



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 29th Legislature  
Third Session

Standing Committee  
on  
Alberta's Economic Future

Agrifood and Agribusiness

Tuesday, March 14, 2017  
6:29 p.m.

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**Legislative Assembly of Alberta  
The 29th Legislature  
Third Session**

**Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future**

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

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Fitzpatrick, Maria M., Lethbridge-East (ND)  
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Tuesday, March 14, 2017

[Mr. Sucha in the chair]

**The Chair:** Good evening, everyone. I'd like to call this meeting to order. I want to welcome all members, staff, and guests to the meeting of the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future. I would like to recognize that this committee meeting is commencing on Treaty 6 territory.

My name is Graham Sucha. I'm the MLA for Calgary-Shaw and the committee chair. I'd ask that members and those joining the committee at the table introduce themselves for the record, and I'll start with the member to my right.

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

**Mr. Gotfried:** Richard Gotfried, MLA, Calgary-Fish Creek.

**Mr. Drysdale:** Wayne Drysdale, MLA, Grande Prairie-Wapiti.

**Mr. Orr:** Ron Orr, MLA, Lacombe-Ponoka.

**Mr. Schneider:** Dave Schneider, Little Bow.

**Mr. Taylor:** Wes Taylor, MLA, Battle River-Wainwright.

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

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

**Mr. Coolahan:** Craig Coolahan, the MLA for Calgary-Klein.

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

**Connolly:** Michael Connolly, MLA for Calgary-Hawkwood.

**Ms Fitzpatrick:** Maria Fitzpatrick, MLA, Lethbridge-East.

If you could please make sure you speak up so I can hear. Thank you.

**Mrs. Schreiner:** Good evening. Kim Schreiner, MLA for Red Deer-North.

**Mr. Dach:** Lorne Dach, MLA, Edmonton-McClung.

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

**Mr. Koenig:** I'm Trafton Koenig with the Parliamentary Counsel office.

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

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

**The Chair:** Excellent.

For the record I would also like to note that Member McPherson is the substitute for the hon. Mr. Anderson.

Before we turn to the business at hand, a few operational items. Microphone consoles are operated by *Hansard* staff, so there's no need to touch them. Please ensure that all cellphones are on silent mode. Audio of the committee proceedings is streamed live on the Internet and recorded by *Alberta Hansard*. Audio access and

meeting transcripts are obtained via the Legislative Assembly website.

We'll move on to the items on the agenda. Would a member move a motion to approve today's meeting agenda? Member Connolly moves that the March 14, 2017, meeting agenda 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. That motion is carried.

We'll move on to the approval of the minutes of the previous meetings. We have the minutes from our last two meetings, February 22 and February 23, 2017. Are there any errors or omissions to note? If not, would a member like to move adoption of the minutes, please? Member Schreiner moves that the minutes of the February 22 and February 23, 2017, meetings 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. That motion is carried. I enjoy not having any members on the phone. This makes it move fast.

All right. Moving on to item 4 on our agenda, inquiry into growing Alberta's agrifood and agribusiness sectors, hon. members, at the February 23, 2017, meeting members were asked to provide topics they wish to focus on for the development of an issues document, that research services was asked to prepare. Members provided their topics both at the February 23 meeting and also via e-mail. As members are aware, these focus issues and support stakeholder information relevant to those topics were distributed to committee members last week.

I would now ask Dr. Massolin of the Legislative Assembly Office research services to elaborate on the issues document for members.

**Dr. Massolin:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I won't have a lot to say, and then I'll pass it off to Dr. Amato for more specifics. I just wanted to note and indicate for the committee's benefit, just to underline what you've said, that this document is slightly different from the issues documents that we normally prepare for the committee at this stage of its consideration in that the first column really has to do with the caucus proposals that, as you've indicated, came from the last meeting, that were submitted at that meeting and also subsequently by e-mail. That's the first column. Then the issues are identified in the middle column. Then the supporting documentation is the stakeholder submissions, which really pertain to some of the caucus suggestions.

The importance of this document and the interesting thing, from our point of view anyway, is that the committee has already engaged in the process of funnelling the topics and selected the topics, so that part of the process is already done. We will await sort of further funnelling and recommendations for the report in due course.

With that, I'll just pass it along to Dr. Amato for further elaboration. Thank you.

6:35

**Dr. Amato:** Good evening. I don't have that much to add, just to say once again that the topics that are listed in this document were taken from suggestions made by committee members on February 23 and subsequently via e-mail.

If you turn to the introduction on the first or second page, there is a listing of those topics: strategies to increase value-added production; access to capital; collaboration between government, industry, and academia; local and international promotion of products made in Alberta; access to markets; regulatory standards and frameworks; carbon reduction; performance indicators; water and land use; educational initiatives and supply of labour; and

community infrastructure. I should say that there are 11 topics in all, and those are the ones that I just read out.

In terms of how the document is actually organized, if I can turn your attention to section 4.0, which begins on page 3, you'll see that in purple blue there is a listing of the topic heading that was suggested. On the far left are the caucus proposals, and on the far right there is a compilation of all stakeholder and member-of-the-public suggestions that pertain in any way to the topic. These stakeholder and member-of-the-public suggestions are organized by issue, and they're grouped that way merely for organizational purposes. You can see that in the middle column.

Perhaps I can conclude by saying that, as always, the document is intended for the reference of the committee, and the committee may use the document as it sees fit, going through the topics or taking up topics that are of interest to committee members that are not included in the document. I'd be pleased to answer any questions.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Are there any questions or comments from members to research services about the issues document?

Seeing none, we'll now move on to item 4(b), deliberations and recommendations. Members, at this stage the committee will commence deliberations regarding the inquiry into growing and diversifying Alberta's agrifood and agribusiness sector. Before we begin, I might remind committee members that we can discuss particular related items prior to us moving any motions. This might be one way to flesh out ideas and topics that the committee would like to see in its report to the Legislature before engaging in a more formal process of moving motions. May I suggest that when moving a motion, members read slowly so that the committee staff and *Hansard* will be able to record it as well?

At this time are there any members who wish to bring forward any topics for the committee to consider?

**Mr. Gotfried:** Maybe it'd be helpful for us to discuss process here in terms of how we're going to address this. I mean, we've got these recommendations in front of us . . .

**The Chair:** Sorry; Mr. Gotfried, can you just speak up a little bit?

**Mr. Gotfried:** Sorry. We've got 11 different recommendations that we can look at here. I'm going to suggest that we maybe take a look at these one at a time, and if there's one that we feel is not a high priority, maybe we agree to push that aside, put in onto a parking lot, as it were, and drill down to those that seem to be of most interest, I guess, to the committee here and where we can maybe decide that. I know that there are some, in talking with some of the other members of the committee, that possibly can be combined as we go forward as well to save us some time. Not that we want to rush it, but if combining will actually drill down to some more succinct motions that we can come up with, then maybe that would be worth while.

**The Chair:** Okay. Are there any comments in relation to Mr. Gotfried's recommendations? Mr. Orr.

**Mr. Orr:** Yeah. I think it's a good idea. I would like to suggest that we can also, first of all, maybe ask the question amongst ourselves: do we feel that the 11 topics actually cover all of the subjects, or was there anything that anybody else might want to add as well?

**The Chair:** Any other members wishing to speak in relation to the matter?

**Mr. Coolahan:** Chair, just to clarify, did we not have a deadline for submissions? I can't remember.

**The Chair:** It was March 2, if I'm correct, to submit to the clerk's office via e-mail.

**Mr. Coolahan:** Okay. These are rather broad headings. I mean, if somebody wanted to bring something up, I'm sure that you could make it fit.

**The Chair:** Yeah. During the deliberation process we can bring up whatever matters we feel should be brought forward here as well.

**Mr. Gotfried:** If I could just add that – and again this follows on some conversations I had with some other committee members – my hope is that we could come out of this with something a bit more specific if we're going to make some recommendations. You know, we can leave these very broad, and then they'll be dealt with very broadly. But if we have an opportunity – and I'm going to just use an example here with respect to value-added production. We would recommend that we identify the top three highest potential products or market opportunities – let's just call it opportunities – for value-added production, that we push forward something very succinct like that. As opposed to evaluating and finding out the top 20, maybe say the top three or the top five or something very specific so that we can give a much clearer direction of something that can be evaluated at the next stages of the recommendations and motions from this committee.

**Ms Fitzpatrick:** Actually, I kind of like your idea, Mr. Gotfried. Certainly, when I look at the caucus proposals, I mean, it seems to me that three of us are on the same page on this, so I'm kind of anxious to get started.

**The Chair:** I'm kind of hearing a consensus from committee members that we should probably start looking into value-added production, seeing as most members are in agreement with this.

Were there any comments, Ms Fitzpatrick, that you wanted to move forward from?

**Ms Fitzpatrick:** Well, I would certainly like to hear what other people have to say, but in my own region there are certainly some things that I think are important, and probably they ring out around the province. That's the craft distilleries, the way the breweries have moved forward. I mean, they've gone from 14 to – I don't know – 52 or something in the last year. Research and development. Meat production: since I'm kind of in the middle of Feedlot Alley, meat production is a pretty big issue down there. But, like I said, I'd like to hear what other people have to say.

**The Chair:** Any other discussion from members in relation to the first proposal, strategies to increase value-added production? Mr. Gotfried.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It just sort of twigs on me, from what Member Fitzpatrick said, that there are probably two markets here that we need to look at. One is increased value-added production for local consumption, and then another market would be one that has export potential. Not that we can't export our beer, but I think we'd probably consume most of it here in Alberta if we did well. It might be something that we want to have, increased value-added production for some of the input products for local production but also for some export. There may be some other ones like beef export. Pasta always seems to be the one that comes up that we may want to have focused more on exports. Maybe there are actually two markets here that we need to talk about, value-

added production for local or regional consumption and ones that are more focused on a higher production capacity for export markets.

**Connolly:** I think that actually touches more on issue 4 than on issue 1. However, I don't have a problem with kind of moving around. Well, that's just my opinion, just moving for a promotion of products outside of Alberta, but everything is kind of intertwined through these whole 11 issues.

**The Chair:** If I heard you correctly, Mr. Gotfried, you also spoke about marrying some of the items together as well.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Yeah. I mean, there's going to be lots of that, I think, going on here. I think that what I'm sort of saying here is that value-added production is great, but you also need economies of scale for production. So at some point in time you have to say: is this just for us or regionally, or are we actually going to scale it up and attract a big international player, a pasta maker, for instance, to come here and produce for global markets or North America-wide markets or something of that sort? To me, the next stage is the promotion and that. You know, you obviously are going to identify markets to build a business plan before you start increasing your production facilities or your capacity, but the actual selling of it would probably come later in the stages and be a much different process. There's a front-end business plan here that's going to attract the investment or not, I would think.

6:45

**The Chair:** Mr. Orr.

**Mr. Orr:** Thank you. Actually, I found this first one, strategies to increase value-added production, to be an interesting one when you really think about it in the sense that if you look back at the mandate of the committee, that's exactly what the mandate of the committee is essentially. In my mind, this is almost a summary statement. I mean, almost everything we could say in the next two nights could fit under that one subject because that's our entire mandate.

I looked through to try and figure out what's unique about this. The only thing I can come up with is the suggestion from one or two of the presenters that we need to work with the existing boards and industry associations and marketing groups, work with all of those people, and in a sense sort of maybe government could encourage them or set a mandate for them or just sort of push the conversation that this is something that everybody needs to be talking about, everybody needs to be thinking about. Then out of all of these existing groups there will be some spontaneous stuff, I think, some innovative stuff bubble up to the top.

Other than that, I mean, this first one really is a summary statement of the whole mandate of the whole committee. Anyway, those are just my comments on it.

**The Chair:** Any comments from any members?

**Mr. van Dijken:** Just going a little further on that with what Mr. Orr was talking about, I think he's – correct me if I'm wrong – looking towards the ministry, essentially the ag ministry, to look towards building a culture of value adding within associations that are currently representing commodity groups at this time and to see if there are opportunities that these associations might be able to recognize and identify to bring it or, like you say, to bubble up to the next level.

**Mr. Orr:** Maybe I'll just add that I think there is, you know, a lot of work being done out there amongst all the different agencies, and I don't see it as just ag agencies. I do think that in the marketing

groups, the groups that are looking at research for how to develop our food industry, our secondary industry there's a lot of creative work being done out there. We just need to sort of trend, direct that, or harness it rather than somehow trying to reinvent the wheel here and starting all over new with something that's maybe happening in a lot of ways already, but it just needs to be sort of brought together and focused and affirmed.

**Ms Fitzpatrick:** Okay. It sounds like everybody kind of knows where we want to go, and I'd certainly put a motion out there. I'll suggest this and see what you say. I move that

the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future recommend to the government that they pursue strategies and initiatives to move Alberta products up the value chain and encourage business development, including evaluating and expanding current successful plans for specialty products, niche markets, and value-added production, processing, and export.

Now, I think that covers everything that we've said.

**The Chair:** Do you have any other comments in relation to the motion?

**Ms Fitzpatrick:** No.

**Mr. Orr:** I think that's pretty close. Like minds think alike, maybe. I don't know. Or great minds think alike. I don't particularly have any difficulties with that. I had approached it from the slightly different angle of just encouraging those existing industry associations and boards and things that are out there. It's not a hill to die on. I think you've essentially said it there. I do like the idea of encouraging the existing, well, I don't know what words to use other than associations and boards from industry that are already working in those directions. That's what I would want to encourage them to do, so yeah.

**The Chair:** Mr. Gotfried.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Yeah. I think this is a great start here. I am wondering whether we have the latitude to recommend something maybe a little bit stronger, that we recommend to the government that they provide resources and support to industry associations and economic regions, maybe. I'm thinking here that there are kind of two players that come into play with initiatives like this. One is the industry associations looking at where their production is and whatnot, but there's also the geographical. You're going to have the towns and the villages and small cities nearby who want to have the plant. Maybe they have the land and they have some other resources. We've got the Economic Developers group across the province, and we know that there's always close interaction between agriculture and economic development. I'm just wondering if we can push it a little harder to say "to provide support and resources to industry or sector associations and geographical economic development groups or" – sorry, what did I think before I had a different wording? – "regional economic development agencies."

**The Chair:** Are you wanting to move an amendment at this point?

**Mr. Gotfried:** Yeah. Just a friendly amendment, a conversation at this time. Is that kind of recommendation doable?

**The Chair:** Yeah.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Just to provide a little bit more than just – what's our current? – "pursuing strategies and initiatives." Something a little bit more, "providing resources and support."

**The Chair:** Oh, okay. As long as it maintains the intent of the original motion, absolutely, yeah.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Oh, absolutely. It's a little wordsmithing, but I think that "providing resources and support" is a little bit more active than "strategies and initiatives." Just a thought. I mean, it's a friendly amendment.

**Ms McPherson:** I'm just wondering if that's being moved as an amendment.

**Mr. Gotfried:** How about discussion prior to an amendment?

**Ms McPherson:** Okay.

**The Chair:** Yep. You can move that amendment if you want right now. It's the will of the committee if they want to discuss this before moving an amendment or move the amendment and then discuss.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Why don't we try it as an amendment, and then we can discuss it next? That's probably a more formal procedure.

**The Chair:** Okay.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Now you're really going to test me on what it looks like: recommend to the government that they provide resources and support . . .

**The Chair:** Are you wanting to strike out "pursue strategies and initiatives"?

**Mr. Gotfried:** Yeah. So "recommend to the government that they," and then strike out "pursue strategies and initiatives"; that they "provide resources and support" and then "to industry organizations and regional economic development organizations."

**The Chair:** Provide . . .

**Mr. Gotfried:** Resources and support. We're just taking a little chunk out there. It's not that different. It's just a little more defined. I'm open to massaging that a bit if there's some better way to do it: "with resources and support to industry associations and regional economic development organizations . . ."

6:55

**The Chair:** I'm sorry. Can you – "to industry . . ."

**Mr. Gotfried:** "Industry associations and regional economic development organizations." Then that would continue on: "to move Alberta products up the value chain." We're taking a little chunk out and putting a slightly more defined chunk in.

**The Chair:** Mr. Roth, could you read the motion if it was amended?

**Mr. Roth:** If it was amended?

**The Chair:** Yeah.

**Mr. Roth:** Should I read the amendment first?

**The Chair:** Yes, please.

**Mr. Roth:** The amendment for Mr. Gotfried is to strike out "pursue strategies and initiatives" and replace it with "provide resources and support to industry associations and regional economic development organizations." If amended, the motion would read that

the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future recommend to the government that they provide resources and

support to industry associations and regional economic development organizations to move Alberta products up the value chain and encourage business development, including evaluating and expanding current successful plans for specialty products, niche markets, and value-added production, processing, and export.

**The Chair:** All right. I'll open that up for discussion. Mr. Piquette.

**Mr. Piquette:** Am I okay to speak? All right. I'd say I appreciate the intent behind the motion as amended. However, I have a couple of reservations. The first reservation I would have is that I'm not sure if I'd follow along with, you know, bringing the language back to just providing supports. I think it's important to have, you know, the idea of strategies and initiatives going back to the initial one because then it gives some scope that we are looking to prioritize. We're not just providing resources to anybody who comes forward. I prefer the way it's framed in the original motion.

Secondly, my concern could be that by listing organizations, we could inadvertently be missing organizations or associations. I think that the way that the motion was originally worded doesn't foreclose any of that. By specifying, we might actually – I know that he's trying to provide clarity, but it might be at the expense of inclusion.

**Mr. Orr:** I actually agree with Mr. Piquette with regard to keeping the language as "strategies and initiatives." I think those are better words than "resources and supports." But I would like to see the broad stroke of: "to industry associations and regional economic development organizations." I think that's pretty broad. It's not limiting it in any way. Those are my comments on it.

**The Chair:** I just want to clarify. Mr. Gotfried, did you formally move that amendment as well, or were you just opening it up for discussion?

**Mr. Gotfried:** I think we're fine to open just for discussion at this point in time. I think that's fine.

**Ms McPherson:** Well, I think Member Piquette covered a lot of what I wanted to say. "Strategies and initiatives" gives us a broader umbrella to take a look at. With narrowing it down, we could be missing out on individuals or smaller organizations that would need those same sorts of supports. That would be my concern in changing the motion.

**The Chair:** Mr. Gotfried.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Yeah. I understand that, but sometimes narrowing is better. That's the only thing I'm trying to focus on here. "Strategies and initiatives" is pretty broad. What I'm thinking when I'm saying "resources and supports" is that we have experts in the Ag and Forestry ministry and in the Economic Development ministry. Those are the resources. It's not more people. It's not money necessarily. It's the people that are there. We're encouraging them to take those resources and supports and actually work with them. Actually, looking at it, we have industry associations. Maybe it should be support to private industry, to companies. Maybe, as you said, it could be individuals. Companies, industry associations: maybe that should be broader still.

You know, having been through lots of these planning sessions, "strategies and initiatives" is really broad, and, I mean, it doesn't tell government what we're asking them to do. They can go back and strategize and come up with initiatives and not really necessarily put anything forth. But "resources and support" means

that they've got to put something forth, and I would argue that you need to say who you need to do it with.

Maybe this isn't broad enough. Maybe this is limiting here. But I'd like us to come out of here with something, I mean, that is drilled down a bit. I'm not saying that this is the perfect one or anything like that. I'm just saying that to give really broad recommendations is almost like giving nothing sometimes. If we can narrow it here and hand it off in a little bit more distilled format, that might be better, you know, for the objectives of this committee.

I just comment. This is for discussion. It's not moved as a formal amendment. If there are improvements to this or pieces of it that might work to give us something that's not quite so broad – and I would just caution us. Really broad sometimes means that you've actually given nothing and no direction. It protects you because you've said it all, but it doesn't actually say what you want them to do.

**The Chair:** Mr. Schneider.

**Mr. Schneider:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the motion and the amendment and the comments that have been going around the table. I really do. You know, all the economic developments across the province were sitting at the table here the couple of days we had the committee meetings for submissions. I think they were on the same page, every one of them: Edmonton, Lethbridge, Calgary. There was another one. I think there were four of them. [interjection] Oh, Mackenzie county. Right. Okay.

I'm going to ask a question, Mr. Chair, through you. The industry associations are like the Canola Council and the wheat growers' association and on and on, and they do have check-offs – right? – and that's for research and innovation and on and on and on. So support to them and resources: I just have a little bit of a problem. I'm not going to die on this hill by any means, but they already have a mechanism to generate funds. You know, industry associations and regional economic organizations: would it be more encompassing with one word and call it stakeholders? Just a thought. Then we're not picking winners and losers, like Mr. Piquette said.

Sorry. I don't know where you're from. I won't say your name again.

**Mr. Piquette:** We're not in the House. Does it still apply?

**The Chair:** You can use names. I've been using your names.

**Mr. Schneider:** He made a good point there, I thought. I mean, like I said, I'm not going to die on any hills here. I think somebody mentioned chambers of commerce when they were in here talking, and all of those regional economic development boards were all kind of onside about the same way.

If you were open to a small amendment, that's the amendment I would offer.

**The Chair:** Mr. Gotfried.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Yeah. Mr. Schneider, I think you said it. I mean, we've got these organizations here who are out there looking at opportunities. I guess maybe the question for us to ask ourselves here is: what are the barriers to them doing it? Why are we sitting here? Why are we listening to them? Why are we trying to find out what they need? What do we need to direct government to do to help them to move from "We've got lots of opportunities" to "Let's get it done"? I think that's our job here, to try and close the gap between the two things. It's not really about the words here. I guess I'm thinking more about the actions we would like to see that will

help regional economic development organizations, chambers of commerce, individuals, companies, and industry associations to actually break down some of the barriers that are stopping them, because we're not hitting the mark on this. We're not achieving what we'd like to see as legislators for sure and as Albertans in terms of value-add.

7:05

So what's stopping us? What do we need to direct government to do to try and break over those barriers? Maybe it is strategies and initiatives. Maybe we need to start up at that high level, you know, if we haven't achieved that here, which I don't think we have because we need experts, quite frankly, to find out what the strategies and initiatives are to break down the barriers of why we're not attracting investment or increasing capacity or finding the export markets to make this economically viable. Maybe we need to be that broad. I tend to try and drill the other way, but maybe this is not the time to do that. I'm open to scrapping the amendment if need be.

**The Chair:** Member Connolly.

**Connolly:** Yeah. I don't think I have any problem with it saying "stakeholders"; however, I am kind of biased. I don't especially love the word "stakeholders." I always find that people ask me why they're not considered stakeholders when in reality some of them will be considered stakeholders, but they don't like the term. It's just kind of thrown around. However, at this point I think it might be the best way of really trying to narrow it down while at the same time not narrowing it down. So possibly "industry stakeholders" or just "stakeholders" in general.

**Mr. Gotfried:** So now I have a really short amendment.

**The Chair:** Okay.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Forget my other one. Why don't we just add "with key stakeholders" in between "pursue strategies and initiatives"?

**Mr. Carson:** Key industry stakeholders?

**Connolly:** I have no problem with that.

**Ms Fitzpatrick:** I'm good with that.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Key industry stakeholders. Then we have a who, right? That's maybe what we're missing from that, the who, who they're supposed to do it with. We've met with the stakeholders, so we can give them a pretty good list, too.

**Connolly:** Exactly.

**The Chair:** You wanted to move this amendment, Mr. Gotfried?

**Mr. Gotfried:** Yes, please: "that they pursue strategies and initiatives" and then in there "with key industry stakeholders."

**Mr. Orr:** Is that a formal motion?

**Mr. Gotfried:** Yes.

**Mr. Orr:** I'll second it.

**Mr. Piquette:** I'm just wondering. This is a friendly try to frame your amendment to say, maybe, "through strategies and initiatives," comma, "in collaboration with industry stakeholders," comma. I think that seems to be the point. Is that kind of what we're trying to get at, that we want government to show leadership, but at the same

time we want them to be working with industry not, you know, kind of . . .

**Mr. Gotfried:** Collaboration is exactly what we're expecting, so I have no issues with that friendly amendment.

**Mr. Piquette:** Okay.

**The Chair:** Mr. Piquette, you'll need to move a subamendment to this amendment.

**Mr. Piquette:** Okay. I always get in trouble when I actually make motions, but at least there are no numbers involved here.

I'd like to move a subamendment. Someone help me out on how to phrase this.

**Mr. Gotfried:** You said in collaboration with, right?

**Mr. Piquette:** Yeah. To modify the amendment to read after "initiatives": comma, "in collaboration with stakeholders," comma. Was it industry stakeholders?

**Mr. Gotfried:** Yeah. Key industry stakeholders.

**Mr. Piquette:** Well, that's a bit redundant, isn't it? We'd assume that. Whatever. That's fine if you want to add it in.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Then the government can pick the key ones, because you might have some marginal ones in there. That's subjective.

**Mr. Piquette:** Well, yeah. Let's say to get rid of "key" because, I mean, we might leave ourselves open. We've gotten into – well, I don't want that on the record. I just think it'd be better to leave it without "key."

**The Chair:** Strike out "key."

**Mr. Piquette:** Yeah. But I guess that's not a hill I'm prepared to die on either.

**The Chair:** All right. I'll open it up for discussion on the subamendment.

**Mr. Gotfried:** I'll second it.

**Mr. Carson:** Can we hear it?

**The Chair:** All right.

**Mr. Roth:** The subamendment would be to strike out "with key" and add "in collaboration with industry stakeholders" after the words "strategies and initiatives."

**Ms Fitzpatrick:** Okay. As the original mover of the motion I'm fine that we take it as a friendly amendment and just put it in.

**The Chair:** Well, we'll still have to vote on these one or two.

**Ms Fitzpatrick:** Yeah.

**The Chair:** Any other discussion on the subamendment? Seeing none, I'll call the vote from the subamendment. All those in favour, please say aye. All those opposed, please say no. That subamendment is carried.

We are now back on the amendment as amended. Any discussions on the amendment? Seeing none, I will call the vote on the amendment. All those in favour, please say aye. All those opposed, please say no. That amendment is carried.

We are now back on the main motion as amended. Is there any other discussion on the main motion? Oh, sorry.

**An Hon. Member:** Can we just read the motion as amended?

**Mr. Roth:** I'd be happy to. Moved by Ms Fitzpatrick that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future recommend to the government that they pursue strategies and initiatives in collaboration with industry stakeholders to move Alberta products up the value chain and encourage business development, including evaluating and expanding current successful plans for specialty products, niche markets, and value-added production, processing, and export.

**The Chair:** Now I'll open up discussion on the motion as amended.

**Mr. Gotfried:** I just want a clarification here. Because it's coming from us and we have a topic here, do we have to throw in the words "Alberta agricultural products," or are we okay without that being defined?

**The Chair:** I think, just considering that that report will be around the motion, that it will probably be implicit. If you want to clarify, you can amend it. All right.

**Mr. Gotfried:** So moved. I'm going to just add the word "agricultural."

**The Chair:** Where?

**Mr. Gotfried:** After Alberta: "to move Alberta agricultural products up the value chain."

**The Chair:** Okay.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Just in case.

**The Chair:** Okay. I'll open up the amendment for discussion. Ms Fitzpatrick.

**Ms Fitzpatrick:** Okay. Hang on a minute. I want any product in Alberta to be able to go through this. If we put "agricultural," are we not closing down?

**Mr. Gotfried:** Our mandate here for this section of this committee work is agrifood and agribusiness.

**The Chair:** Okay. It's a review. It's the challenges. This is how I'm interpreting it, and I'll seek how maybe counsel can clarify.

**Mr. Gotfried:** I don't disagree with you.

**The Chair:** Because we're looking at value-add, do you want to define when it's not agricultural, when it is agricultural?

**Mr. Gotfried:** What have we been discussing here?

**The Chair:** Yeah. Realistically you can broaden it. I think it will always be implicit that it'll be agricultural. It's really up to the will of the committee.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Yeah. Okay. That's what we just spent the last numbers of weeks, months talking about, agricultural products, and now we want to impute that across to all products. Not that I disagree with that, that it's not a good idea, it's just that that's what we've been discussing and we are now somewhat more knowledgeable about making recommendations on.

**The Chair:** Yeah. At the end of the day the mandate of the inquiry goes around agriculture and agrifoods.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Okay. That was my first question. Do we need it, or do we not need it? If we don't, then we don't. Context is important here, then.

**The Chair:** Yeah. I'll open it up for Mr. Orr.

**Mr. Orr:** Yeah. I think it's unnecessary to add that, but if we do add it, I think we need to stick within the mandate. We need to say agrifood and agribusiness, not just agriculture.

**Mr. Dach:** I think less is more. I think we should just leave it as is, and we'll be fine.

**The Chair:** Okay. The amendment has been moved, so I'll need the unanimous consent of the committee to withdraw. All those in favour, please say aye. All those opposed, please say no. The amendment is withdrawn.

All right. We're back on the main motion as amended. Any further discussion?

7:15

**Mr. Orr:** Do you need a seconder?

**The Chair:** No.

Seeing no one wanting to discuss this, I'll call the vote. I'll get Mr. Roth to read it into the record one final time.

**Mr. Roth:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Moved by Ms Fitzpatrick that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future recommend to the government that they pursue strategies and initiatives in collaboration with industry stakeholders to move Alberta products up the value chain and encourage business development, including evaluating and expanding current successful plans for specialty products, niche markets, and value-added production, processing, and export.

**The Chair:** All right. All those in favour, please say aye. All those opposed, please say no. That motion is carried.

We are back on deliberations. Mr. Schneider.

**Mr. Schneider:** Yeah. Mr. Chair, I don't mean to leave number 1, but I do have something I'd like to put forward for number 2 if that's okay. I mean, it does speed things along a little.

As we sat here and we talked about industry and agribusiness, what we heard was people looking for better opportunities to get capital. One that was brought up was a loan or a grant – I believe it's a loan – that AFSC offers on the ministry's website under agribusiness. The cap on that loan is \$5 million. Now, what we heard was that this was next to nothing. I asked: if it was \$10 million, would it be enough? Some of them said no. I mean, being a fiscal gentleman, I would suggest that potentially we could have a discussion about raising that cap from \$5 million to \$10 million. I'm prepared to make a motion, if you want, unless there's some discussion.

**The Chair:** I would recommend to just continue with things flowing. It may be best for us to open that up for discussion, and then you'll have the freedom to make a motion as we move forward.

**Mr. Schneider:** Sure. I mean, that's where I'm headed right now.

**The Chair:** Okay. Mr. Dach.

**Mr. Dach:** Okay. Thank you for your comments, Mr. Schneider. I don't disagree with you that that was one of the points of discussion

during the presentations. We did hear that reference to the \$5 million cap on AFSC being insufficient. However, I think we might want to make our recommendations a little more broad than that and cover a much larger concern that I think was echoed by many of the presenters during the presentation. There was a general feeling that there was an incapacity on the part of the financial community to provide financing which allowed businesses to scale up. They could get to a certain level, and then the financing wasn't available. There seemed to be a gap in what the market was providing for financing.

So I think we should be looking at a wider view on this and not just look at the \$5 million cap but perhaps look at other financing options and investigate and evaluate – I mean, including the \$5 million cap – just to find out what opportunities there might be to allow businesses to scale up once they reach a threshold of production so that they can get to the next stage and do that value-added production in Alberta and grow their capacity in their plant and hire more people here.

That's the kind of motion that I'd be more inclined to support, where we encourage the government to take a good, hard look at why we see this gap in financing capacity in the market right now, not to exclude evaluating the \$5 million cap – do that as well – but as part of a wider view of how we approach this problem, and actually get financing in place and available for Alberta companies that do want to expand beyond their cottage industry and get to the next level and investigate export opportunities once they do scale up.

That's my two pence.

**The Chair:** Mr. Schneider.

**Mr. Schneider:** Yeah. Just to follow up, look, I agree. However, the only money source, AFSC, is a Crown corporation. That's the only source we, or the government, have any stroke with. Chartered banks, et cetera, are a different situation. I don't even know how you'd get to that point. If I'm wrong, somebody please correct me, but AFSC is, as far as agriculture is concerned – that is a Crown corporation we certainly have. You know, we can make recommendations that the government do something about that amount of money, but have you got some ideas on other money?

**Mr. Dach:** If I may, I'm not sure if we've exhausted all the global opportunities of capital in terms of capital pools and types of capital and venture capital investment that might be possibly invited to look at agrifood and agribusiness investment. I don't know if there's some promotion around that that we have not done as a province to really dig in and see: okay; what's out there? There's lots of talk about huge pools of capital that are untapped from various different sources, and I think that should be investigated rather than putting our hands up and saying: "Well, this is the only pot we've got. We're hooped." This is a big world with lots of money floating around in it. We should be looking at drawing some of it here.

**The Chair:** Mr. Gotfried.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, I tend to agree with that argument as well from Member Dach, so I kind of agree with both sides here. You know, what we heard was that that \$5 million wasn't enough, so that's talking about large-scale industries, probably, that need that. I was just looking at the interest rates. They're fairly attractive interest rates. But I think, at the end of the day, we want these businesses to have solid business plans and an ability not just to take the loan and to expand their value-added production but to actually do it profitably. If they've got a good business plan, they should be able to go to private lenders. I look at

this more almost as a complementary lending facility for someone who maybe has found private capital, as Member Dach has said, and needs something to maybe take that leap into a further opportunity, where they've secured either an investor or private lending facilities, and this helps them to reach the kind of scale that we'd like to see.

Looking at the application, they do have to have business plans. I'm sure that AFSC have their own risk management and risk tolerance there as well. I'd like to maybe understand more about why \$5 million isn't enough. To Member Schneider's point about \$10 million, does that make a big difference, or is that still too – I certainly am not averse to us looking at increasing that level, understanding that this may not have been changed for a long period of time. We do have inflation. We do have increased costs.

Also, if we're looking at developing value-added businesses that can scale for export, that's a whole lot different than just making it so that they can produce more for the local farmers' market. I'm not averse to increasing that or recommending an increase. We're not going to make that decision. It's going to go between the government and AFSC to decide to increase that, but if that would help some businesses, I think that's probably a good thing.

**The Chair:** Mr. Taylor.

**Mr. Taylor:** Yeah. In my mind, I think we need to define how much that is, from that \$5 million to whatever that number is going to be. If it's going to be \$10 million, fine. That's what we need to define.

I have kind of a question that I would pose along with that. When was the last time that that \$5 million actually was put in place? If you take inflation into account, what was that \$5 million worth then as to now? Of how much value was it for them at that point in time?

Businesses need money pretty much now – these agrifood businesses will need it now or in the near future – if they're going to be able to expand and to grow. So if we just look at the idea of the government expanding the idea of how much they can borrow, well, we're leaving the businesses high and dry for the next whatever period of time it is until the government decides what they want to do with it. I think it's important for us to have this discussion.

**The Chair:** Mr. Dach.

**Mr. Dach:** Thank you. I appreciate the member's comments. I do have some hesitation about specifying precise amounts in terms of making recommendations to government. We're not writing legislation here. We're making recommendations that are somewhat specific but also have a broad scope as well. I'm thinking that we should probably include evaluating the \$5 million cap on AFSC but not specifically make recommendations about an amount that it should or should not go to.

What I'd like to do is move a motion if I may. I'll speak slowly for the scribe to get it up on the screen for us all to read. I'll try to invoke the Raj Pannu style of speaking. Slow and steady wins the race.

7:25

**The Chair:** I do warn you, Mr. Dach, that we need to be out by 9.

**Mr. Dach:** I move that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future recommend to the government that they ensure that small and medium-sized businesses have access to the capital needed to start and grow their businesses, including evaluating the \$5 million cap on AFSC.

I'm open to discussion.

**The Chair:** All right. Mr. Dach, does that meet your intentions?

**Mr. Dach:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Mr. Schneider.

**Mr. Schneider:** Yeah. I have just a small correction. It's a \$5 million cap on an agribusiness loan within AFSC. You've got to be somewhat specific. If you want me to look it up, I can do that.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Value-added and agribusiness: that is what it's called.

**Mr. Schneider:** Is that what it's called?

**Mr. Gotfried:** The value-added and agribusiness program loan.

**Mr. Schneider:** That's the description of the loan, yeah.

**Mr. Dach:** I think that's an appropriate addition to define exactly what the cap is capping.

**Mr. Dach:** Are you sure you're not just making that up?

**Mr. Gotfried:** It's on Wikipedia. It's got to be right.

**Mr. van Dijken:** I'm just having a little trouble with the word "ensure" because I'm not sure that that's – are we able to have government ensure that there is access to capital?

**Mr. Dach:** Endeavour?

**Mr. van Dijken:** Yeah.

**Mr. Gotfried:** I'm just thinking here. I totally agree with where you're going with this except maybe what we need to be doing is asking government to review the terms of this type of loan to ensure or to enhance the opportunity for small and medium-sized businesses to, you know, grow. Maybe we need to put the objective first, which is that we want them to review the terms.

**Mr. Dach:** I'd rather just put the words in: that they endeavour to ensure.

**Mr. Gotfried:** I'll let somebody else figure that one out.

**The Chair:** Mr. Koenig.

**Mr. Koenig:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. If it's helpful for committee members, I have quickly had a look at some of the legislation that governs this area. The Agriculture Financial Services Act is the piece of legislation that has been raised here, and I believe that it's section 29 that deals with loans by the corporation. The maximum amount of loans under section 29 is capped under the regulations at \$5 million. Just to give committee members a bit of background there on what the structure is that allows these loans, from my brief review of the legislation here.

**Mr. Gotfried:** So maybe we have to recommend that they review the act, or that approach, to be legislatively correct.

**Mr. Koenig:** I mean, it may be that if the committee wishes to do that, it would be to urge the government to review the legislation and any maximum loan amount set out under the regulation.

**The Chair:** I just want to clarify for the members here that \$5 million is under regulation, not legislation.

**Mr. Koenig:** Yes. That's right.

**The Chair:** Mr. Piquette.

**Mr. Piquette:** Yeah. We're still just framing this, right? That's my understanding. I think that from my understanding of the consensus we're not looking at evaluating the cap; we're looking at the potential to increase the cap. I think that maybe we don't need to say "\$10 million," but I think that we should be clear on our intent to the government that we're looking at evaluating the cap in order to, you know, have more available, right? Just speaking to the importance of it, I mean, I think that was the one thing. I think some other members of the committee were discussing: well, where does this come from? I think the big thing is that whole wall that a lot of our producers had hit where they're too small for big international financiers or the big banks to start to take risks on them, but they've outgrown the other programs, so they're stuck, right? I think it's really important that that piece be kept; \$5 million isn't enough for a lot of our businesses.

**Mr. Schneider:** This goes to Mr. Dach, I guess, through the chair, of course. I tend to agree with Mr. Gotfried. If you look at what the synonyms are for the word "ensure," they are safeguard, guarantee, confirm, certify, warrant. This means that we would be suggesting that the government guarantee that small and medium-sized businesses have access to capital needed to start and grow their businesses. Would it be: to provide opportunities for them to have access to capital? Just a suggestion.

**Mr. Dach:** My solution – I aired it before – was that we simply add that they endeavour to ensure. It doesn't mean that we're ensuring. We're making efforts towards ensuring that small and medium-sized businesses – so just add those two words before ensure, "endeavour to."

**An Hon. Member:** It's softer.

**Mr. Gotfried:** I hate to get too deep into wordsmithing here, but really what we're asking them to do is to improve access. Maybe we can just use the word "improve" because that's really what we're asking them to do, to improve the access to capital and possibly review the limits on the amount.

**Mr. Dach:** Yeah. I think that's more direct.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Do you think that might be less ambiguous for us?

**Mr. Dach:** Yeah. Direct is good.

**Mr. Gotfried:** There's a bit of typo in there right now anyway: that the government that. There are two thats in there. I will move a friendly amendment. We don't have to – sorry?

**The Chair:** We're just wordsmithing right now.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Oh, you are. Okay.

**The Chair:** So change "ensure" to "improve"?

**Mr. Gotfried:** Yes. We have to change a little bit of wording there: that the government improve . . .

**Connolly:** Improve access to capital for medium and small businesses.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Yeah. We're going to have to flip that a bit. Improve access for small and medium-sized businesses.

**Connolly:** In order for them to have access to the capital needed.

**Mr. Gotfried:** See, there's some good wordsmithing going on.

**Connolly:** That's why I went to school.

**Mr. Gotfried:** That's why they pay you the big bucks.

**Connolly:** I know.

7:35

**Mr. Orr:** Just to promote thinking here, my question is: how would we expect the government to answer that in terms of how they are supposed to improve access? Have we worded this correctly? I mean, in the end, apart from AFSC do we see this as being something from government or something from all the other different sources you mentioned at the very beginning?

**Mr. Dach:** If it's not AFSC, it'll have to be some other source of capital. That's what we hope is out there, that the government can actually attempt to discover more of by investigating and seeing what pools of capital are out there that are not currently being accessed. That's the enabling piece, that we want government to look at improving the sources of capital by investigating. We'll see. We won't know until late June.

**Mr. Orr:** I like the word "investigating," which isn't in there.

**Mr. Dach:** You're taking words from my mouth.

**Mr. Orr:** That's where I got it from.

I guess I'm just wrestling with: is it about encouraging the government to investigate or maybe even, to take it a step farther, to – I don't know – explore strategies, create ecoenvironments? I'm just wrestling with it.

**Mr. Dach:** Where would you add it in?

**The Chair:** Sorry, Mr. Dach. I'll allow Mr. Gotfried to have an opportunity.

**Mr. Orr:** Somewhere toward the beginning there. But we might get in over our heads here. I don't know.

**The Chair:** Sorry. I'll allow Mr. Gotfried to have the floor.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think what we're trying to do here is very specific to the AFSC, and I think this is good. I mean, there may be some other things we want to recommend. I think that this is pretty clear, what we want them to do with respect to AFSC loans, which seems to be, you know, a good initiative of a government organization to help grow what we're trying to grow. I like this. I think this is very good, and I'd support it unless there are some really good friendly amendments.

**The Chair:** Yeah. Once the committee has determined that this is sort of the direction they want to go, they have to make sure that we officially move it and lock this in.

**Mr. Dach:** Sorry. I can't hear you.

**The Chair:** Sorry. When the committee has decided that this is the motion that they officially want to move, we just need to make sure that we lock this in and recognize in the committee that you've officially moved it.

**Mr. Dach:** Yeah. I'm looking at what's on the screen right now, Chair, and I believe that that actually specifically identifies my consensus-born intent. I'd be good with moving that.

**The Chair:** Okay. I'll open up discussion on the motion on the floor. Mr. Taylor.

**Mr. Taylor:** No. It was answered, so it's good.

**The Chair:** Okay. Any other members wishing to discuss the motion on the floor?

Seeing none, I'll call the question on the motion. I'll have Mr. Roth read it for the record.

**Mr. Roth:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Moved by Mr. Dach that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future recommend that the government improve access to capital for small and medium-sized businesses to enable them to start and grow businesses and consider increasing the \$5 million cap on value-added and agribusiness program loans provided through Agriculture Financial Services Corporation.

**The Chair:** All those in favour, please say aye. All those opposed, please say no. That motion is carried.

We're back on deliberations. I'll open up the floor for further discussion. Oh, sorry. Mr. Piquette.

**Mr. Piquette:** That's okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to move on to the third point, collaboration between government, industry, and academia. I think this is something that came through very clearly in the presentations we received, just how important it is when we're going up against, you know, other jurisdictions where they have very proactive governments working in tandem with industry and in tandem with producers to be able to scale up to be able to meet the demands. I think that particularly in the designer proteins type of industry, you know, moving up from pure commodities to products that aren't quite so fungible – I'm trying to think "return," but I think actually "margin" is what I'm looking for – that have a more favorable margin.

Where we've been successful in the past has been in leveraging our world-class agricultural research institutions, developed at places – well, I'm thinking of Olds College in particular but also, of course, you know, the college in Vermilion, the wonderful work being done at the U of A, the U of C. I think that if we're going to be competing against some of these big players, making sure we get a big part out of that international protein market and also take advantage of CETA and the potential to get into the European market, this is a way we need to go. I guess I'm referring particularly to – was it the U of A program that talked about the importance of the clusters? – clustering, where you have a place where you can bring smaller producers together with academia, led by government, which would feed into, of course, the first motion that we passed as well. I think that would be a follow-on from that.

I could stop if other people want to talk about it.

**The Chair:** I'll open up discussion in relation to section 3. Mr. Orr.

**Mr. Orr:** Yeah. I think that there's value in this one as well. To try and give it some specific direction for the government, I'd like to suggest that maybe we recommend that the government either work with or co-ordinate with agricultural industries, other governments, academia to establish a national nonprofit annual agribusiness conference to address the needs and concerns of value-added and agribusiness across the country. I realize that this goes beyond Alberta, but there isn't a national organization to address that need. I think that if Alberta, being a strong agricultural presence in the country, were to initiate that, it might be something that would be, actually, really useful. We would probably benefit from it strongly.

It's not my idea; it comes from another agriculture group actually right here, based in Edmonton. But I throw it out there as a

discussion piece, that that might be a recommendation the government could explore.

**The Chair:** Mr. Piquette.

**Mr. Piquette:** Yeah. I guess I'd say, you know, I'd have to consider that.

**Mr. Orr:** I'll be honest. It comes from Northlands looking at exploring how to expand the agricultural effectiveness of Alberta and maybe wanting to try and initiate or make the suggestion that that would be something that should be developed. Like I said, it's not my idea, but I pass it on.

**Mr. Piquette:** Well, I'm just wondering if I could maybe read out a motion, that just might be more of a general motion, and then we could see if that would encapsulate the type of project that Mr. Orr is talking about. If not, then we might want to make a separate motion with a bit more detail on that.

7:45

**The Chair:** Okay. Would this be about a motion that you're considering?

**Mr. Piquette:** Yeah. Is there an appetite for that?

**The Chair:** Yeah.

**Mr. Piquette:** Throw something up there to play with, let's say. Okay. I'd like to move that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future . . .

**The Chair:** Sorry.

**Mr. Piquette:** Can I do that?

**The Chair:** Sorry. I'll allow Dr. Massolin.

**Dr. Massolin:** Yeah. I just want to make it absolutely clear – a comment on the committee's process here because it seems like the committee is working well together and there's a consensus to work on the wording of some of these proposals. So if it's the will of the committee, perhaps a proposal could be put forward with the wording as if it were, you know, an actual motion, without moving it. You can wordsmith it, make changes, and then you could formally move it. This is not perfect textbook procedure, I might add, but that's okay. I don't think Mr. Koenig would get too mad at me.

Anyway, if that's acceptable to the committee, Mr. Chair, maybe that's the way you could proceed from this point forward.

**Mr. Orr:** So wording for discussion.

**The Chair:** Yeah. I'll allow Mr. Piquette to sort of wordsmith that.

**Mr. Piquette:** All right. I'll suggest that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future recommend to the government that they encourage collaboration between academia, government, and industry so that Alberta producers in the agribusiness sector are leaders. That's broad.

**The Chair:** Any discussion on the wordsmithing?

**Mr. van Dijken:** It doesn't bring us into, necessarily, any new direction. I think we currently have a fair bit of collaboration between academia, government, and industry, so I guess we're recommending that the government continue to promote this and to

encourage it. I'm not sure if Mr. Piquette was intending anything new to come out of this type of a motion.

**Mr. Piquette:** Well, I think it's important that if we're looking at the overall strategy of value-added in Alberta that we also, you know – I mean, if something is functional and worth continuing, that we do state that. However, I mean, I think greater collaboration across more areas would be beneficial from what we've heard. I mean, this isn't even a motion, so if you want to propose something that's going to beef it up, I'm happy.

**Mr. van Dijken:** I guess I'd like to see that this continues and that it allows Alberta producers in agribusiness to continue to be leaders in industry. I'm not sure. I don't have any ideas off the top of my head to change what we're currently doing. We currently have many institutions, that are both funded by industry and government, that are doing a lot of good work with regard to production of commodity. Maybe we're limited a little bit in the value-added end of things and building on that end of it.

**The Chair:** Member Connolly.

**Connolly:** Thank you very much. Yeah, I kind of agree with Mr. van Dijken. However, we did hear from several universities that they would like to maybe push for a little bit more collaboration between the three groups, not that it doesn't happen already.

However, to push on to what Mr. Orr was saying, perhaps we could add at the end of "leaders" something along the lines of "as well as potentially explore the feasibility of having an annual or biannual or whatever conference on X, Y, Z."

**Mr. Orr:** I like that. That gives legs to it.

**Connolly:** Yeah. I don't know if you want to finish that.

**The Chair:** So adding to the end about looking into feasibility?

**Connolly:** Right. Yeah. So "as well as potentially exploring the feasibility of an annual conference on agrifood and agribusiness."

**Mr. Dach:** It's okay to write two sentences, right?

**The Chair:** Sorry. Member Connolly was exploring the feasibility.

**Connolly:** Yeah. So if you're putting "and," I would say that it's "and explore the feasibility," not "exploring." If you're putting "as well as," then you put "exploring," but if you're saying "and exploring," then I prefer that. Then "an annual conference on agrifood and agribusiness." I think Mr. Orr said a national conference, but I think just conference is fine.

**Mr. Gotfried:** I just wanted to comment on this, and it's not meant to be negative in any way. It just concerns me when government and, you know, postsecondary industries get together without a clear objective. It leads to navel gazing, and I'm not sure that we want to encourage navel gazing.

**Mr. Orr:** Yeah, but there's industry in there, too.

**Mr. Gotfried:** They can navel gaze, too, sometimes.

It concerns me here because I think that this is relevant in some of the other objectives, that we may need to have that, for example, to move ahead with access to market issues, where we need all levels of government and maybe some academics together to address certain issues. But to just throw everybody into a room without a clear mandate of what you're expecting them to come out with could be a huge waste of time and resources, and that concerns

me. I'm not disagreeing that this might be a good thing attached to an objective, but I'm not sure that a stand-alone statement like this is actually going to achieve anything.

So I'd ask you to ask yourselves: what is the "what" here? What are we trying to achieve with this? Is it just a big confab of people talking about innovation? We can do that all day long unless we send them into a room with an objective. I'm just saying that, just throwing that out there and playing devil's advocate.

7:55

**Mr. Orr:** Maybe in that regard, then, we could add "an annual conference to study and commercialize agrifood and agribusinesses." I don't know if "study" is the right word, but maybe it is.

**The Chair:** So study and commercialize?

**Mr. Orr:** Yeah, probably. Study and commercialize. That's the goal here, to actually create commercial businesses that enhance the economy, that grow the economy. So unless we get to the commercialization stage, we don't get there.

**Mr. Gotfried:** That's adding a bit more of a what.

**Ms McPherson:** If we use the word "validate," I don't think we need to go into so much detail. What we could do after "and industry" is add "in order to validate that Alberta producers in the agribusiness sector are leaders" and "explore the feasibility of an annual conference to study and commercialize agrifood and agribusiness." You might not need "study," then, because the validation is implied in that. And I think that "commercialize" is redundant because agrifood and agribusiness – the whole purpose is to sell them.

**Mr. Dach:** I think what Member McPherson may be getting at is that we use the conference that we're discussing here as a performance measure to assess exactly what progress has been made.

**Ms McPherson:** Yeah, I think that's fair. Yeah. The validation takes away the possibility that it's a boondoggle, and there is a deliverable implied in that, that we have validated that these things are happening.

**The Chair:** So strike out "so" and put in "to validate"?

**Ms McPherson:** Yes. To validate that Alberta producers . . .

**Mr. Orr:** To validate or to strengthen? I'm just playing with words.

**Ms McPherson:** Well, with "validate," then you have a deliverable. You have to have some measurables, right? Is it working? Is it not working?

**Connolly:** Are we leaders in the business sector or not?

**Ms McPherson:** So "strengthen" is up for debate. Is it stronger?

**Mr. Gotfried:** The word "leader" is very subjective in there. I'd like us to have a bit more objectivity in what we're trying to achieve with this, I mean, that it was around leading-edge technology or leading-edge processes or, you know, the word "commercialize." We can all get in a room and can all come out and say: aren't we great leaders? But what did we get in there to lead?

**Ms McPherson:** Right. Ergo, validation.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Yeah, but then what are we validating? I guess I'm trying to challenge us here to say that we're going to have this because we're going to achieve something so that every year that we do this, we're going to come out and, you know, through the collaboration of these three groups, which is a good thing, and I'm not saying that it isn't, we're going to come out and ensure that we are – I don't know. I'm asking you, maybe. What are we going to come out with? If we go and do this, that's great, but what are we going to come out with specifically? What's a measurable from this to say that we came out with better technology, or we came out with a new process, or we came out with a way to use lentils better and export them better or whatever it is? How are we going to measure that? How are we going to embed that in this so that this does not have a boondoggle feel to it?

**Ms McPherson:** I see what you're saying, although with our leaders I think that that is measurable. There are KPIs that you could put in place to say: "Yeah, we're actually leading in this area. We're comparing like with like and we're ahead." Or: "We have a challenge here. We have space to grow. What's our strategy in order to be able to do that? How do we bring together studying the academic part of it, the regulatory and the business part of it to make sure that we are leading?"

**The Chair:** Mr. Coolahan.

**Mr. Coolahan:** Yeah. Thanks, Chair. I hate to interrupt this nonmotion motion, but I'm just reading all the submissions here in 3, and it's all about research and development. I don't think we're in the ballpark here.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Yeah. That's, I think, where I am because if this is about R and D, then let's make it about R and D.

**Mr. Dach:** I was coming out of left field. I was basically going to move along the road of Member McPherson, where we were looking at showcasing examples that demonstrate progress made as a result of the collaboration between academia, government, and industry. That's the gist of what I wanted to get to. I think that incorporates the R and D component because the collaboration is going to be basically research and development between these three groups. That's my contribution. I wanted as a deliverable to have this conference showcase and demonstrate examples of progress made as a result of this collaborative effort.

**The Chair:** Okay. Mr. Gotfried, and then Mr. Orr.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Yeah. I think when you're using terms like "showcase," then I'm starting to get it a little bit more. Maybe, going back to Member Coolahan's comments, we can turn this so that it is a showcase or a platform for annual submissions from collaborations or academia or government on innovation, research, and technology related to agrifood and agribusiness. Something a little more specific – I think the term "showcase" I like because it's like: "Okay. Come one, come all. Bring your best ideas. Let's all get together." Maybe you put a competition or a prize or some resources, you know, that's going to be voted on by your peers. I'm getting maybe a little bit more into the weeds here than I mean to. But if it's a showcase of research, technology, and innovation, then I can get my head around this better.

**Connolly:** Something along the lines of the petroleum show?

**Mr. Gotfried:** Yeah. Or, you know, there are social enterprise things where people come in and there are submissions of social

enterprise, and then somebody wins funding, right? You could make it a bit of a competition, which I like.

**Ms McPherson:** A farm expo.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Yeah. Something like that.

**Mr. Orr:** Two comments. One, I fail to see that this is outside of the subject area because if it's about R and D, study and commercialize is just other language for research and development. I think we're actually in the ballpark here, and I think we're where we should be.

My second comment is to point out that we're only on item 3, and we've only got an hour left. I'd say it's time for a motion.

**Mr. Piquette:** Back to me?

**Mr. Orr:** Well, you started that. It's that simple.

**Mr. Piquette:** I suppose, yeah.

**Mr. Orr:** If you don't want to, I will.

**Mr. Piquette:** I'm just thinking that I'm not sure about "validate," with all due deference to my colleague. I would say "ensure" maybe. I mean, I want something a bit more proactive than "validate." I mean, that would be one thing.

Secondly, I think this would be – well, it's not for the amendment because it's my motion. Well, it's not even a motion quite yet. I think that Mr. Orr was specifically not thinking of an annual conference; you were thinking of an annual national conference. Was that . . .

**Mr. Orr:** I was, but this works.

**Mr. Piquette:** This works?

**Mr. Orr:** Yeah. I mean, I was sort of going beyond the realm of Alberta, thinking blue sky. I mean, within the mandate of our committee Alberta is probably more appropriate.

**Mr. Piquette:** I just wonder. Is it going to be – could Farmfair fit under that definition as it stands now?

**Mr. Orr:** If it were to include all three of those groups in a deliberate attempt, possibly it could be a vehicle by which we could work that way, but I'm not sure that they actually focus on the R and D side of it with academia and government at the same level.

**Mr. Piquette:** Fair enough. So specially bring in everybody. I get it.

**Mr. Orr:** Yeah.

**Mr. Piquette:** All right. Well, that could be – sorry. Go ahead. Oh, sorry. I'm not the chair.

**The Chair:** Sorry. Mr. Taylor, did you have some comments?

**Mr. Taylor:** I'm just thinking of a different way to just word that one sentence just after "validate." It says that Alberta producers are leaders in the agribusiness sector. Instead of putting "leaders" at the back, put it in the front after that. Alberta producers are leaders in the agribusiness sector: that "leaders" just sits out there, and it just floats out there and says nothing. I don't really like the way it sits there.

**The Chair:** Mr. Gotfried, were you having a further comment here?

**Mr. Gotfried:** No.

8:05

**The Chair:** Mr. Piquette.

**Mr. Piquette:** Yeah, I'll move that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future recommend that the government encourage collaboration between academia, government, and industry to ensure that Alberta producers are leaders in the agribusiness sector and explore the feasibility of sponsoring an annual conference to study and commercialize agrifood and agribusiness.

**The Chair:** I'll open up the motion on the floor for discussion.

Seeing that no one wishes to speak to it, I'll call the question on the motion.

Mr. Roth, if you can read it for the record.

**Mr. Roth:** Certainly, Mr. Chair. Moved by Mr. Piquette that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future recommend that the government encourage collaboration between academia, government, and industry to ensure that Alberta producers are leaders in the agribusiness sector and explore the feasibility of sponsoring an annual conference to study and commercialize agrifood and agribusiness.

**The Chair:** I'll call the question. All those in favour, please say aye. All those opposed, please say no. That motion is carried.

We are now back on deliberations. Are there any topics that members wish to explore? Mr. Drysdale.

**Mr. Drysdale:** Yeah, I'm not sure if number 4 is the right one to do it, and I'm not going to get into wordsmithing like fancy, educated people. I'm just a beef farmer. I think we need to have something more specific and solid, so I would like to see the government work with industry to develop a certification program for Alberta beef; you know, the highest standards in the world. It can work on the details with industry, whether it's antibiotic free, humane, quality beef. We were threatened last year by a substandard certification from the States that doesn't hold a candle to Alberta beef, but we actually don't have a certification in Alberta, and I think that with government and industry, they should develop that certification. It's unquestionable that it's the best beef in the world. You can wordsmith it all you want. I'd like to see something solid like that, and if number 4 isn't the right place for it, we can find one.

**The Chair:** Well, it's a good place to start.

I'll open it up for discussion. Mr. Gotfried.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Yeah, you know, this exact topic came up this morning in Public Accounts about the challenge we had with the whole Earls saga and how we sort of left ourselves open for ridicule by not having our own. We have good certification. We have the best standards. We just don't have a stamp or a seal on it that tells everybody that it's of the highest standards. So there's some recognition that we need to do that.

I'd like to support the idea that we have a certification here. One of the comments from the agricultural ministry was that us having sort of a self-certification may be a little bit sketchy in terms of its international recognition, but I think that if we were to develop the standards here – there were some comments about whether we could take that to someone like ISO or another global standard, CSA or someone, to have it sort of either certified nationally or internationally but develop those standards here. I think it's something that we need to do to protect our industry going forward

to ensure that those standards are measured against any other standards, that we can show that they're the highest, and then maybe find some secondary certification on a national or global standard that even enhances that further. So I'd be very much for a certification, for us to encourage a certification program within Alberta.

**The Chair:** Mr. Orr.

**Mr. Orr:** Yeah, I agree with the principle of what you're talking about, but in reality isn't this a federal Agriculture Canada role that should be played at the national level rather than just us as a province? Therefore, my suggestion would be that if we go here, we encourage the Alberta government to work with the Canadian government to create a national certification that will get better recognition than just something done provincially.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Sorry, I don't disagree with you on that, Ron. The only thing is that we got hijacked by a group out of – where was it? – Indiana or somewhere about the halal beef, and all of a sudden all of our standards here became for naught. So if we're going to be subject to somebody out of Indiana, we may as well have a made-in-Alberta solution, and I don't disagree that we may need to elevate that to a national level. My statistics aren't that clear, but don't we produce or export – about 85 per cent of the beef in Canada comes from Alberta anyway. So if we're going to do this, as I said this morning, maybe the If It Ain't Alberta, It Ain't Beef certification thing. I always liked that advertising. I think that, you know, this is really in our hands. We are the biggest beef producers in the country. Why don't we take our destiny and our future in our own hands and then drive that out and get support for it as best we can elsewhere?

**Connolly:** While I don't disagree with the main idea, I think instead of a certification it might be better to create a made-in-Alberta type brand because I know we can do that here in the province without working with the federal government. Just something recognizable that signifies that it was made here in Alberta, kind of that it is the best. It might be easier than a certification. I don't know if that's kind of in the same vein of what you're trying to accomplish, Mr. Drysdale.

**Mr. Drysdale:** Well, you know, a brand is good, and we've always had the Alberta Beef brand. That is a branding, but that doesn't say that it's certified. I mean, that's more of an advertising slogan than anything, so let's have a real certification that proves that our beef is the highest standard. Whether you do it with the CSA, I agree, but I think we need to start it here, and if it doesn't go any farther, we can do it in Alberta. All kinds of small groups certify their products. You know, I think Alberta could get started. If Canada wants to be part of it, that's good, because I think it should be under the CSA standard rather than some American standard. You know, branding is fine, but we've always had the brand Alberta Beef. That doesn't protect you in the market for certification.

**Mrs. Schreiner:** I was just going to say: do we want to keep it just to beef, or do we want to open it up to, you know, pork and all the other . . .

**The Chair:** Mr. Gotfried.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Yeah, To Member Schreiner, you know what? I understand. I think beef is such a big – and pork, obviously, probably secondary to that. I mean, we could say beef and pork

certification, but we seem to have always had the challenges with our beef products. I don't know. Wayne, you might have more knowledge about that. That seems to be the point where we seem to get tripped up the most, so I think maybe a bit of a focus on that, and if we get the beef one right, maybe then we move on to a pork one afterwards.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mr. Drysdale.

**Mr. Drysdale:** Yeah. I think the pork guys may join in, but it should be specific about beef to start with. If you get it too general, then it's not a specific quality.

**The Chair:** Mr. Orr.

**Mr. Orr:** Yeah. This is a tricky one because it does expand, and there are multiple subjects here we're wrestling with. I wonder if we shouldn't for this one look at maybe a couple of short, focused motions that try to cover the ground. It might keep us out of some quagmires. I mean, I agree with most of what I'm hearing. It's just: how do we get this into a manageable form?

**Mr. Gotfried:** I think we have a manageable form right up there.

**The Chair:** All right. So with that being said, Mr. Drysdale, do you wish to move the motion?

**Mr. Drysdale:** Yeah. I would like to add, though, that government work with industry to develop it. Again, I don't think we should tell industry, so yeah. I'll make that motion.

**The Chair:** All right. A motion is on the floor.

8:15

**Mr. Piquette:** I guess it's a formal motion, so I'd like to move an amendment, then. I think industry would be – I'm afraid of foreclosing, too, because, I mean, if we want to develop an effective standard for certification, I think we have to have input beyond industry. I'd even put "stakeholders."

**Connolly:** Industry and academia?

**Mr. Piquette:** Yeah.

**The Chair:** So to add after "industry" "stakeholders" or "related stakeholders"?

**Mr. Taylor:** It's implied when you say "industry." Stakeholders are implied.

**Connolly:** Well, industry and related stakeholders. Then you could open it up to different . . .

**Mr. Taylor:** With related – I see what you're saying.

**The Chair:** I'll open up discussion for the amendment if that meets your intentions.

You can read it in for the record.

**Mr. Roth:** Moved by Mr. Piquette that the motion be amended by adding the words "and related stakeholders" after "industry."

**Mr. van Dijken:** I'm not sure what related stakeholders would be involved here. I do believe "industry" is the right terminology. Are we looking at related stakeholders all of a sudden possibly being in the food service industry, possibly being in the food retail industry?

I don't believe that's necessarily what the intent of Member Drysdale was. I think most times, when you're trying to brand something like a commodity like beef, you would work with the production entity of beef as opposed to related stakeholders that are further up the value-added chain. The related stakeholders further up would be doing their own branding. That would be my take on it. I think "work with industry" is probably better verbiage.

**Mr. Piquette:** Well, once again this isn't a hill that I'd want to die on, but I think that you would want to be including people higher up the chain if that's the way you want to characterize it in discussion because the whole point of certification is to make the product more marketable, so you want to have certification around the types of characteristics that the market wants. That would be my understanding of why that would be important.

**The Chair:** Mr. Dach, and then Mr. Gotfried.

**Mr. Dach:** Yes. Thank you, Chair. What "related stakeholders" says to me is that it revolves around the inputs that go into beef production, you know: what happens at the feedlot, what are these animals eating, and what medications are they being given? That's certainly something that should be included in the certification process so it's not a matter of moving it up the chain to unrelated and further down the line retailers and so forth. It's right at the growth level of these cattle – what exactly is being put into these cattle? – and that should be something that is considered as part of the certification program. It would have to be.

**Mr. Gotfried:** I'm fine with "and related stakeholders," as suggested. You know, we're talking about the government here, but there are obviously other levels of government which would come into play, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, for example, and we talked retailers upstream, downstream within that industry. I think if that amendment broadens the understanding of this, then I'm quite supportive of it.

**The Chair:** Mr. Drysdale.

**Mr. Drysdale:** Yeah. I was just going to say that I'm okay with the amendment. You know, it's a certification, not a branding. I want to make sure that that's clear. There's a difference between branding and certification. You know, whether it's retailers or whatever, I think if you add "related stakeholders," as long as it doesn't get too broad – you get a bunch of health food and all that kind of stuff trying to affect it. I think we can manage it with the term "related stakeholders."

**Mr. Taylor:** I kind of liked the original one that they had, "with industry," because the stakeholders are implied. The related stakeholders become part of that when you're working with the industry itself. I think we're just adding more words for the sake of adding more words when we don't need to.

**Mr. Dach:** Well, we could just say, "industry stakeholders."

**Connolly:** I think the point of "related stakeholders" was to include the federal government as well as the provincial and so on and so forth.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Call the question.

**The Chair:** Seeing that there is no discussion, I'll call the question on the amendment. I'll have it read into the record.

**Mr. Roth:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Moved by Mr. Piquette that the motion be amended by adding the words “and related stakeholders” after “industry.”

**The Chair:** Having heard the amendment, all those in favour, please say aye. All those opposed, please say no. That amendment is carried.

We're back on the main motion as amended. I'll open that up for discussion.

Seeing none, I'll call the question if Mr. Roth can read that into the record.

**Mr. Roth:** Moved by Mr. Drysdale that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future recommend that the government work with industry and related stakeholders to develop a certification program for Alberta beef.

**The Chair:** Having heard the motion as amended, all those in favour, please say aye. All those opposed, please say no. That motion is carried.

We are back on deliberations. Are there any other items members wish to speak to?

**Mr. Orr:** There were a couple of stakeholders that presented the question, particularly with regard to – oh, now I'm at a loss for words – the organic industry, about the Alberta branding thing, the made-in-Alberta brand, the marketing side of it. I'd like to suggest that we consider putting together a motion to investigate the feasibility of instituting a minimum threshold for agricultural products to meet to use the made-in-Alberta brand on packaging and in marketing.

Do you want me to read that slower?

**The Chair:** Yes, please.

**Mr. Orr:** Okay. That the government consult with stakeholders and investigate the feasibility of instituting a minimum threshold for agricultural products to meet in order to use – maybe you want this in quotes – the made-in-Alberta brand on packaging and marketing materials.

**The Chair:** I'm sorry. Were you speaking specifically to organics with this one, or were you speaking in general?

**Mr. Orr:** No, not necessarily, although it did come from them very clearly, but I think others are concerned about it as well.

**Ms McPherson:** The honey people.

**Mr. Orr:** Yeah. I think the honey people said that – you're right – and a few others. So I don't want to limit it to just the organic industry although maybe honey is organic, too.

**Mr. Koenig:** Just a small point of clarification. The made-in-Alberta brand: is that something that exists right now, or is this a potential brand that could be created? Just for my own clarification.

**Mr. Orr:** Yeah. I don't know that it's an official designation. Maybe that's part of what we're creating here, and maybe we need to word that slightly differently.

**The Chair:** Sorry. We'll go with Mr. Koenig, and then Ms McPherson.

**Mr. Koenig:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So I guess, then, the point of clarification would be: in order to label a product as made in

Alberta. That's the point you're driving at here. So it's creating a minimum threshold to label a product as made in Alberta.

**Mr. Orr:** Right.

**Mr. Koenig:** Okay.

**Ms McPherson:** I was going to do that with fewer words.

**Mr. Drysdale:** I don't want to be in opposition, and I don't even know for sure – we could research it – but I think that actually already exists. There is made in Alberta, and you have to get permission to use that brand.

**Mr. Orr:** Is it trademarked?

**Mr. Drysdale:** I won't guarantee that, but I'm pretty sure it is.

8:25

**Mr. Orr:** But the question raised was that there are no standards. There's nothing defining who can and who can't put that on there, is my understanding. We need more research, maybe.

**Mr. Drysdale:** I think there is, but I won't argue the point.

**The Chair:** Are you speaking in relation to, like, product of origin labelling?

**Mr. Orr:** Yes.

**The Chair:** If this was something – sorry; Dr. Massolin.

**Dr. Massolin:** Yes. If I may make a suggestion here, first of all, as I understand it, product of origin, something like champagne in France, and parmigiano di Giano. I got to use my Italian. They're all products of a particular origin. There are many others. So we could do some research on this to determine whether or not this is actually made in Alberta, one way or the other, is actually in that category or not, and come back to the committee with this for tomorrow's meeting. Is that acceptable, Mr. Chair, to the committee?

**The Chair:** Yup.

Okay. So we'll move on to the next item.

**Mr. Orr:** Can I just add one comment?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mr. Orr:** I mean, I know Alberta beef has had their branding, which is close to this but not quite the same, but the vineyards have this rule, like, if it's wine from Alberta, it has to have a certain percentage of grapes that are in it. I mean, how we define what made-in-Alberta really means in agriculture and produce I think is what we're after, and how does that, then, lend some credibility to the marketing of it and enhance our Alberta economy, really?

**The Chair:** Dr. Massolin.

**Dr. Massolin:** Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chair. If I may respond to that, I mean, I think those are good questions. I don't think it's for us to determine how this made-in-Alberta brand, if you will, or this designation is determined or what goes into it. I think for this stage it's whether or not it exists – right? – to verify what Mr. Drysdale is saying. And then maybe it's for the committee to subsequently recommend that it ought to be this or that. But I suppose we could – and we've only got a day – look into what goes into some of the designations, like, for other regions. I mean, you know, there are a

variety out there, as you well know. I'm not too educated myself on this, but we could perhaps try to get some sense of what would go into a made-in-Alberta. Is that kind of what we're after here, Mr. Chair?

**Mr. Orr:** Yup. That'd be very helpful. Thanks.

**The Chair:** All right.

**Connolly:** I think we're just looking for something that could become a recognizable brand that signifies sustainable, responsible, and quality food products from Alberta as opposed to just having maybe a sticker on it. I think that's kind of what we're trying to push for. Is that correct?

**Mr. Orr:** Yeah.

**Connolly:** I don't know if we want to put that in the motion.

**The Chair:** Well, it's up to the will of the committee if we want to continue discussing this.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Just quickly, it looks like there are some marketing councils that are in charge of a lot of this type of issue. I'm sure if we give the committee staff here a chance to take a look at it, we might find out enough to make a well-informed decision tomorrow. So I would move that we push it back for discussion in tomorrow's proceedings.

**The Chair:** All right. Moving back to further deliberations. Are there any other items members wish to bring forward? Member McPherson.

**Ms McPherson:** Thank you. Something that was highlighted – it's number 5 in the issues – is access to markets. You know, if we're going to do all this work to develop the products, we need to develop the markets for that, too, and capitalize on the reputation that Alberta has internationally already.

**The Chair:** Mr. Gotfried.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, interesting. Again, we had some of these discussions in Public Accounts this morning around some of the export market opportunities in, particularly, places like India, very underserved, and the statistic we had was that there's about \$1.53 billion worth of agricultural exports from Canada to India, and Alberta only has \$45 million of that, which sounds really out of whack to me. So there are some specific markets that we need to address.

One of the specific issues – maybe this is a little too specific – that has come up is that although the China market is back open to Alberta beef, they're not allowed to accept chilled Alberta beef. I don't know if we want to get so specific as to ask for action by our government to work with the federal government to try to eliminate the exclusion of chilled Alberta beef for import into China or whether this committee feels that maybe that's a little too specific. But it's a big issue, and it actually affects us being able to export higher value cuts. Higher value cuts typically are not frozen – they're chilled – with higher levels of packaging, and then they'd be put onto the Air China 747 cargo freighter out of here and the Cathay Pacific one out of Calgary and sent over as chilled beef maybe to high-end hotels and restaurants or to certain high-end consumers.

That opportunity is not there for us right now, so I'd just maybe present that as an option for us to take a look at because that's a

very specific access to market. There are many other things that we can take a look at.

**The Chair:** Any other members wishing to discuss the matter at hand?

**Ms McPherson:** I have a motion if that works right now.

**The Chair:** Yeah. Go ahead, Member McPherson.

**Ms McPherson:** I move that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future recommend to the government that they continue to seek out new and larger markets for the agrifood sector by leveraging our international reputation, that could be further enhanced . . .

**The Chair:** Sorry, Member McPherson. Just allow them to catch up.

**Ms McPherson:** Oh, sorry. You need that voice detection stuff. Okay. Let me get with you here. . . . by made-in-Alberta branding.

**Mr. Gotfried:** I really like the intent here, but if you do a lot of research around the globe, made in Alberta isn't actually what they're looking for; it's made in Canada. It's the maple leaf and Canada that are the big brand. As much as I know we are proud of our products here and like to think that everybody knows where we are and who we are, Canada is the leading brand almost everywhere, globally, that we go, particularly in the larger markets like China and India. Hence, that's why we tend to piggyback on those as opposed to creating a sub-brand. That's what I've learned from attending a few different events, one of them being the Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association, which very specifically talked about the Canadian brand and the Canada brand.

**Ms McPherson:** Like, I see what you're saying, but the motion says, "could be further enhanced by made-in-Alberta branding." Maybe: "leveraging Canada's international reputation" and then "further distinguishing Alberta."

**The Chair:** Mr. Gotfried.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Yeah. I love the made-in-Alberta thing. It's just that this is what I've heard. There was one presentation given at the Cattle Feeders', and it was very specifically about the power of the Canadian brand. So I'd just caution us about that. What you're saying is true about the Canadian brand already, and we should leverage off that as much as we can.

**Mr. Orr:** Just add the word "Canada."

**Ms McPherson:** Yeah. "The Canadian international reputation" and "that could be further enhanced by made-in-Alberta branding."

**The Chair:** Because the motion has been moved, we just need an amendment for that as well. Mr. Gotfried, if you're wanting to move that amendment.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Yeah. Let Ron do it. My wordsmithing is off.

**Mr. Orr:** I'll make the amendment that we just add the word "Canada" after the word "Alberta."

**Mr. Gotfried:** That doesn't fit.

**Ms McPherson:** No.

8:35

**Mr. Gotfried:** Okay. I've got it. How about if we say "... further enhanced by leveraging the Canadian brand for made-in-Alberta products"?

**Ms McPherson:** Yeah. That's what I was getting at, what I meant to say, I guess.

**Mr. Gotfried:** "... be further enhanced by leveraging our Canadian international reputation, that could further enhance our made-in-Alberta products." How does that – did you get that there? You've got an extra "be" in there. Get rid of the word "be."

**The Chair:** Mr. Orr, does this match the intent of your amendment?

**Mr. Orr:** I'm good with it.

**Mr. Gotfried:** You just need to get rid of the word "be" in there. "... that could further enhance made-in-Alberta products." Last sentence. No, no. That "be" has to stay in. The bottom "be." First word, last line.

**The Chair:** Excellent.

Mr. Dach.

**Mr. Dach:** Thank you, Chair. I was wondering if Mr. Orr might consider ...

**The Chair:** Mr. Dach, sorry. My apologies. I didn't give Mr. Orr the opportunity to speak to the amendment.

**Mr. Orr:** I'm good with that. Yeah.

**The Chair:** Okay. Sorry.

Carry on, Mr. Dach.

**Mr. Dach:** I'm wondering, Mr. Orr, if you'd consider adding a little beef to the amendment by striking out "continue" after the word "government" and saying that the government "aggressively seek out new and larger markets."

**Mr. Orr:** I like that, yeah.

**The Chair:** This would have to be a separate amendment.

**Mr. Orr:** Why don't we just pass the first one and make that second one because it's different?

**The Chair:** Okay. So I'll open up discussion on the amendment.

Seeing none, all those in favour, please say aye. All those opposed, please say no. That amendment is carried.

Now we're back on the main motion as amended.

**Mr. Dach:** I might add my own amendment if I may, Chair.

**The Chair:** Just one second, Mr. Dach, so we can get this fixed up here as well.

**Mr. Dach:** Sorry. I can't hear you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Just one second so we can get this prepared for you.

**Mr. Dach:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** All right. Go ahead, Mr. Dach.

**Mr. Dach:** Thank you, Chair. I would like to make an amendment that

after the word "government" we eliminate the words "continue to" and substitute the word "aggressively."

**The Chair:** All right. I'll open up the amendment for discussion.

Seeing no speakers, I'll call the vote on the amendment. All those in favour, please say aye. All those opposed, please say no. That amendment is carried.

We're back on the main motion as amended. Are there any – Mr. Piquette.

**Mr. Piquette:** Yeah. I'm just pedantic about this, but I think that we need to make a small amendment to the motion, so "leveraging Canada's international reputation in a way that can further enhance." It doesn't actually make grammatical sense as it stands now.

**The Chair:** Would you need "in a way that"?

**Mr. Piquette:** "That further enhances." You could make it more succinct that way.

**Ms McPherson:** But it still doesn't make a lot of sense. "Could further enhance made-in-Alberta products." Like, we're not actually enhancing any products. We're trying to enhance the markets. We're not doing anything to the products themselves.

Can I just read out the original motion and just see if we can maybe retrofit some of it back in here?

**The Chair:** Well, we have an amendment on the floor right now, so we have to discuss ...

**Ms McPherson:** Okay. All right.

**The Chair:** The other thing, too: we can always go back if Mr. Piquette wants to withdraw this amendment, and then we can go back to discussion.

**Mr. Piquette:** You want me to withdraw my amendment? Oh.

**The Chair:** Yeah. Or you can move a subamendment.

**Mr. Gotfried:** What we're really talking about here, I think, because we're now getting into some awkward wording – now there's some question about enhancing the product. It doesn't really enhance the product. What it does is that it enhances the perception of the product.

**Ms McPherson:** I think I just said that.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Yeah.

**The Chair:** Mr. Gotfried, you would have to be making an amendment to the existing amendment.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Right. It would have to fit in there.

**Mr. Piquette:** I withdraw my amendment. You know, all I'm looking for is some actual clarity and grammatical sense to the motion.

**The Chair:** Okay. I'll call the question. I need unanimous consent to withdraw the amendment. All those in favour, please say aye. All those opposed, please say no. Okay. That is withdrawn.

We're back on the motion as amended.

**Ms McPherson:** Can I reread what the original one was? Give me a minute. Okay. I'm going to reread it, and then we'll talk about it. How's that? "That the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future recommend to the government that they continue to seek out new and larger markets for the agrifood sector by leveraging our international reputation, that could be further enhanced by made-in-Alberta branding."

With that in mind, the "Canada's international reputation" makes sense. We could possibly either just end it right there, or we could add back in "that could be further enhanced by made-in-Alberta branding."

**Mr. Orr:** Yeah. I think we should do that now.

**Ms McPherson:** The second?

**Mr. Orr:** That's what she started out with, in my opinion.

**Ms McPherson:** Yeah.

**Mr. Orr:** I totally agree.

**The Chair:** There are some difficulties in relation to this just because we've already amended the wording in that portion. We would have to rescind the motion and then bring forward a new motion.

8:45

**Mr. Koenig:** There may be a few different options in terms of changing the wording of the motion. Now that you're back on discussion of the main motion, you can withdraw the motion as it is and then move a new motion, if that works, or if there are other amendments that you can make that don't necessarily reverse or contradict amendments that have already been agreed to by the committee, you can also proceed in that manner. It's, you know, up to the committee, though, how it wishes to deal with this.

**Mr. van Dijken:** I think what we're trying to get to is a position where – the word "enhance" is not necessarily the proper word, so I would make an amendment to strike the word "enhance" and replace it with "promote."

**Ms McPherson:** I think that's in the spirit of the original motion. I think that makes a lot of sense.

**The Chair:** Okay. That should be in order here. Mr. van Dijken is moving a motion to . . .

**Mr. van Dijken:** I move an amendment to strike the word "enhance" and replace it with the word "promote."

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

**Mr. Gotfried:** I'm a little confused because the wording doesn't really sit well with me. I think the word "enhance," that was used originally – what we're really doing here is trying to enhance a perception of made-in-Alberta products.

**Ms McPherson:** What we're doing is looking for a market share of the products, and I think promoting is an effective way to do that. I like the word.

**Mr. Dach:** You say "to promote" . . .

**The Chair:** Through the chair, please.  
Any other members wishing to speak?

**Mr. Gotfried:** I'm not sure that that promotes – "Leveraging Canada's international reputation to promote": that makes some sense to me. I think I even have agreement.

**The Chair:** To include "to promote," we'll need to make a subamendment to add the word "to" before "promote."

Mr. Koenig.

**Mr. Koenig:** Thank you. I think maybe I would suggest for the committee that the easiest way to address some of these wordsmithing issues – it gets quite complicated once you start making subamendments. You also have to be careful because you can't completely change the intent of an amendment that's already been brought forward. You can't negative an intent. So these questions start to get very complicated very quickly.

What may be worth while here, if I might suggest, is that the amendment as it stands right now could be withdrawn, and a new amendment could be put forward. Or if there is still quite a bit of wordsmithing required on the original motion, it could also be withdrawn with the consent of the committee, and then rather than moving a motion immediately after, you could put something on the floor for discussion, and it would make the revision process a bit more straightforward. That might be a way forward if there is a desire from the committee to continue to change the wording of this.

**Ms McPherson:** I am happy to withdraw the motion.

**Mr. Orr:** But let's save the language.

**Ms McPherson:** Yes.

**The Chair:** We have to deal with the first amendment that's on the table here.

Mr. van Dijken, do you wish to withdraw that one?

**Mr. van Dijken:** So we're starting from square one is what you're saying? Sure, I can withdraw the amendment.

**The Chair:** Okay. I need unanimous consent of the committee to withdraw the amendment. All those in favour, please say aye. All those opposed, please say no. That amendment is withdrawn.

We're back on the motion as amended.

**Mr. Gotfried:** We should probably come up with the right wording. "To promote" I thought worked, but . . .

**The Chair:** Sorry, I'm going to pull back for a quick second here. Member McPherson, you're looking to withdraw the motion? Then we can go back to wordsmithing.

**Ms McPherson:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Okay. Member McPherson moves to withdraw the motion as amended. All those in favour, please say aye. All those opposed, please say no. That motion is withdrawn.

**Mr. Koenig:** Mr. Chair, if I can suggest that maybe this wording be left on the screen for the benefit of all the members. Until this is moved, the changes can be thrown on the floor, and it can be revised as necessary.

**Ms McPherson:** Can I suggest a wording?

**The Chair:** Yeah. Go ahead, Member McPherson.

**Ms McPherson:** Okay. I'm going to go slowly and carefully. Sorry to be taking a minute. I just want to be clear. I move that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future recommend to the government that they continue to seek out new and larger markets for the agrifood sector by leveraging Canada's international reputation that could promote made-in-Alberta products.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Can I make just a very minor friendly amendment that I don't think changes anything? Instead of "that could promote," say "in promotion of." So "leveraging Canada's international reputation in promotion of made-in-Alberta products."

**Ms McPherson:** Okay. All right. I'm so tired; it just looks like alphabet soup now.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Just another comment here. I'm quite happy to leave this for a complete other discussion. The one thing we're missing in this statement here is – we're seeking out new and larger markets, but we're forgetting about growing existing markets. I guess my comment here, because I don't know if this is etched in stone yet, is that AEF recommend that the government continue to grow existing markets while seeking out new and larger markets. I'm not going to die on this hill. I'm just saying that we're missing it. It's not going to hurt this to not have it. It's just that that's the same sort of thought process, that we want to grow and we want to seek new.

**Ms McPherson:** Okay.

**The Chair:** Any other discussion on the matter at hand?

**Connolly:** Maria brought up that it's supposed to be "in the promotion of," and I think she's right grammatically.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Is it? I think probably either way is fine.

**Mr. van Dijken:** I guess I'm struggling now over the word "larger." Grow existing markets and seek out new markets for the agrifood sector by leveraging Canada's international reputation. I'm not certain that we need the words "and larger" markets in there.

**The Chair:** So strike out "and larger"?

**Mr. van Dijken:** Yeah. That's correct.

**The Chair:** Any other comments on the matter at hand?  
Member McPherson, were you wanting to move a motion?

8:55

**Ms McPherson:** I would love to move this motion.

**The Chair:** Okay. I'll open it up for discussion.

**Mr. van Dijken:** I'm just wanting to respect Mr. Dach's wording with regard to "aggressively." I don't know if that's a concern for you at this point in time or if you're fine with the wording of the current motion.

**Mr. Dach:** I'd prefer to have it in there, but I'm going with the committee's majority.

**The Chair:** Because we had moved this, we'd have to amend the motion.

All right. Mr. Dach is moving an amendment.

**Mr. Dach:** I'm moving to add the word "aggressively." Yes.

**The Chair:** All right. Mr. Dach, I just want to confirm that this is what you want to do: remove "continue to."

**Mr. Dach:** The word "aggressively" should be coming after the words "seek out."

**The Chair:** Before the words "seek out."

**Mr. Dach:** Yeah. Before.

**The Chair:** Okay. We're on discussion of the amendment. Are there any other members wishing to discuss the amendment at hand?

Seeing none, I will call the question on the amendment. All those in favour, please say aye. All those opposed, please say no. That amendment is carried.

Mr. Piquette.

**Mr. Piquette:** Considering the lateness of the hour and the amount of hard work we've done today and the fact that we might have a follow-up meeting, I move that we adjourn this meeting.

**The Chair:** There's been a motion to adjourn. All those in favour, please say aye. All those opposed, please say no. That motion is defeated.

We're back on the main motion as amended. Any other discussion on this?

**An Hon. Member:** Call the question.

**The Chair:** I'll call the question on the motion as amended. All those in favour, please say aye. All those opposed, please say no. That motion is carried.

Considering the lateness of the evening, I will seek a member to call a motion to adjourn. Moved by Mr. Piquette that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future be adjourned. All those in favour, please say aye. All those opposed, please say no. All right. We are now adjourned.

The next meeting date is tomorrow, March 15, 2017, at 6:30 p.m.

[The committee adjourned at 8:59 p.m.]





