



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
Fourth Session

Standing Committee
on
Alberta's Economic Future

Impact of the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement
on Agriculture in Alberta

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6:30 p.m.

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The 29th Legislature
Fourth Session**

Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future

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van Dijken, Glenn, Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock (UCP), Deputy Chair

Carson, Jonathon, Edmonton-Meadowlark (NDP)
Connolly, Michael R.D., Calgary-Hawkwood (NDP)
Coolahan, Craig, Calgary-Klein (NDP)
Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (NDP)
Fitzpatrick, Maria M., Lethbridge-East (NDP)
Gotfried, Richard, Calgary-Fish Creek (UCP)
Horne, Trevor A.R., Spruce Grove-St. Albert (NDP)
Littlewood, Jessica, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (NDP)
McPherson, Karen M., Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill (AP)
Piquette, Colin, Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater (NDP)
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6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, November 7, 2018

[Mr. Sucha in the chair]

The Chair: Good evening, everyone. I'd like to call the meeting to order. Welcome, staff, members, guests in attendance to the meeting of the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future. Before we begin, I would like to acknowledge that this meeting is commencing on the traditional territory of the Treaty 6 people as well as the Métis people, who have a close connection with this land.

My name is Graham Sucha. I'm the MLA for Calgary-Shaw and the chair of this committee. We'll go around the table and have those introduce themselves for the record, starting with the member on my right.

Mr. van Dijken: Good evening. Deputy chair and MLA for Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock, Glenn van Dijken.

Mr. Schneider: Dave Schneider, Little Bow.

Ms McPherson: Karen McPherson, MLA for Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill.

Dr. Starke: Good evening. Richard Starke, MLA for Vermilion-Lloydminster.

Mr. Horne: Good evening. Trevor Horne, MLA for Spruce Grove-St. Albert.

Mr. Carson: Good evening. Jon Carson, MLA for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Mr. Dach: Good evening. Lorne Dach, MLA for Edmonton-McClung.

Ms Fitzpatrick: Good evening. Maria Fitzpatrick, MLA for Lethbridge-East.

Connolly: Michael Connolly, Calgary-Hawkwood.

Ms Dotimas: Jeanette Dotimas, communications for LAO.

Dr. Amato: Good evening. Sarah Amato, research officer.

Dr. Massolin: Good evening. Philip Massolin, manager of research and committee services.

Mr. Roth: Good evening. Aaron Roth, committee clerk.

The Chair: Excellent.

We'll go to the members on the phone, starting with Mr. Piquette.

Mr. Piquette: Good evening. Colin Piquette, MLA for Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater.

Mr. Taylor: Good evening. Wes Taylor, MLA for Battle River-Wainwright.

The Chair: Excellent.

Please note that the microphones are operated by *Hansard*, and committee proceedings are being live streamed on the Internet and broadcast on Alberta Assembly TV. Please set your cellphones and devices to silent for the duration of the meeting.

We will now move to the approval of the agenda. Are there any omissions or changes that any members would like to note?

Seeing and hearing none, would a member like to move approval of the agenda? Moved by Member Connolly that the agenda for the

November 7, 2018, meeting of the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future be adopted as circulated. All those in favour, please say aye. All those opposed, please say no. For those members on the phone. Excellent. That motion is carried.

All right. We'll move to approval of the minutes. We have our minutes from our last meeting. Are there any errors or omissions we wish to note?

Mr. Gotfried: Yes, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: All right.

Mr. Gotfried: Yes. Under the decision, the standing vote on page 79 under the recorded vote, there is no notation there as to the result.

The Chair: Okay. Good note there. We'll make that change accordingly.

Are there any other errors or omissions to note besides the one brought up by Mr. Gotfried?

Seeing and hearing none, would a member like to move approval of the minutes? Moved by Member Connolly that the minutes of the October 11, 2018, meeting of the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future be adopted as revised. All those in favour, please say aye. All those opposed, please say no. And on the phone? Excellent. That motion is carried.

Mr. Gotfried, if you'd like to introduce yourself for the record, too.

Mr. Gotfried: My apologies. Richard Gotfried, MLA for Calgary-Fish Creek.

The Chair: Excellent. Thank you, sir.

We'll move on to item 4, section (a), review of the standing . . .

Mrs. Littlewood: Chair.

The Chair: Yes. Sorry. MLA Littlewood.

Mrs. Littlewood: You want me to introduce myself for the record?

The Chair: Sure.

Mrs. Littlewood: Jessica Littlewood, MLA representing the beautiful rural constituency of Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.

The Chair: Excellent. Thank you, Mrs. Littlewood.

All right. Members, just to reviewing Standing Order 52.07. At the October 11, 2018, meeting of the committee, the committee passed a motion to initiate an inquiry into the impacts of the United States-Mexico-Canada agreement, the USMCA, "on Alberta agriculture, in particular the effect of increased market access of U.S.-originating dairy, poultry, and eggs on Alberta's supply-managed producers and their suppliers."

At this time I'd like to review the processes for undertaking an inquiry in legislative policy committees. Standing Order 52.07 governs the general processes of such an inquiry. I'd like to draw members' attention particularly to Standing Order 52.07(2), which states:

A Legislative Policy Committee may on its own initiative, or at the request of a Minister, inquire into any matter concerned with the structure, organization, operation, efficiency or service delivery of any sector of public policy within its mandate.

To refresh all of our memories, Standing Order 52.01(1)(b) states, "Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future – mandate related to the areas of Agriculture and Forestry, Advanced Education, Infrastructure, Economic Development and Trade, Culture and Tourism and Labour."

I would also like to draw members' attention to Standing Order 52.07(4), which defines the length of an inquiry conducted by a legislative policy committee. It states in subsection (4), "All inquiries must be concluded and a substantive report presented to the Assembly no later than 6 months after the commencement of the inquiry." As the committee passed the motion to initiate the inquiry at its October 11 meeting, it must report to the Legislative Assembly on this matter by April 11 of 2019.

I would like to invite Dr. Massolin, Parliamentary Counsel, to provide any additional information on the inquiry process under the standing order.

Dr. Massolin: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I don't really think I have a lot to add since you gave the committee a really good rundown of this standing order, what it provides, what the parameters are, and I think the committee has already undergone – well, I know that the committee has already undergone a review pursuant to the standing orders, but I'm available to answer any questions if there are any.

The Chair: Before I open up the floor, if you'd like to introduce yourself for the record, Mr. Coolahan.

Mr. Coolahan: Thank you. Craig Coolahan, MLA for Calgary-Klein.

The Chair: All right. Are there any questions in regard to the standing order or its mandate there? MLA Fitzpatrick.

Ms Fitzpatrick: I'm sorry. No questions, but I'd like to make a few comments.

The Chair: Yeah. Sure.

Ms Fitzpatrick: Okay. I want to begin by thanking research services for the work that they do to support the committee. I've certainly been on a few committees where you've done quite a bit of work for us. I want you to know how much I appreciate it. Certainly in terms of this one there are a number of complexities in consideration, so I believe that a technical briefing would certainly be appropriate in this case. I guess receiving a technical briefing will help the committee so we can move forward.

The Chair: Member Fitzpatrick, we're still on just a review of the standing order, so we can move to the technical briefing.

Ms Fitzpatrick: Oh. I'm sorry. I was getting ahead of myself. Sorry.

The Chair: Excellent.

Any other questions by members just in regard to the standing order? Or members on the phone? All right.

Seeing and hearing none, we'll move on to the technical briefing side. MLA Fitzpatrick, I'll allow you to continue.

Ms Fitzpatrick: I kind of want to get this done.

As I said, I think technical briefings would be very helpful for the committee in the work that we have to do and our next steps, and I want this, and I'm sure all of us want this review to move forward in a timely manner. It's important that we focus our efforts on what our inquiry specifically looks like to learn more about the impact of the USMCA on Alberta agriculture – that's pretty important to me in southern Alberta, for sure – and specifically how increased market access for the U.S. will impact supply-managed producers.

I feel at this time that we should request a technical briefing from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, and I'd suggest that we ask specifically for a briefing from Agriculture and Forestry's intergovernmental relations, trade, and environment division. We want to hear directly from the experts on the subject matter of our inquiry. We want to receive information that is focused and specific to this particular inquiry, not broad and general. I want it specific to Agriculture and Forestry.

I think this is especially important when we consider that we have a deadline to complete this inquiry by April 11, 2019. We need to hear a focused and specific technical briefing as soon as possible, and I'd like to make a motion if I can.

The Chair: Go ahead. Yeah. Please proceed, MLA Fitzpatrick.

6:40

Ms Fitzpatrick: Okay. I will move that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future invite representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to provide a technical briefing to the committee in regard to the impact that the United States-Mexico-Canada agreement will have on Alberta agriculture, in particular the effect of increased market access of the United States-originating dairy, poultry, and eggs on Alberta supply-managed producers and their suppliers at a future meeting of this committee.

If you'd read it back.

The Chair: Mr. Roth, if you've got the whole thing written down there.

Mr. Roth: Thank you, Mr. Chair. What I have is: moved by Ms Fitzpatrick that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future invite representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to provide a technical briefing to the committee in regard to the impact that the United States-Mexico-Canada agreement will have on Alberta agriculture, in particular the effect of increased market access of the United States-originating dairy, poultry, and eggs on Alberta supply-managed producers and their suppliers at a future meeting of the committee.

Ms Fitzpatrick: Perfect. Thank you.

The Chair: We have a motion on the floor. I'll open that up for discussion. MLA McPherson.

Ms McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just would like some clarity as to what the regular process is in circumstances like this because I've never encountered this before. I'm wondering if we could just get some information about how it works in other circumstances with the same standing order.

The Chair: Yeah. I'll kind of give some context to what happened, because I was present as chair when we did a similar review in regard to the diversification of the agrifood and agribusiness sector, and I'll allow Dr. Massolin to supplement if I've missed any items in relation to it.

Typically when we proceed, because it does fall under a specific ministry, whatever the mandate we're looking to achieve, we usually receive a technical briefing from that specific ministry on the item that we're reviewing. Research services will sometimes do research comparisons. Usually it's cross-jurisdictional, but this one will be different because this is something very new. There isn't really any jurisdiction to compare it to because it's not specific to a province but more specific to the country in a general sense, looking at the impacts to Alberta. Then we'll bring in stakeholders and get a stakeholder list and things like that.

Ms McPherson: I just wondered, regarding the technical briefing itself, what the usual process was, and you've answered my question very well.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Perfect. Excellent.

Mr. van Dijken: Just for clarity's sake, I believe that Ms Fitzpatrick identified a department within the ministry, the department of trade or so. But I don't remember hearing it from the motion as the clerk has quoted it.

The Chair: MLA Fitzpatrick.

Ms Fitzpatrick: Okay. I didn't include it in my motion. I did talk about how I'd like to have the briefing specifically from Agriculture and Forestry's intergovernmental relations, trade, and environment division because they're the ones that deal with it.

Mr. van Dijken: But not included in the motion? Okay. Fair.

The Chair: Usually, too, as we look at the broader interpretation of the motion, a lot of the conversations we'll contextualize and then give some direction within what's being defined within the motion there as well as what's hoped to be achieved. When we seek that briefing, we will make sure that MLA Fitzpatrick mentions that specific ministry when we send a letter to the ministry requesting that.

Any other questions? Any members on the phone?

Seeing and hearing none, I will call the question. Mr. Roth, if you'd like to read it into the record for those on the phone again.

Mr. Roth: Certainly, Mr. Chair. Moved by Ms Fitzpatrick that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future invite representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to provide a technical briefing to the committee in regard to the impact that the United States-Mexico-Canada agreement will have on Alberta agriculture, in particular the effect of increased market access of the United States-originating dairy, poultry, and eggs on Alberta supply-managed producers and their suppliers at a future meeting of the committee.

The Chair: Having heard the motion, all those in favour, please say aye. All those opposed, please say no. Members on the phone?

That motion is carried.

All right. We will now move on to research requests. Hon. members, the committee may wish to consider inviting submissions from certain stakeholders in regard to this inquiry. Members may wish to suggest potential stakeholders today, but they may also wish to consider identifying additional stakeholders. In addition, research services can be tasked with developing a list of stakeholders for the committee that would be relevant to our inquiry.

I would like to open up the floor for discussion on whether the committee would like to compile a list of stakeholders for consultation. I know we've done this before in other committee meetings as well, where we allow for some ample time and then approve the stakeholder list after the fact, between myself and the deputy chair, which allows us to compile stakeholders after the meeting because sometimes those things occur.

I'll open it up for any discussion or questions about a possible stakeholder list. MLA McPherson.

Ms McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a list of 55 stakeholders that I've put together. I'm happy to share it, but I don't know the best way to do that, if electronically would be appropriate or if you want me to read them into the record or what the preference is.

The Chair: Whatever your prerogative is. You could e-mail it to the clerk, and he can distribute it to all the committee members.

Ms McPherson: I'll do that.

The Chair: Yeah. Okay.

Any other questions or comments? Mr. Horne.

Mr. Horne: Yeah. Not having the list of 55 stakeholders, you know, there are definitely a few that I think should be in there. I was going to say that I think if we can have the table officers draft something, and then we can look over it in the future. There are definitely some stakeholders like the Hatching Egg Producers and all of the relevant supply management groups that I think should be included, but I kind of assumed they would be. If it was 55 stakeholders and they weren't there, I'd be a bit concerned.

The Chair: Mr. Gotfried.

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think in the past we've given a specified period of time for members of the committee to provide draft stakeholders for that list to then be compiled and circulated and then a last opportunity for us to supplement that with anyone we've forgotten. We have a constituency week coming up. Maybe we could set an appropriate date out that gives us a certain degree of urgency but also some ample time to consult in our constituencies and with some of our own research team to come up with that list. Is that what you're seeking?

The Chair: Well, it's whatever the prerogative of the committee is.

Connolly: Honestly, I think we should only finalize a list following the next meeting. We should receive a technical briefing first, and then I believe we should finalize a list right after that. The technical briefing will help members to determine who else we might need to hear from. If that works for the rest of the committee, I think that's the best idea.

The Chair: Excellent.

Sorry. Member McPherson.

Ms McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Well, my list is the best list.

Mr. Gotfried: I have 56 on the list coming.

Ms McPherson: That other one doesn't count.

I just wanted to follow up on being able to submit stakeholder names later on and just be more clear on what the process for that is. It sounds like, especially after what both members Connolly and Gotfried were talking about, we'll have some time if we do identify further stakeholders that we'll be able to submit them even after the next meeting.

The Chair: You can move a motion for it. Also, I can just give directions to research services to start compiling that information. If you want to filter those up to the committee clerk, he can just start compiling those lists, and then we can go over that in the next meeting.

Ms McPherson: Okay.

The Chair: So we'll task research services to move on that. Excellent. I actually do have a motion here, but it won't set any firm timeline as to when that collection will be finalized. So we can discuss at the next meeting the end date for that. If someone wants

to move it, I can read it out for the committee members if that's the will. Moved by Member Connolly that

the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future direct research services to prepare a draft list of stakeholders as part of the committee's review into the impacts of the United States-Mexico-Canada agreement on Alberta agriculture for the next meeting of the committee.

6:50

Connolly: In that motion it doesn't specify that we would be able to add to it following the next meeting. Can we just add that to the motion, or is it in the motion? Sorry. I might have just misheard.

The Chair: They would just compile it for you.

Connolly: Okay.

The Chair: There's nothing that would prevent you from adding to it after the fact.

Connolly: Okay. Sure.

The Chair: Dr. Massolin.

Dr. Massolin: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chair. You know, this is a suggestion, that we could receive stakeholder suggestions prior to preparing the list. Then we can sort of specify who they came from and that sort of thing. And then the list would be presented to the committee at the next meeting for approval but possibly for additions as well, right? So you could do it that way.

Connolly: Yeah.

The Chair: Any other questions? Members on the phone?

All right. Seeing and hearing none, I will call the question. All those in favour, please say aye. All those opposed, please say no. And members on the phone? Excellent.

That motion is carried.

Hon. members, what I'll leave to the members is that they can continue sending off the list of any stakeholders, or if any potential ones come up, send them to the committee clerk, and we'll make sure that we have a compiled list for you at the next meeting, when we determine that date.

We'll move on to other research. As hon. members know, our committee and others have asked research services to provide additional information on specific matters in support of the committee's work. I would like to invite Dr. Massolin to provide a brief overview of research services that his team may make available to the committee during this inquiry.

Dr. Massolin: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll be brief because I think, you know, the committee is familiar with the research we provide. We provide nonpartisan research for the committee. You're familiar with it from previous reviews like this one, you know, on the agriculture and agrifood review plus the bill reviews that you've had. We'll prepare that stakeholder list. But as you yourself have mentioned, Mr. Chair, we prepare jurisdictional comparisons. I don't know how relevant that is here, obviously. But if there are any other sort of research reports that the committee would want us to delve into and prepare for the committee's information, we're prepared to do that. Of course, we'll assist with the final report and submission summaries as well.

Thank you.

The Chair: Are there any questions for Dr. Massolin?

Mr. Gotfried: Not directly to Dr. Massolin. And I don't know whether this should come under other research or whether maybe it also falls under the technical briefing. We talked about having Alberta Agriculture and Forestry in here, but a lot of the trade relationships are governed through the relationships that are established through Economic Development and Trade, obviously, the Alberta offices overseas and also in the U.S. and other jurisdictions that may be affected by this. So I'm wondering whether this would be something that would fall under some other research we would do or whether a motion is required within the technical briefings to ask for Economic Development and Trade to also join us.

In my past experience, Economic Development and Trade and agriculture have always worked very closely together in international relationships. I've had some engagement with them on some China issues in the past, and they collaborate, co-operate very much on the trade file. I just wonder if that's something that we could incorporate either under the technical briefings or under other research. I would suspect that maybe under technical briefings would be more appropriate.

The Chair: Yeah. We've just moved on from that area.

Mr. Gotfried: I apologize for that.

The Chair: Oh, it's all right.

Mr. Gotfried: I'm thinking of it now under research of the information we require to do that. So I don't know if, at the will of the committee, that's something we should be considering if we want to indeed have the best technical briefing information. That trade file, if you recall, is very much under the purview of the minister of economic development and his department. Most of the briefings we were receiving in the Legislature actually emanated from that minister, not from the minister of agriculture specifically, because the trade file, the trade relationship, and the trade negotiations file was more under Economic Development and Trade if I'm not mistaken.

The Chair: Why don't I throw this into other business and we can go back to this, so we can make sure we stay within sort of the research elements of things? I'll just make sure we kind of get back to this in other business so that we stay focused on the research side.

Mr. Gotfried: That'll be fine, Mr. Chair. Thank you. My apologies for not catching that.

The Chair: Member McPherson.

Ms McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Something that I believe would be of benefit to us is to engage someone that has NAFTA expertise to be able to compare what the USMCA agreement is to NAFTA and understand the gaps between them and what the net impact will be for the agriculture industry.

Mr. Dach: I tend to agree with MLA McPherson on that count. I think there are a number of research pieces that would benefit the committee, a background on supply management, as Member McPherson is referring to. I'm wondering. Could this include a cross-jurisdictional scan of producers across Alberta and Canada? I think we do need to see market and economic information like market access and market share, the number of quota holders, the value of quota holders, and so on.

As also mentioned, a research brief on how the USMCA differs from NAFTA and what the known and anticipated impacts are to

agricultural producers would be useful and good context and background for the committee.

I would like to see a crossjurisdictional on how other provinces have been impacted and the differences between Alberta and other provinces so that we really have an understanding of the impact here relative to other jurisdictions in the country.

I'd also like to suggest that research services request a briefing from the federal Ministry of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. That would be a written briefing, not an appearance in person. I know they have discussed establishing working groups and have also discussed compensation. We should know more about that, so I'd like to make those recommendations.

The Chair: Okay.

Dr. Massolin.

Dr. Massolin: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Well, there's a lot there, but what I would say is that some of that if I'm not mistaken, Mr. Chair, through you to Mr. Dach, has to do with the invitation to the committee in terms of stakeholders, perhaps, or other experts. Some of it is for us, perhaps, in terms of gathering the information in terms of backgrounders. I may be wrong on that. I'm seeing kind of a perplexed look, so correct me if I'm wrong on that. But I think that some of those requests have to do more with the committee inviting people to come and present to the committee if I'm not mistaken.

Mr. Dach: Not really. I was really looking at it as an item under other research and having it gathered and assembled through your efforts at assembling that other research.

Dr. Massolin: Okay. May I make another comment, Mr. Chair?

That's fair enough, Mr. Chair. The crossjurisdictional material might be difficult in the sense that this agreement has not, as I understand, been ratified yet, so it's all speculative. You know, there might be some information speculating on the impact of a supply management situation that's undone, if you will, and we can try to track that down, but I'm not so sure that we can do a crossjurisdictional on something that doesn't exist, right?

Mr. Dach: Understood. It's to get a general context of what the discussions are that are taking place right now and the anticipated impacts.

Dr. Massolin: No. Fair enough.

The Chair: With that being said, any other questions or comments? Yeah.

Mr. Dach: I could make a motion to that effect to tie it up a little bit. I move that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future direct research services to prepare the research briefings discussed for the next meeting of the committee.

The Chair: Just with the motion, so we can get proper direction, can we specify what research materials you'd want?

Mr. Dach: Sure.

The Chair: I also heard in your comment to draft a request to the federal government, so we might want to have that and then also tie in the federal government side as a second piece of that motion.

7:00

Mr. Dach: Yeah. I would definitely like to have the input from the federal Ministry of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada with respect

to a briefing or included in a briefing regarding their assessment of impacts as they see it on supply management in Alberta.

As I mentioned before, a crossjurisdictional on how other provinces have been impacted may only be speculative, but whatever information we can glean would be useful so we get an idea of the climate and the process as far as what anticipated impacts there are in other provinces. It is important, I think, to have a threshold starting point to know where the differences are between what the original NAFTA agreement was, the former NAFTA agreement was, and what the USMCA now is and what the changes were that have been made and therefore causing impact to the supply management producers in Alberta, and then simply a background on supply management in Alberta and Canada, including a crossjurisdictional scan of producers across Alberta and Canada and more market information and economic information like market access, market share, number of quota holders, value of quota holders, and so on to get an idea of the nature of the supply management producer sector as it stands now.

Mr. van Dijken: I'm becoming a little concerned that we are diving into research. The committee was charged with essentially getting an understanding on the impact of the USMCA on agriculture in Alberta, in particular SM5 products. As we've heard from our research people, most of the impact is going to be speculative. So I think I would suggest that a technical briefing from the ministry will give us a good understanding or should give us a good understanding of the existence, of what's currently in existence, with regard to those commodities within Alberta. I'm not so sure we're going to get much benefit on diving into a lot of that detail, that that will give us much information as regard to that.

We need a description of the difference between USMCA as opposed to NAFTA and how the department is able to give us information with regard to that, but to go into the detail of specifics about number of producers, value of quota, and that type of thing: I don't know that it would serve us a lot of purpose at this time.

The Chair: Have you been able to work out the draft motion?

Mr. Roth: I think I might have something, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Okay. First, because I know Mr. Dach was trying to move a motion, we're just trying to sort of hammer out the fine details and the meat and potatoes of it. So, Mr. Roth, I'll have you read it out just to see if it matches what Mr. Dach is intending, and then we can kind of open that up for discussion. Then I'll move to Member McPherson, who is next on the list.

Mr. Roth: Certainly, Mr. Chair. What I have is: moved by Mr. Dach that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future direct research services to request a briefing from the federal Ministry of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in regard to the impact of the USMCA on Alberta agriculture and prepare a crossjurisdictional comparison on the anticipated impacts of the USMCA on different provinces and a comparison between NAFTA and the USMCA and a briefing note on supply management.

Mr. Dach: I would add the word "written" before the first "briefing" just to be very clear that what we would like would be a written briefing.

The Chair: Does that match your intent, Mr. Dach?

Mr. Dach: Yeah. Thanks.

The Chair: Mr. Roth, if you can e-mail that to members. I know that was a lot to take in in that motion.

Ms McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is an awful lot, and I have concerns about the time constraints that we would have to be able to compile all of that information. A lot of the information: I would really like to encourage members to go get curious on their own. I think we can do a lot of that research on our own. I think where we would be bereft of the technical expertise would be the comparative analysis of NAFTA to the United States Marine Corps agreement. No, the new trade agreement. Yeah. I think we can do a lot of this stuff on our own. We don't need to engage research services. My concern is definitely about how much time there is to be able to have research services compile all of that for us.

Mr. Dach: I can think of 55 reasons to be cognizant of time, but I don't believe we're overloading research services. We do want to make sure that we do have the federal assessment of what they anticipate doing, so that's why I was really wanting to make sure that the federal Agriculture and Agri-Food department gives its briefing in writing to us so that we could determine what their thoughts are on anticipated impacts.

The Chair: Thank you. That's been sent to all members, for those who are on the phone here as well.
Member McPherson.

Ms McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to clarify that I read the agenda and I knew what was coming up and I came prepared with 55 suggestions for stakeholders because that's part of our job here. I would like the record to reflect that.

The Chair: Yeah. Sure. Excellent.
Any other members wishing to speak to the motion on the floor or any other questions or comments?
Seeing and hearing none, I will call the question. Mr. Roth, if you'd like to read it in for the record.

Mr. Roth: Certainly, Mr. Chair. Moved by Mr. Dach that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future direct research services to request a written briefing from the federal Ministry of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada regarding the impact of the USMCA, prepare a cross-jurisdictional comparison on the anticipated impacts of USMCA on different provinces, a comparison between NAFTA and the USMCA, and a briefing note on supply management.

The Chair: Excellent. Having heard the motion, all those in favour, please say aye. All those opposed, please say no. Members on the phone? Okay.

That motion is defeated.

Are there any other members wishing to speak to items on research? Member McPherson.

Ms McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Do we require a motion in order to direct research services as to what to look into?

The Chair: Yes.

Ms McPherson: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Any other questions or comments about any research wishing to be done? Member McPherson.

Ms McPherson: Here we go. I'd be happy to move a motion that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future direct research services to request a comparison between NAFTA and USMCA.

Ms Fitzpatrick: I just have a question because I thought that we were talking about research services doing the comparison.

The Chair: Was that "request" or "prepare"? Sorry.

Ms McPherson: Say that again, please.

The Chair: Sorry. Were you asking research services to request it from someone or for research services to prepare it by themselves?

Ms McPherson: I am asking to request it because there are people with expertise in NAFTA as it existed and how that compares to the new agreement, USMCA. So yes, to please request it from someone else.

7:10

Dr. Massolin: Before we go too far on this, it's kind of a consideration with respect to the other request as well about the federal department of Agriculture and Agri-Food. I think, typically, the committee is better served by the committee itself requesting some of this information. I'm not trying to get out of work here, by the way. I'm just saying that if the committee needs information from an external source, I would suggest that instead of going through research services, the committee itself, through the committee chair, make requests of these external entities if the information, of course, is readymade, off the shelf, as it were, right? I don't want to lead you in whatever direction. If it's information, however, that you want us to compile, to summarize, that's our role for sure, and we can do that. I just wanted to make that distinction clear.

Thank you.

The Chair: Member McPherson.

Ms McPherson: Thank you for that. I appreciate it. I shouldn't write my own material. I'm perfectly able to admit that. But what I'm getting at is that I don't think there's any off-the-shelf information that is available for this. I don't know who has the expertise, so that's where I believe we need the assistance in locating who has that expertise. That's why I moved the motion, to ask for research's help to determine who has that expertise and can they give that to us.

The Chair: Sorry. Can you reread the motion for those on the phone?

Mr. Roth: Certainly, Mr. Chair. The motion that I have, just to make sure it's right: moved by Member McPherson that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future direct research services to request a comparison between NAFTA and the USMCA.

The Chair: I'll open that motion up for discussion.

Mr. Carson: Just a comment that I'm not ready to support this motion because I think that there's a few other things that I would like to see included. I don't think the last motion put forward totally had everything either. Hopefully, we'll be able to put something else forward that has another few pieces for research services to go into that we can all agree on.

The Chair: Okay.

Ms McPherson: I wonder if the member would like to amend the motion.

Mr. Carson: We can try that. I can read out my full motion if that works, and you can decide where to delete and add or if it's even in order. Yeah. I mean, we can just vote and start over.

The Chair: Yeah. It wouldn't be in order just because we're on this current motion right now. If you find a way that you can potentially amend it or add something to it. But we would want to make sure we keep it kind of in order.

Mr. Carson: I'm happy to just vote on it.

The Chair: Are there any questions or comments on the phone?

The other thing I would reiterate, too, to members, if we're looking at the elements of research, is that there is the opportunity to move more than one motion as well.

Any other questions from members on the phone? Members on the floor?

Seeing and hearing none, I will call the question. Mr. Roth, if you could read it into the record one last time.

Mr. Roth: Certainly, Mr. Chair. It is moved by Member McPherson that

the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future direct research services to request a comparison between NAFTA and the USMCA.

The Chair: Having heard the motion all those in favour, please say aye. All those opposed, please say no. On the phones?

That motion is defeated.

Mr. Dach: I'd like to propose a new motion. I think, hopefully, it will cover everything and un muddy the waters, make sure that it doesn't overly encumber research services, and express our intent as a committee as to what information we want from who and how we get it. I'd like to move that we direct research services to prepare a research briefing on differences between the USMCA from NAFTA and a crossjurisdictional scan on producers across Alberta and Canada, that would be supply management producers, and request from the federal department a written briefing on what steps they are taking to address the changes. Hopefully, that's more satisfactory.

The Chair: Sorry. The last part?

Mr. Dach: The last part will read: and requests from the federal department a written briefing on what steps they are taking to address the changes. That would be the federal Agriculture and Agri-Food.

The Chair: Sorry; just read out the ministry you want that from again, please.

Mr. Dach: I believe, if I'm not misspeaking, it would be the federal Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

The Chair: Can you just read the whole motion out one last time?

Mr. Dach: Sure. Ready to roll?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Dach: I move that we would direct research services to prepare a research briefing on differences between USMCA from NAFTA and a crossjurisdictional scan on producers across Alberta and Canada and request from the federal department – that would be the ag and ag-food department – a written briefing on what steps they're taking to address the changes.

The Chair: Mr. Roth, if you can just read that out for the record.

Mr. Roth: Sure. Just to make sure that I have this, that it meets your intent, Mr. Dach. Moved by Mr. Dach that

the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future direct research services to prepare a research briefing on differences between the USMCA from NAFTA and a crossjurisdictional scan on supply management producers across Canada and request that the federal Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food provide a written briefing on what steps they're taking to address the changes between NAFTA and the USMCA.

Is that correct?

Mr. Dach: I think we're there.

The Chair: If you can e-mail that off to members for their record. I'll open that for discussion. Dr. Starke.

Dr. Starke: Thank you, Chair. This new motion is remarkably similar to the earlier one that was defeated. The problem that I had with the earlier one that was defeated was specifically the area of the crossjurisdictional comparison. When you're setting out the terms of reference or the parameters of a research study, one of the things that has to be cautioned against is an attempt to boil the ocean. To ask for this much information, some of it questionably relevant, especially a crossjurisdictional study amongst Canadian provinces that have vastly different agricultural sectors – you know, in Alberta the supply managed sectors constitute roughly 5 per cent of the total farm receipts out of all the agricultural receipts. It's an important sector, to be sure, but it is a relatively small one compared to some other provinces. In addition, other provinces have completely different forms of support programs that they afford to their producers.

A crossjurisdictional study, while it may well be interesting reading to inform members, I think would have very limited utility to this particular issue, specifically with regard to the USMCA, which hasn't even really been implemented yet. I would be okay with most of this motion if the reference to the crossjurisdictional comparison was deleted. I think the rest of what is being asked for is reasonable, but I do not think the crossjurisdictional study is in any way reasonable.

The Chair: Were you wanting to move an amendment, Dr. Starke?

Dr. Starke: Well, providing the amendment is in order and doesn't change the nature or the intent of the original motion, then I'd be happy with that. Like I say, I don't have any issue asking for those other bits of information, and I think they're very relevant. I think a crossjurisdictional study, for one thing, is a significant addition of things that we're asking research services to do, with questionably little return. I think the other areas certainly are substantive and would be helpful in terms of some of the information we need to gather, but with regard to crossjurisdictional – I've just now received the text of the original motion. I would, you know, basically say that I would delete the words "and a crossjurisdictional scan on supply management producers across Canada," and the remainder can stay intact.

7:20

The Chair: If you were wanting to strike that out as an amendment, I would call that in order.

Dr. Starke: Okay. Well, then I would move that amendment, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Okay. Mr. Roth, just to make sure it follows Dr. Starke's intent.

Mr. Roth: Certainly, Mr. Chair. As I would have it, moved by Dr. Starke that
the motion be amended by striking out “and a crossjurisdictional scan on supply management producers across Canada.”

Dr. Starke: Correct.

The Chair: We have an amendment on the floor. I'll open that for discussion. Mr. Dach.

Mr. Dach: Well, the whole point of delving into this crossjurisdictional analysis was to get a sense of what the federal department might have on its mind as far as the different impacts that might be being learned now. Granted, it would be speculative. I'm sure there are different scenarios being thought about. It was, I thought, useful to hear whatever briefing the federal ministry could provide regarding crossjurisdictional differences and impacts, not knowing that it would be the full value of it for sure, because it would be speculative, but certainly I thought that whatever was there in their research bank we should have the benefit of while we're considering it. That was my thinking on it. I'm willing to hear other committee members talking about the amendment and see if I can be convinced to support it.

The Chair: Okay. Any other comments or questions? MLA Fitzpatrick.

Ms Fitzpatrick: I'm good with this amendment. Yeah.

The Chair: Excellent. Any other questions or feedback? Seeing and hearing none, I will call the question on the amendment. All those in favour, please say aye. All those opposed, please say no. On the phones?

That amendment is carried.

We're back on the motion as amended. Any other questions, comments, or feedback? Mr. van Dijken.

Mr. van Dijken: Yeah. I still have concerns with the motion as it's presented, even in its amended form. I believe that in our technical briefing from the department we will receive information comparing the differences between the USMCA and NAFTA. I believe that we are possibly moving ahead and duplicating the research that's going to be done. I may suggest that it would be wise to receive the technical briefing from the ministry. I know we're going to also discuss possibly expanding that to include the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade. But to direct research services to prepare a research briefing on differences between USMCA and NAFTA, I think we're going to duplicate and not have much advantage with that at all. I would propose an amendment that would strike “to prepare a research briefing on differences between the USMCA from NAFTA.”

The Chair: Sorry. Mr. van Dijken, which terms were you wanting to strike out again?

Mr. van Dijken: Following “research services” strike “to prepare a research briefing on differences between the USMCA from NAFTA.”

The Chair: To strike out the initial part would leave it with no context there because there is still an additional portion.

Mr. van Dijken: Okay. I see your concern. So you can leave the word “to” and strike the word “and” before “request”: to request that the federal department of Agriculture and Agri-Food provide a written briefing.

The Chair: I would rule this out of order. In the context of yours and Dr. Starke's is that the initial one was still asking for a prepared research study, and that was Mr. Dach's intent on the motion, the research study and the letter. We're removing an item from research, but if you were to remove the entire context of the research study, that would change the context of his motion.

Mr. van Dijken: Fair enough.

The Chair: Any other questions? Member McPherson.

Ms McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm not in favour of this amendment, and the reason why is because this is an inquiry into the impact . . .

The Chair: Are you talking about Mr. van Dijken's amendment?

Ms McPherson: Yes.

The Chair: I ruled it out of order.

Ms McPherson: Oh. Sorry.

The Chair: That's all right.

Any other questions or feedback? Mr. Gotfried.

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I know that the amendment to the motion has been ruled out of order, but I echo Mr. van Dijken's concern about us churning the research wheels here. I think we have to respect the time of our research team, and if we have the technical briefings from Alberta Agriculture and possible other briefings from other parties, we might find that that research has already been done. It would be a shameful waste of time of some of our brightest minds in this Legislature that work for us to have them do something that we may be duplicating. I'd rather direct their energies towards some things that will be more impactful for us in terms of new and more insightful research that might be more helpful.

I just wanted to add that comment on file, that I think that we need to respect their time and their expertise and use it and direct it accordingly.

Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Member McPherson.

Ms McPherson: Now, I find my comments relevant. What we're charged with doing is an inquiry into the impact of the United States-Mexico-Canada agreement on agriculture in Alberta, and if we're only soliciting a report from government sources, we're missing a lot of critical information that comes from private industry and that perspective also from the legal field, who have been very engaged in understanding what NAFTA and USMCA mean. For that reason I think we need to keep that request in the motion that's on the floor right now. I think it's imperative to what we're charged with doing. To only get a government perspective and producers but not have that expertise at the 30,000-foot level would do us a disservice. I don't think we're going to come up with the best quality information.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Carson: I'd just like to say that the intent of this motion in keeping it the way it is is the fact that we have a wonderful team of researchers here, so we're going to get two perspectives. I don't think that we can, you know, really know what to expect from either briefing. I think I'm happy with the motion the way it stands, and I'm ready to vote on it.

The Chair: Any other questions or feedback? Members on the phone?

Seeing and hearing none, I will call the question.

Mr. Roth, if you want to read it into the record as amended.

Mr. Roth: Certainly, Mr. Chair. Moved by Mr. Dach that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future direct research services to prepare a research briefing on the differences between the USMCA from NAFTA and request from the federal Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food a written briefing on what steps they are taking to address the changes between NAFTA and the USMCA.

The Chair: Having heard the motion, all those in favour, please say aye. All those opposed, please say no. On the phones? Excellent.

That motion is carried.

Any other questions or comments in relation to other research?

Seeing and hearing none, we will move on to public consultation.

Hon. members, as you are aware, it's a common practice of committees to consider whether they wish to invite public consultations on topics they are inquiring into or reviewing. To help define the scope the committee may wish to take as part of its inquiry, I would like to open the floor to discussions on whether there is a desire to seek public input and what the committee might want it to look like. This will inform items further in our agenda such as what elements might be necessary in a communication plan should the committee wish to proceed with public consultation.

I'll open it up for any comments or discussions about public consultation. Member Connolly.

7:30

Connolly: Thanks. I honestly think that our focus should be on inviting stakeholders and experts and receiving and reviewing their written submissions. We believe we need to hear from these stakeholders first, and we need to make good use of our time. We can decide later if we need additional, broader feedback from the public after we've received the technical briefing and heard from stakeholders. I'm happy to hear everyone else's opinion, but I think that's the best course forward.

Dr. Starke: Well, Mr. Chair, I would agree with Member Connolly. Given the limited time that we have to complete this report and given that this is a topic, the USMCA, where there's, again, very little, you know, actual knowledge out there in terms of what impacts this will have – and that would be largely speculative in any case because we really don't know – and given the complexity of the USMCA, I think our time is best spent, as was largely described, reviewing the technical briefings and the research material that we will be receiving and engaging specifically directly with stakeholders that have a direct interest in this. Again, we have a relatively limited period of time. For us to embark on a public consultation plan and have everything all wrapped up with a bow by April 11 I think would be really challenging.

The Chair: Any other questions or comments?

I'm feeling a consensus in the room that this is something that we would probably wish to explore at a future date.

Then I'll move on to the next item on the agenda, which is a communications plan. I've already sort of gotten a feeling of consensus in relation to the public consultations. Was there any desire to discuss preparing a draft communications plan if we wish to seek public consultations?

Seeing and hearing none – sorry to our communications people who joined us. I hope you enjoyed the context of the conversation here.

All right. We'll move on to other business. We'll go back to the item that Mr. Gotfried was asking about, trying to include Economic Development and Trade in the technical briefing.

Do you have any other supplements or comments?

Mr. Gotfried: Yeah. You know what, Mr. Chair? Again I apologize for not bringing it up under technical briefings. But it just sort of struck me afterwards that, again, a lot of this file is actually handled by the Alberta Economic Development and Trade department and their offices in various jurisdictions and their connection, obviously, with some of the consular offices as well, and this file was, as it was being negotiated, very much under their purview.

So I would just suggest – and I have a motion that we could maybe put forward for consideration by the committee – to include them, to ensure that we have the robust, I think, background we're looking for, the best research, the best information we can get. I think those two departments, who I'm sure have worked very closely together on this file, can give us a very complementary – and if they both know that each other is coming, even if it's at separate times, then they know that what they don't bring may be backfilled by information from the other department, which they've collaborated with.

If I may, I can provide a motion here.

The Chair: Sure.

Mr. Gotfried: I'll actually flip an electronic copy to Mr. Roth here, if we can do so accordingly, so that in the interests of efficiency he doesn't have to retype that. I move that

subsequent to a briefing from Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, Alberta Economic Development and Trade provide a separate technical briefing on a different date with respect to the impact of the United States-Mexico-Canada agreement on Alberta agriculture.

The Chair: Excellent. I'll open that motion up for discussion.

Ms Fitzpatrick: Since I brought forward the original motion there, I guess I disagree with what you're saying because Agriculture does have their own intergovernmental division for trade and economics. I think that's as specific as we need because that's what we're talking about, agriculture. We're not talking about anything else, so I disagree with your suggestion.

The Chair: MLA Dach.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Chair. I'd like to concur with the previous MLA who just spoke and say that the Agriculture and Forestry department has an intergovernmental relations, trade, and environment division, which her original motion asked to hear from. They have expertise specifically related to agriculture and trade, and that's what we're calling upon them to provide us with. If indeed there are gaps, I think we can call Economic Development and Trade afterwards if need be, but I don't want to get into unnecessary duplication when we have the specific body right before us that will probably provide us ample opportunity to understand the trade implications.

The Chair: Any other questions or comments?

I will call the question. On the motion, all those in favour, please say aye. All those opposed, please say no. On the phones?

That motion is defeated.

Is there any other business that members wish to discuss?

All right. Seeing and hearing none, at the next meeting we will be going over a technical briefing with Agriculture and Forestry as

well as arguing the submissions. I will poll for a meeting date. Ideally, what I'll aim for, hon. members, is to try to tie it in with the Legislature sitting if at all possible.

Other than that, I would need a member to move a motion to adjourn.

Dr. Starke: So moved, Chair.

The Chair: Moved by Dr. Starke that the November 7, 2018, meeting of the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future be adjourned. All those in favour, please say aye. All those opposed, please say no. And on the phones? Excellent. That is carried, and the meeting is now adjourned.

Thank you all very much.

[The committee adjourned at 7:38 p.m.]

