

Building Trust and Collaboration in Agriculture Locally and Nationally

SPG Staff

Food production in Saskatchewan does not just have a story, as the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture said as part of its 2019 agriculture month promotions this October. Food production in this province has a history. Since its inception Farm & Food Care Saskatchewan (FFCSK) has worked to provide growers and ranchers with the tools they need to talk about their livelihood confidently, and also to connect questioning consumers with opportunities to understand agriculture better.

“When I talk to farmers and ranchers they feel like they should do a better job of speaking up about their operations, but they just do not feel confident about doing so,” states Clinton Monchuk, Executive Director of FFCSK.

More and more in agriculture there appears to be a divide between producers and consumers. That is why public trust is important to foster, and to understand, says Monchuk. It is also one of the goals that FFCSK strives to achieve.

“We try to grow trusted contacts with those in the food production system,” says Monchuk. If a consumer question arises about certain food production practices, FFCSK can go back to their network of trusted contacts to ensure that those questions get answered. “This helps build a better understanding of food production in our province,” says Monchuk.

Public trust extends beyond producers and the public though. Monchuk mentions that organizations such as FFCSK are also working with policy-makers to help them better understand what goes into the production of food. This includes the tools growers use to help their crops reach maturity, how ranchers use the land, the benefits of crop rotations, and many other things.

“We know that the population often has questions about why agriculture is allowed to use products like glyphosate or genetically modified crops,” states Monchuk. “These are concerns we hear often, but they have science behind them, are backed by analysis, and have the approval of government like the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Health Canada.”

“Our goal is to work with policy-makers and consumers closely so they understand why growers and ranchers are using these tools.” The overall outcome from this would hopefully see policy and law makers protecting production tools instead of removing access to them.

This year FFCSK has partnered with the Canadian Centre for Food Integrity to host the 2019 Public Trust Summit in Saskatoon. The conference will tackle ways in which the agriculture community as a whole can increase the trust of Canadians with food and farming.

“This conference has a strong emphasis on collaboration,” says Monchuk, giving nod to keynote speaker Dr. Dave Williams, astronaut and author that will be speaking on transparency, trust and collaboration. Dr. Evan Fraser with the Arrell Food Institute at the University of Guelph will discuss elevating Canada’s place within the global economy.

On the second day conference attendees will participate in a workshop, using the skills they have picked up from day one. “We are interested in putting insights to action, says Monchuk.

The Public Trust Summit is looking for producers, members from industry, and students to attend this event, [so register yourself now](#).

Saskatchewan Pulse Growers is a partner of the 2019 Public Trust Summit.

