)

Bob Kingston	President
Fabian Murphy	First National Executive Vice President
Glenn Miller	Second National Executive Vice President

Professional Institute of the Public Service Canada (PIPSC)

Linnell Edwards	President, AAFC National Consultation Team
Catherine Keir	Vice President, AAFC National Consultation Team
Dale Woloshin	Steward, National Capital Region
Jean François Prigent	Employment Relations Officer, PIPSC
Jeff Ballard	Steward

Canadian Association of Professional Employees (CAPE)

Salma Jaroudi President, AAFC – NCR (Local 507)
Yves Rochon Labour Relations Officer, AAFC – NCR (Local 507)

Association of Canadian Financial Officers (ACFO)

Dany Richard Labour Relations Advisor, ACFO

Regrets:

Peter Bruce CIO Information Systems Branch
Tina Namiesniowski ADM Market and Industry Services Branch
Raphaël Tarasco Third National Executive Vice President
Meraiah (Krebs) Morison Fourth National Executive Vice President
Paul Cameron Assistant Business Manager, IBEW
Rob Hunter Steward, National Capital Region, PIPSC
Maurice Korol Vice President, AAFC – NCR (Local 507), CAPE
Céline Tremblay Principal Consultant, Labour Relations, Human Resources Directorate, CMB

<u>Agenda Item</u>	<u>Summary and Action</u>	<u>Accountability</u>
1. Opening remarks S. Vinet	<u>Summary:</u> S. Vinet expressed her appreciation for the union collaboration in view of the recent announcement of AAFC Transformation.	Y
2. Approval of Minutes S. Vinet	Union representatives were in agreement with the minutes of the previous meeting. F. Murphy (PSAC) indicated that he had connected with S. Guillemin and had agreed to monitoring rather than co-delivery of the Creating a Respectful Workplace training course.	No follow up required.
3. Blueprint 2020 T. Sargent	<u>Summary:</u> T. Sargent highlighted the Blueprint 2020 initiative and invited union engagement in the roll-out of activities that will involve various methods of communication to and with employees. Blueprint 2020 activities will take place using	

horizontal networks and communities of interest across the Public Service such as the Inclusiveness Management Committee at AAFC as well as unions.

The unions (PSAC) expressed concerns regarding AAFC involving employees directly in this initiative which could contravene NJC directives or collective agreements.

T. Sargent acknowledged union concerns reiterating that national outreach efforts will be undertaken through the National Joint Council and that other types of engagement activities with local bargaining agents is being considered.

Blueprint 2020 discussions may also be part of established union-management consultation committee meetings.

Regular consultation will continue beyond the planned engagement sessions in 2013 and include a working partnership after an Action Plan is released in the new year.

Union to provide information

Unions were asked to indicate how they would like to be involved with Blueprint 2020 activities.

**4. AAFC Plans and Priorities 2013-2014
S. Vinet and Branch Heads**

Summary:

S. Vinet provided a summary of departmental plans and priorities for 2013-2014 and the publication of AAFC's first Integrated Business and Human Resources Plan (IBHRP).

Each Branch Head presented a summary of their respective branch priorities for 2013-2014.

No follow up required

**i) Strategic Policy Branch (SPB)
G. Meredith**

Summary:

G. Meredith indicated that SPB will continue to maintain a central role in creating the policy and regulatory environment for the agriculture sector to thrive.

SPB's planning process reflects the key priorities for the sector including implementation of GF2, supporting the grain sector in taking full advantage

of marketing choice and supporting the sector to become more competitive both domestically and globally.

SPB priorities reflect the sector's and government's objectives. AAFC is also adjusting its operations to respect actual funding levels going forward. The most recent adjustments align with departmental business goals, reflecting the key priorities, policies and programs to be delivered on this year and in the years ahead.

**No follow up
required**

SPB has made considerable progress however additional internal re-organization of the branch will be required to accommodate budget realities and future policy priorities.

**ii) Science and
Technology Branch
(STB)
S. Mithani/G.
Saindon**

Summary:

S. Mithani indicated that AAFC's goal is to improve the sector's access to science by working through partnerships to reshape the collective approach to Research, Development and Technology Transfer (RDT).

STB's focus is on finalizing a clear, long-term direction for science and technology that will support a competitive and innovative agriculture, Agri-food and Agri-based products sector.

STB's scientists and technicians will begin new department-led research, development and knowledge transfer projects in support of this direction. This includes the development of national sector and commodity strategies to better align STB work with how the sector is organized. These strategies will guide AAFC-led research and innovation programs and departmental support to industry-led research.

Sunsetting programs, shifting delivery models and other budgetary constraints contributed to decisions to consolidate AAFC's national science capacity in key locations in line with efforts to concentrate expertise and use resources more effectively to generate the science and knowledge needed to

advance the industry.

STB's strategic direction focuses on the appropriate federal role, based on partnership approaches and ensures that AAFC plans & priorities are met.

Adjustments to STB capacity are consistent with the focused investments being made under Growing Forward 2 and will enable AAFC to better leverage the investments supporting industry led priorities through collaborative efforts to achieve outcomes.

No follow up required

**iii) Market and Industry Services Branch (MISB)
S. Gagné for T. Namiesniowski**

Summary:

S. Gagné indicated that the transformative vision for agriculture set out in Growing Forward 2 highlights a more active role for industry in undertaking activities to support its long-term profitability, and also increases the role of provinces and territories, which has altered the landscape for how and where AAFC operates.

Recognizing GF2 and reduced funding levels, going forward MISB will be focusing on the core functions of trade negotiations and market access, and continuing to work with industry on issues of importance and areas where the federal government is best situated to act.

MISB has a key role in supporting AAFC priorities, particularly with implementation of GF2, in delivering federal-only initiatives such as traceability and managing agreements with the provinces for the cost-shared funding.

MISB's focus is on developing a departmental international strategy that highlights key areas of interest and clearly outline the roles and responsibilities, such as those within the market development sphere, to maximize MISB's impact as a department. Efforts will be undertaken to refocus regional offices to reflect their unique regional intelligence function, and their role as the corporate face of AAFC across Canada.

No follow up required

iv.) Programs
Branch (PB)
M. Brassard

Summary:

M. Brassard indicated that PB's core priorities include delivering federal-only Growing Forward 2 programming and supporting the transformation of agricultural research and innovation.

PB is continuing to deliver programs that enable industry to develop and adopt innovative products, processes and management practices (GF 2 AgrilInnovation and other programs) and deliver changes to the Business Risk Management (BRM) programming.

PB will continue to transform and improve the delivery of programs and improve service delivery to farmers and agri-businesses, including the development and adoption of common processes, systems and processes and ensuring consistent service delivery.

PB will implement government and ministerial priorities including leading the divestiture of the Community Pastures Program as a result of Budget 2012 and supporting impacted employees through transition and transformation.

PB resource levels have been impacted by several considerations, including: a shift in GF2 funding towards provincial non-BRM program delivery and the ending of several large programs which will not be renewed. PB has therefore made adjustments to reflect current priorities and the operational resources of the Branch, ensuring efficient use of resources while continuing to serve the sector.

PB's has consolidated programs and functions for efficiency and consistency. Further efficiencies can be gained by eliminating duplication through centralization of functions. In certain areas, further consolidation results in either rationalization or discontinuation of functions.

PB is well positioned, with the changes introduced as part of transformation, and will continue to align with changes to the program suite, improve services to clients, deliver on branch commitments, manage within assigned resources to achieve priorities and support the sector and employees.

**No follow up
required**

v.) Information
Systems Branch
(ISB)
R. Rai for P. Bruce

Summary:

R. Rai indicated that ISB identified six top priorities for 2013-2014:

1. Implement prioritized GF2 related system changes for IM and IT (e.g. AgriRisk Initiatives processing and back end systems).
2. Provide IM/IT tools and solutions (e.g. SMSP) to Science and Technology Branch to help enable the successful delivery of AAFC-led research, development and knowledge transfer projects.
3. Partner with other organizations (e.g. SSC, CFIA) in the delivery of IM/IT services while making sure that accountabilities, service expectations and commitments are clear.
4. Implement IM/IT solutions that allow information to be easily shared between AAFC and its partner organizations.
5. Implement secure solutions that support a mobile workforce that requires access to IM/IT systems and data anytime and from any location.
6. Continue to rationalize the number of IM/IT applications and standardize the way they are maintained while managing evolving levels of service to all clients (e.g. decommissioning of applications).

ISB resources have been realigned within a strategic framework identifying four core strategies as part of the three-year IM/IT Plan (2013-2016): Information and Knowledge Sharing; Business Solutions Delivery; A Modern and Mobile Workforce; and Strategic and Operational Partnerships.

The Transformation Agenda changes are in keeping with previous reductions and are in line with efforts to streamline departmental tools, modernize ISB service delivery and maximize cost-savings through joint initiatives and partnerships.

R. Rai highlighted that AAFC invested significantly over the last several years in IM/IT and will be taking advantage of these investments to meet

departmental needs with less projected expenditures going forward.

The Branch has recently established a single Help Desk with a common 1-800 number for both CFIA and AAFC as part of the Budget 2012 commitment. This integrated Help Desk will allow the leveraging of efficiencies technically and organizationally.

ISB is introducing new service delivery models such as increased self-serve (e.g. web publishing, NCR walk-in centre for devices) and library support for the rollout of digital collaboration work sites.

With increased availability of better IM/IT tools, best practices and information sharing methods, the delivery of IM and IT services will continue to evolve and will likely become more standard across government and allow for increased consolidation opportunities.

No follow up required

**vi.) Corporate Management Branch (CMB)
P. Corriveau**

Summary:

P. Corriveau indicated that CMB is ensuring its work is aligned to government priorities and delivering on its core mandate and commitments and continuing to strike a balance between reducing costs; modernizing and streamlining operations; and delivering the right programs and services to clients.

CMB client branches have announced changes related to a further streamlining of operations, modernization of service delivery, an increased focus on core mandate, and some related office closures. Since CMB provides enabling services to Branch and departmental core business, changes in these areas have had a cascading impact on the level of resources that CMB requires to meet client needs.

Service modernization has also contributed to the recent combination of the former Corporate Management and Human Resources branches, as well as efforts to further expand the provision of shared services within the AAFC portfolio, focussing on reducing costs in administration and internal services and ensuring the most effective and efficient way of

responding to client service needs.

P. Corriveau added that the Canadian Pari-Mutuel Agency (CPMA) is currently considering the changing business needs of the horse racing industry and reductions in service demands.

CMB will continue to focus on the efficient delivery of core services to its clients and having a responsive, adaptable organization that will meet the needs of evolving departmental operations.

No follow up required

**5. Update on Growing Forward 2 (GF2)
G. Meredith**

Summary:

G. Meredith indicated that there has been continuity from Growing Forward to Growing Forward 2, and a continued emphasis at the federal level on innovation, competitiveness and market development, and ongoing attention to assurance systems and environment.

G. Meredith highlighted that the new five-year GF2 Policy Framework was launched on April 1, 2013 by the Federal Government, in partnership with the Provinces and Territories and that bilateral agreements with all provinces and Territories, with the exception of Nunavut and Northwest Territories, which are expected to be finalized by the fall.

No follow up required

**6. Public Service Employee Survey (PSES) Action Plan
P. Corriveau**

Summary:

P. Corriveau provided a brief summary of AAFC's accomplishments such as:

- Values and Ethics Month in November 2012, the first of its kind in the Public Service;
- Agriculture in Action: Using Values to Realize the People Commitments;
- Review of the Executive Governance Structure to streamline the functioning of the committees; and
- Establishing semi-annual meetings for employment equity stakeholders.

Other initiatives were undertaken to address the areas of official languages, learning & development and performance management, as well as issues of harassment in the workplace.

No follow up required

With the goal of establishing AAFC as a “workplace of choice”, communication has expanded to include the use of new collaboration and social media tools.

**7. National Public Service Week (NPSW)
P. Corriveau**

Summary:

P. Corriveau reported on events that took place across the country to mark National Public Service Week (NPSW) and to show appreciation for the work AAFC employees do to serve Canadians and one another as Public Servants.

NPSW launch day in the NCR featured a number of displays and entertainment by talented AAFC performers. The displays not only promoted the work we do for Canadians but were also a platform to share information about programs, tools and services available to employees including values and ethics, the employee assistance program and gold harvest award nominations.

At the suggestion of the Professional Institute Of The Public Service Of Canada (PIPSC), a display was developed that provided information on the option of “alternation”.

Employees of AAFC and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) in the NCR were provided with the opportunity to get to know their workplace better through tours of the central experimental farm and the National Emergency Operation Centre.

Activities were organized to encourage AAFC employees to network with colleagues; learn about inclusiveness at the department; and, managers took part in a learning event that will help them to continue to support employees and the department as we undergo transformation in the public service.

Various events were held in several locations across the country such as in Kentville, Morden, Ontario, Lethbridge and Montreal. There were also various regional federal council activities across the country.

No follow up required

8. Workforce

Summary:

**Adjustment (WFA)
C. Dunn**

C. Dunn acknowledged that AAFC is currently managing difficult transitions and that the priority is to ensure that all impacted employees have the support they need to make well-informed decisions about their future, and that those employees who wish to remain in the Public Service have every opportunity to do so.

C. Dunn reiterated that ongoing support, tools and information is being provided to employees and managers relating to WFA and that the AAFC Employees in Transition page in AgriSource continues to be updated regularly. Efforts continue to ensure support to AAFC employees who are still impacted by WFA, and include activities such as the maintenance of current information on opting employees in the AAFC People Bank which enables the effective matching of employees wishing to alternate with potential volunteers; current Opting employees have been informed and provided the opportunity to register and be referred to positions that fit their profile.

C. Dunn acknowledged the work that has been done at AAFC to place opting employees wishing to alternate. AAFC was one of the first departments to establish an alternation process to assist both employees in the department and from across government and, the Department has seen considerable success in placing employees through alternation to date. In view of the PSLRB Decision (April 9, 2013) on the policy grievance relating to alternations, AAFC has issued a message notifying managers at all levels that alternations in the department will be considered in accordance with the criteria outlined in this decision. This notification was also posted on AAFC Employees in Transition page in AgriSource, on news@work and sent to unions (for information).

C. Dunn reported that WFA Consultation Committees are working well in AAFC; as of the end of May over 125 WFACC meetings will have been held at the local, regional or branch level, including 14 national level meetings.

The unions requested an in-depth discussion regarding employees who chose Option A – Surplus in 2012. Meetings to be arranged.

(Completed 12-07-2013)

9. Issues submitted by Unions

The unions (PSAC) requested a “discussion on consultation with bargaining agents as per the collective agreements”, referencing that “Departments or organizations shall advise and consult with the bargaining agent representatives as completely as possible regarding any workforce adjustment situation as soon as possible after the decision has been made.”

Previously discussed at the National Workforce Adjustment Consultation Committee meeting held May 15, 2013.

The Deputy noted that AAFC met its obligations under the collective agreement work force adjustment appendices and the National Joint Council Workforce Adjustment Directive since AAFC management informed senior officials of the responsible union(s) on May 6, 2013.

P. Corriveau indicated that following official notification there was a conference call with the representatives from NWFACC on May 7, 2013.

A National Workforce Adjustment Consultation Committee meeting was held on May 15, 2013, where unions were provided with further detail regarding workforce adjustment situations.

Workforce Adjustment Consultation Committees to be established, continued or renewed at local, regional and/or branch level were proposed to union representatives at the NWFACC on May 15, 2013.

At the requests of unions (PSAC) an ad hoc meeting to discuss WFA Issues was held on May 28, 2013. Management heard further discussion on where unions believed WFA Committees should be established and issues have been addressed

accordingly.

Reiterate that any issue with respect to specific WFA situations ought not to be delayed and may be referred directly to Labour Relations at any time.

Next meeting

Next meeting date will be confirmed and scheduled.

ADM CMB

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