

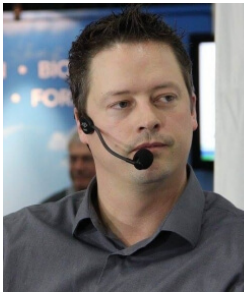
The AgCoalition in Review

An Update from the Alberta Agriculture Farm and Ranch Safety Coalition

This Update: What's Happening with the Government Consultation Tables

The AgCoalition and the Government Table Consultation Process

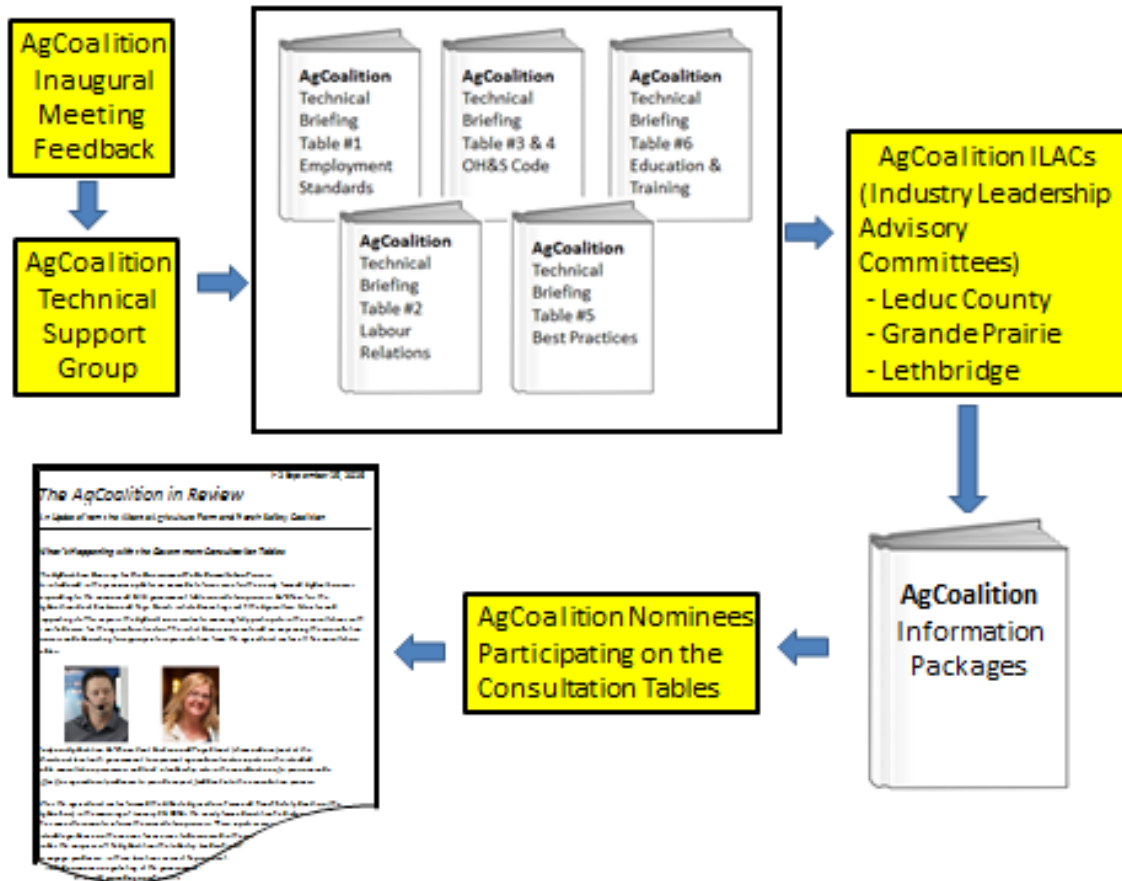
As introduced in the previous update, an immediate focus area for the newly formed AgCoalition was responding to the announced Bill 6 government table consultation process. The Co-Chairs for the AgCoalition, Kent Erickson and Page Stuart, initiated meetings with the Agriculture Minister and supporting staff to express the AgCoalition's resolve to meaningfully participate in the consultations with a unified voice for the agricultural sector. The initial discussions centered on improving the consultation process and advocating for appropriate representation from the agricultural sector at the consultation tables.



Early on, AgCoalition Co-Chairs Kent Erickson and Page Stuart (shown above left to right) met at the Ministerial level with government to represent agricultural sector inputs on the intended table consultation processes, and took a leadership role in the coordination of a province wide effort for agricultural producers to provide expert feedback into the consultation process.

The Alberta Agriculture Farm and Ranch Safety Coalition in Action

After the agricultural sector formed the Alberta Agriculture Farm and Ranch Safety Coalition (the AgCoalition) in the morning of January 22, 2016, the newly formed coalition had intensive sessions on the same afternoon to inform the consultation process. These inputs were summarized and provided valuable guidance on the various focus areas to be covered in the consultation process. Additionally, under the auspices of the AgCoalition, the Industry Leadership Advisory Committee (ILAC) was formed to engage producers in three locations across the province to provide additional guidance. This provided AgCoalition nominees, negotiating at the government consultation tables on behalf of the agricultural industry, with a solid grounding on where the industry was positioned on various topics.



As shown above, the AgCoalition Technical Support Group compiled feedback from the inaugural AgCoalition meeting of producers into Technical Briefings, that were in turn used by the ILAC sessions to produce Information Packages that went on to the AgCoalition nominees. As the concluding government consultation table results become available, they will be communicated to the wider AgCoalition producer membership in updates similar to this one.

The ILAC meetings were held in Lethbridge on June 22nd, Leduc County on June 27th, and Grand Prairie on June 30th, taking advantage of Alberta’s regional diversity to get a representative sample of Alberta’s farmers and ranchers, and allowing all interested parties to have a voice in the process. Ward Toma from the AgCoalition Strategy Committee led the organization effort for these sessions. All told, the ILAC meetings saw participation from over 110 individual farmers and ranchers, who set aside time in their very busy schedules to come and share their thoughts on these very important matters.

“This legislation will have its greatest affect on farmers, ranchers and their employees,” said Page Stuart, AgCoalition Co-Chair. “Our intent is to ensure that this community has an opportunity to be part of the process and support our industry’s representation at the consultation tables.”

The ILAC sessions then provided an effective mechanism for feedback from a large and diverse sector through this widespread participation. “We looked forward to working together as a sector to develop

key positions to ensure our consultation nominees are fully equipped to represent their industry,” said Kent Erickson, AgCoalition Co-Chair.

AgCoalition Participation at the Consultation Tables

After the government invited submissions for nominees to participate in the table consultation process, the AgCoalition coordinated a process to identify nominees that were part of the agricultural sector producer organizations. As stated earlier, these nominees were in turn supported by the AgCoalition with representative sector information and expert inputs as required. While the number of nominees from the AgCoalition was lower than desired, the tables also included some other producer membership and organizations supportive of sector principles and practical positions that make sense at the farm and ranch level.

Consultation Table #	Focus Area	AgCoalition Nominees
1	Employment Standards	5
2	Labour Relations	5
3	OH&S Codes 1	2
4	OH&S Codes 2	5
5	Best Practices	2
6	Education & Training	4

AgCoalition nominees number 23 in total out of a possible 72 participants (12 per table), or approximately 32% of the total, while representing more than 97% of the industry.

Recognizing the Contribution of AgCoalition Nominees

The value that the AgCoalition nominees bring to the consultation process is significant. Kent Erickson, Co-Chair for the coalition, highlighted that “the nominees provide expert background and information to the other table participants on how the agricultural industry works, and demonstrate that various positions taken must be modified to be effective and practical at the farm and ranch level.”

In addition Page Stuart, Co-Chair for the coalition, joined with others in expressing appreciation for the contributions of AgCoalition nominees to the consultation process. She commented that “the Alberta Agriculture Farm and Ranch Safety Coalition nominees are really doing a good job to represent the interests of our fine industry. Our nominees have taken considerable personal time and effort to participate in this hard work.”

Consultation Table Outcomes and Expectations

The agricultural industry is certainly challenged by some of the initial positions taken on various topics in the consultation process. When it is clear that consensus will not be reached in areas of significance, this is noted and the associated issues become a matter of record. When table sessions conclude, it is expected that these areas of difference will be published and in turn given serious consideration in terms of guiding future strategies for application in agriculture.

Next Update: The Labour Relations Consultation Table Reports Back