

March 21, 2022

Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Crops
PO Box 53163
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Ottawa, ON K1N 1C5

Re: SaskCanola feedback on Responsible Grain

Responsible Grain Code of Practice was widely supported when it was proposed as a vehicle to inform the public and international customers about the achievements of Canadian farmers in the area of sustainability. Farmers are proud of their industry and proud of the advancements they have made in providing food to a hungry world in a sustainable manner.

In the first draft farmers perceived a document that was too long, prescriptive and overreaching. They did not see the positive, affirming, outward looking code they were expecting. In early 2021, the negative response was very swift, and Twitter erupted with negative comments and much of the good will for the project soon evaporated.

SaskCanola supports the concept of a Code of Practice designed to achieve its original goal: to showcase the environmentally sound practices that farmers have adopted over the years to grow the food that feeds the world. SaskCanola would be very concerned with a checklist of practices that farmers are required to follow at great individual farm expense without any clear benefit. Unfortunately, the last iteration has created an unfriendly atmosphere which has to be considered when designing the new approach. If problematic words and attitudes are not eliminated in the new draft, it is a much shorter distance to disapproval this time than last time.

In certain geographical areas the inclusion of Ducks Unlimited will doom any industry initiative from the outset. The terms 'Code of Practice,' and 'Responsible Grain' may have become tainted to the point where they can no longer be used. A new draft Code needs to be a positive document which touts the achievements of farmers could be retooled to be the resource needed in conversations with consumers and international customers.

In short, SaskCanola recognizes a need for a code of practice, but it must be something that Saskatchewan farmers can get behind and be proud of. For it to be successful it needs to be positive, short, concise, and have widespread support from farmers, something like *The Real Dirt on Farming* published by Farm and Food Care.



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We are all interested in the industry progressing to meet agriculture's future needs, as well as the needs of the environment but we need to see a road map to success. If there is consensus to proceed with a new draft, SaskCanola recommends a written strategy be developed to ensure that the final document would receive widespread support from farmers.