

**THE HONOURABLE WALLY SCHUMANN
MINISTER OF INDUSTRY, TOURISM
AND INVESTMENT**

NO.: 24-18(3)

DATE: February 13, 2018

Canada's Agriculture Day in the Northwest Territories

Mr. Speaker, our government has committed in the mandate to diversifying the economy to create greater opportunities for our residents. Our investment in the agriculture sector is part of this important work and we continue to make progress on this commitment.

Mr. Speaker today is Canada's Agriculture Day. It is a day established to increase awareness for, and encourage, the relationship between food consumers and food producers; a relationship that we, as a government, are growing in our territory in support of our mandates to increase economic development and diversification and stabilize the cost of living in our communities.

For the first time, this year, we are joining Canadian farmers, harvesters and growers, and all those who enjoy their products, in marking this day.

It is a milestone that also highlights our transition to a more commercially-focused agriculture sector. With the new fiscal year, we will open a new chapter in our economy as we invest new money in the implementation of our Agriculture Strategy, and its goal to advance the business of food in the NWT.

Meanwhile, we are also finalizing our participation in the new Canadian Agriculture Partnership, which will build on the Growing Forward Programs that preceded it, to

sustain an annual investment of \$1.2 million in the regional and community agriculture activities that have got us to where we are today.

While our first areas of strategy implementation must be in the processes and regulatory frameworks that will guide and protect our commercial food sector, the Canadian Agriculture Partnership will allow us to continue to support local agriculture training programs, courses and workshops in areas such as greenhouse operations, new food growing techniques, food preservation, composting and harvesting.

Mr. Speaker, while the seeds of a commercial agriculture sector in the NWT have been planted, its growth and success will depend on NWT growers and producers getting involved and embracing the potential that we have. I am happy to advise, Mr. Speaker, that they are doing just that, and more.

Our territory boasts commercial agricultural operations that range from egg and honey production to hydroponics and vegetables, and a wide range of small and larger livestock. We have businesses that supply producers with seeds, local compost, feed and other inputs. Every region has one or more commercial agricultural operations. People can shop for fresh produce at farmers markets in Inuvik, Norman Wells, Yellowknife, Hay River, Fort Smith and Fort Simpson.

After taking root in the NWT's first ever commercial food producers' conference in Hay River last year, a new organization is being formalized to represent the interests of NWT growers and producers.

Mr. Speaker as we celebrate Canada's Agriculture Day, it is my pleasure to salute the hardworking individuals in our territory who are dedicated to growing fresh, nutritious food across the Northwest Territories. Our local food producers are not

only leaders within their communities; they are forging a new economic path for our territory.

We have made great strides in the advancement of our agriculture sector and will continue our investment and support for the growers, initiative and commercial entities that will help us realize the viability and potential of this important sector.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.