

Ever considered becoming a crop committee delegate?

By Alison Inglis

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Have you considered becoming a delegate on one of Manitoba Crop Alliance's (MCA) crop committees or a member of the board of directors, but don't know much about these roles or where the process begins?

Crop committee delegates are essential to how MCA operates. There are four crop committees — corn, wheat and barley, flax, and sunflower — which work to support the research, agronomy, market development and access, and

communication and advocacy initiatives of the organization. A key responsibility of the crop committees is to elect delegates from the respective committees to sit on the board of directors.

Delegates are nominated and elected every two years. This fall, MCA will open up nominations and begin the process of electing eligible members to serve as delegates on the four crop committees. Of course, serving for any organization requires a time commitment, but there are also numerous benefits producers will take away from their time serving on a crop committee or the board of directors.



Josée Saquet

Josée joined the wheat and barley committee in January 2021 and this is her first time in this type of role. She wanted to be active in the agriculture industry and gain a better understanding of how check-off dollars are put to work.

Why did you want to be nominated for a delegate position on the wheat and barley committee?

As a grower, I think it is important to understand and see how our check-off dollars are spent. It's important to know what projects are being funded, who the funding partners of MCA are and how they interact together. This helps us see how these will affect growers down the line. Joining MCA is also a way for me to represent growers in having a voice within the industry.

MCA crop committee delegates focus on crop-specific issues, including research, agronomy, communication initiatives, and market access and development. They are responsible for developing research recommendations for board approval, as well as reviewing crop-specific projects and monitoring research results. They also gather grassroots feedback about member needs and provide it to the board.



Korey Peters

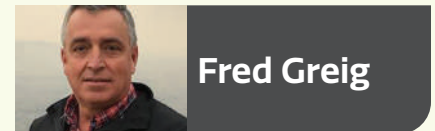
Korey has been on the sunflower committee since January 2021 and this is his first board position in the agriculture world. Korey joined MCA to get more involved in the industry, learn more about policy decisions and grow his ag network.

How would you explain the role of an MCA crop committee delegate?

It's an opportunity to have a say in what your check-off dollars do when it comes to research on a certain crop in Manitoba — designed specifically for farms in Manitoba and our field conditions and climate.

In addition to focusing on research, delegates also have the opportunity to represent MCA on external organizations and their working committees, such as:

- Cereals Canada
- Grain Growers of Canada
- Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP)
- Manitoba Corn Committee
- Prairie Grain Development Committee — various Recommending Committees



Fred Greig

Fred was a director with the Manitoba Wheat and Barley Growers Association, and has been a director with MCA since the amalgamation in 2020. Fred has also had the privilege of serving on the boards of the Manitoba Pulse and Soybean Growers, Western Grains Research Foundation (WGRF), Sunrise Credit Union and Canterra Seeds.

How would you explain the role of a director?

MCA has an excellent structure set up that allows directors and delegates to do as much as they feel comfortable doing. Training and education opportunities are available to enable greater responsibilities. Research is our major focus, so your input into all things research will be required. You will also be kept abreast of the latest developments in ag policy and be asked for feedback.

MCA directors are appointed by MCA's crop committees and are accountable to all farmer members. Directors are responsible for the management and supervision of the activities and affairs of MCA, including board governance, strategic planning and long-term goals, financial and risk oversight, stakeholder relationships, research and market development oversight, policy and advocacy oversight, as well as quality and operational performance measurement.



Sally Parsonage

Sally has been a delegate on the sunflower committee since January 2021 and is a member of the Whole Farm Research committee. This is her first time serving on a commodity group committee. She grows several of the crops represented by MCA and wanted to be more immersed in the sunflower sector. She had been looking for a way to contribute to the agriculture industry in Manitoba when the sunflower committee was suggested to her.

What have you learned so far?

I've enjoyed learning about the research side from the funder's perspective; seeing what projects researchers are contemplating, and discussing with other farmers what would be the most useful/interesting use of the funds we all contribute. It's been rewarding to connect with more experienced sunflower growers from across the province, to learn about their practices and struggles, and learn more about what's coming for this commodity.



Hubert Preun

Since January 2021, Hubert has been a delegate on the corn committee. He has been involved with KAP for 15 years, and before that was involved with the Manitoba Pork Council. He has enjoyed learning a lot about the research side of things and all that goes into being a delegate.

What is one takeaway you've learned that you didn't realize before becoming a corn committee delegate?

Being part of MCA is a big responsibility because we are dealing with a lot of money that needs to be dealt with properly. I think it is our duty as farmers to be involved in organizations like this to make a difference in our industry. We as farmers must be involved to help push agriculture in the right direction.



Jonothan Hodson

Jonothan has been a director at MCA since its inception on Aug. 1, 2020. He has served on local boards, as well as the Manitoba Angus Association. Prior to the amalgamation, Jonothan was a director with the Manitoba Corn Growers Association and was a supporter of putting more crops under one organizational umbrella.

What have you enjoyed the most about being a director?

Without a doubt it's the people I've met and the ideas and thoughts they bring to the table, whether that's a fellow director or a staff member.

Becoming a director will provide personal growth opportunities, including networking with fellow farmers, researchers, and industry stakeholders and leaders, as well as gaining in-depth understanding of the crop industries MCA represents. Directors also have the opportunity to represent MCA to external partner organizations such as:

- Cereals Canada
- Barley Council of Canada
- Flax Council of Canada
- Grain Growers of Canada
- KAP Advisory Council
- WGRF
- Canadian Wheat Research Coalition
- Canadian Barley Research Coalition



Sheila Elder

Sheila joined the wheat and barley committee a little over a year ago, having no previous experience in a similar role. After completing two levels of agronomy through distance learning with Olds College, Sheila and her husband saw this as a great learning opportunity for her as she becomes more involved with their farm.

What have you enjoyed the most about being on the wheat and barley committee?

Two things: 1) The sense of feeling welcome and included, and 2) The learning. I love to learn and the group is so willing to answer questions and find resources if I ask. They seem to understand (at least I hope they do!) that I am genuinely interested in learning.




Dean Buchanan

Dean was elected to the flax committee last year and has served on other boards over the years. Dean has enjoyed finding out about the different research projects MCA undertakes and funds, and meeting the other members.

Would you encourage other farmer members to get involved and consider becoming a delegate on a crop committee?

I would recommend anyone who has an interest in all crops or a certain crop should get involved and consider becoming a delegate, it's been a good experience so far. You get to meet a number of new and diverse people and you can help focus the way the different crops that MCA represents are researched and promoted.

Becoming a delegate with MCA will provide personal growth opportunities, such as networking with fellow farmers, researchers, and industry stakeholders and leaders, the chance to gain an in-depth understanding of the crop industries MCA represents, and the ability to attend educational and leadership-building workshops



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33.44%

and seminars. Participation on the crop committees will also provide development opportunities for a potential future role on the board of directors.



Fred Greig

Would you encourage others to get involved and consider becoming a director?

I can't say enough good things about my time as a director and delegate with MCA. I would absolutely encourage anyone to become a director. It is an excellent opportunity to expand your skillset and knowledge while giving back to this amazing industry and farmers.

For more information on the roles and responsibilities of MCA crop committee delegates and the board of directors, please visit mbcropalliance.ca/about/board-and-crop-committees

MCA will share information on the upcoming nomination and election period in the coming months, so stay tuned!

MCA offers interest-free/low-interest cash advances for farmers

Manitoba Crop Alliance (MCA) is now issuing cash advances for the 2022 crop year through the Advance Payments Program (APP).

The APP is a federal loan program administered by MCA on behalf of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC). It offers Canadian farmers marketing flexibility through interest-free and low-interest cash advances, allowing them to sell their agricultural products based on market conditions rather than the need for cash flow.

"The APP is a valuable resource for farmers across Manitoba," says Pam de Rocquigny, CEO of MCA. "We are proud to provide personalized, friendly, small-town service to all our APP clients to make their experience with the program as smooth as possible."

MCA provides cash advances on over 35 different crop kinds, including cereals, grain corn, oilseed crops, pulses, specialty crops, hay and grasses, and honey. Farmers can access up to \$1 million per program year in advances based on the value of their agricultural product.

AAFC pays the interest on the first \$100,000 advanced to a producer. For interest-bearing cash advances, MCA's interest rate is competitive with major banks and credit unions.

For the 2022 Spring Cash Advance program, AAFC has temporarily waived the requirement for production advances to be issued in two installments, 60 per cent upfront and 40 per cent after seeding is confirmed. For this program year, producers can receive 100 per cent of their 2022 advance immediately when they apply.

"As an APP administrator for more than 40 years, MCA is committed to offering the exceptional level of service our clients have come to expect," says de Rocquigny. "This commitment is fully defined in our APP Service Standards, which are available on our website."

MCA's staff will continue to work closely with partners at AAFC to deliver the APP and provide administrative options to serve Manitoba farmers. For more information about the APP – including 2022 application forms, rates and fees, and important dates and deadlines – visit mbcropalliance.ca.

ADVANCE PAYMENTS PROGRAM

SERVICE YOU DESERVE!
The Advance Payments Program is a federal program, administered by the Manitoba Crop Alliance. Now issuing advances for the 2022 program year.
204-745-6661