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HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

John Nater

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April 15, 2016

The Honourable Lawrence MacAulay
Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON N1A 0A6

Dear Minister:

I had the pleasure to attend the Perth County Federation of Agriculture (PCFA) MP/MPP Spring forum on April 1, 2016 in Stratford, Ontario. I heard from a variety of agricultural stakeholders and commodity groups in my riding of Perth—Wellington. Topics included rural infrastructure, energy, cap and trade, biosecurity and business risk management. I wanted to bring to you attention their key concerns.

Many of the agricultural producers in attendance wanted to reiterate that all future agricultural programming must be properly funded. Growing Forward 2 will expire in 2018 and all agricultural groups must be meaningfully consulted as we work together to ensure the industry remains strong for generations to come.

There remains concern over with the delay in ratification and implementation of both Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA). These two trade deals represent billions of dollars in exports for our agricultural producers and they should be ratified as soon as possible.

A concern that was raised by the Dairy Farmers was the lack of commitment to the previously-committed TPP compensation package. The Federal Budget does not mention this pledge. The dairy industry is particularly eager to see the funding for processing capacity delivered immediately to allow for certainty in the industry and for investment to be made. This funding could be de-linked from the \$4.3 billion compensation package to allow processors and producers to begin to make necessary upgrades. This would allow our dairy industry to remain competitive in the global economy.

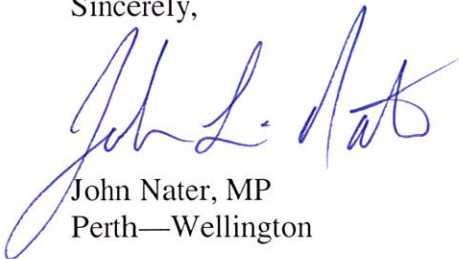
Forum participants voiced their concern over the lack of federal support when it comes to dispelling misinformation in the general public and in the business community. There were concerns over General Mills' most recent *Bring Back the Bees* campaign which erroneously argues that the bee population is decreasing in Canada. According to Statistic Canada, there are over 700,000 bee colonies in Canada, a 25,000 increase from 2014. There was also concern over A&W's misleading *Better Beef* campaign, which is similar to General Mills in that it spreads misinformation about Canadian producers.

It is vital that the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food not follow the lead of its provincial counter-parts in Ontario in relation to neonicotinoid treated seeds. Since July 1, 2015 the Ontario government has had in place an unnecessary and costly ban on neonicotinoid treated seed. The farmers in my riding are concerned that the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food will begin to ignore scientific evidence when making policy decisions. It is important that all decisions are based on scientific evidence and not special interest group lobbying.

Farmers need to move their product to market. A concern raised at the PCFA MP/MPP Spring forum was that there was no new funding announced in the Federal Budget for roads and bridges in rural Ontario. At the provincial level in Ontario, lower-tier municipalities have constantly seen funding formulas disproportionately benefit large urban centres. I agree that transit is important in cities, but rural infrastructure needs are often overlooked. For farmers to be able to get their goods to market, rural infrastructure must be upgraded. I would encourage you to work to ensure that rural municipalities benefit from federal infrastructure funding.

Thank you for your attention to these key issues affecting agriculture in my riding and beyond. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Nater". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" and last name "Nater" clearly distinguishable.

John Nater, MP
Perth—Wellington

cc. PCFA
cc. MPP Randy Pettapiece
cc. Municipalities in Perth—Wellington