THE SIMPSON CENTRE.

THOUGHT FOR FOOD.

POLICY **TRENDS**

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KEY MESSAGE

Alberta farmers want economic enablers first: Frictionless market access, reliable transport, and tax relief; tailored by farm size to drive business competitiveness.

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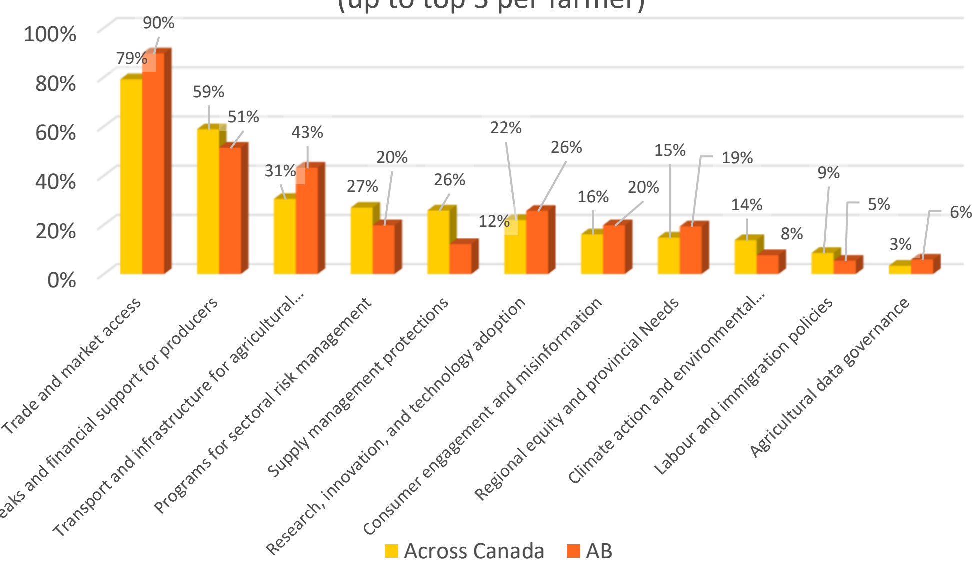
2025 AB FARMER SURVEY: POLICY PRIORITIES

Alberta holds about 32% of Canada's total farm area, and agriculture contributed about $10.3 billion to GDP in 2023 and employed roughly 83,000 people across farming and processing.

Yet, producers consistently report that agricultural issues are overlooked. To portray Alberta farmers' priorities, the Simpson Centre surveyed 222 Alberta farmers (within a national sample of 979) as part of the "Voices from the Field" project. The findings seek to amplify Alberta producers' perspectives for lawmakers, advocacy organizations, and the public.

As per **Figure 1**, Trade and market access is the top priority, selected by 90% of Alberta respondents versus 79% nationally, reflecting the province's export-driven production base. Transport and infrastructure for agricultural goods is next at 43% (vs. 31% nationally), underscoring the need for reliable rail and road corridors across vast geographies. Tax breaks and financial support for producers (51%) remain crucial as they directly impact input costs and tax margins. Notably, Alberta producers show above-average interest in consumer engagement and misinformation (20%) and in research, innovation, and technology adoption (26%), indicating both reputational concerns and a desire for productivity-enhancing tools. By contrast, climate action and environmental sustainability (8%) and labour and immigration policies (5%) are lower priorities relative to other provinces.

Figure 1: Policy Preferences
(up to top 3 per farmer)



Priorities also shift with scale (refer to **Table 1** in the Appendix). Trade remains the top concern across all income groups (peaking at 100% among $100,000–$249,999 farms and still 82% for $2 million+). Tax relief is a near-universal second-major need, especially for mid-sized (62%) and small farms (50%). Transport infrastructure need intensifies for mid-income operations (50% at $500,000–$999,999; 45% at $250,000–$499,999). Smaller farms are most supportive of supply management (33%), while interest in research and technology climbs among $1–$1.99 million (40%) and $2 million+ (29%) operations. Climate priorities remain below 15% in every bracket, near zero for the smallest farms, suggesting incentive-led, outcomes-oriented approaches (e.g., ecosystem-services payments) will resonate better than punitive models.

Next Steps: Alberta farmers would prefer policies involving economic enablers: trade facilitation, export diversification, targeted infrastructure development, and tax relief (e.g., carbon exemptions, capital cost allowances).

Support should be tailored by farm income levels: large farms (>$1M) prefer trade liberalization, digital adoption, logistical modernization, and innovation supports; mid-sized operations need financial relief, sectoral risk management, and lower transport costs; lower-income producers benefit from supply-management protections, regional equity, and local processing and logistics.

Federal-provincial collaboration that centers these priorities and segments supports accordingly will maximize uptake and avoid alienating Alberta's agri-food sector.

EDITORIAL PRACTICES STATEMENT

This manuscript is a rapid contribution to the policy conversation that has been open-reviewed by at least one University of Calgary faculty member prior to publication.

APPENDIX

Policy Priorities/ Income Range	$2 million and over	$1 to $1.99 million	$0.5 to $0.99 million	$0.25 to $0.49 million	$0.1 to $0.249 million	Less than $100,000	Prefer Not to Answer
Climate Action and Environmental Sustainability	4%	5%	14%	13%	8%	0%	0%
Trade and Market Access	82%	95%	84%	97%	100%	83%	94%
Supply Management Protections	20%	5%	10%	13%	15%	33%	6%
Tax-breaks and Financial Support for Producers	57%	47%	42%	52%	62%	50%	69%
Labour and Immigration Policies	10%	4%	2%	10%	8%	0%	0%
Research, Innovation, and Technology Adoption	29%	40%	20%	19%	15%	0%	13%
Programs for Sectoral Risk Management	20%	15%	26%	23%	8%	17%	25%
Transport and Infrastructure for Agricultural Goods	33%	42%	50%	45%	46%	67%	44%
Consumer Engagement and Misinformation	24%	20%	18%	19%	0%	17%	31%
Regional Equity and Provincial Needs	14%	25%	22%	6%	31%	33%	19%
Agricultural Data Governance	8%	2%	12%	3%	8%	0%	0%