



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri- Food

AGRI • NUMBER 097 • 1st SESSION • 42nd PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Monday, April 23, 2018

—
Chair

Mr. Pat Finnigan

Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food

Monday, April 23, 2018

• (1530)

[Translation]

The Chair (Mr. Pat Finnigan (Miramichi—Grand Lake, Lib.)): Welcome, everyone.

[English]

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), we will continue our study of climate change and water and soil.

[Translation]

Before we proceed with committee business, is there anything you would like to discuss during the public portion of the meeting?

Mr. Breton, please go ahead.

Mr. Pierre Breton (Shefford, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Hello, everyone.

Dear colleagues, we have already discussed the notice of motion regarding the mental health of farmers, which was tabled a number of weeks ago. My colleagues in the NDP and the Conservative Party thought a study on that topic was a good idea. Today, I am pleased to officially table the motion.

May I read it out, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Yes, go ahead.

Mr. Pierre Breton: Very well.

The motion is as follows:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food undertake a study on the mental health challenges that our farmers, ranchers, and producers face; that this study meet with farmers, ranchers, producers, and community health groups with the goal of understanding the issues they face, sharing best practices, reviewing currently available resources and identifying gaps related to mental health in the Canadian agriculture community and that the Committee report its finding to the House. The study would be undertaken over a period of a minimum of six meetings and start as soon as Wednesday, May 23, 2018.

The motion I am officially tabling today provides further details. I hope we can all agree to discuss this challenge affecting our agricultural producers.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Breton.

You have all heard the motion. Do you wish to discuss it?

Mr. Berthold, you have the floor.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank my colleague very much for tabling this motion. I would point out that the motion, shared by the entire group, is further to a motion tabled by my colleague, Mr. Earl Dreeshen. He was very concerned by the situation farmers are in now. The agriculture community is regularly shocked by crises, but they often go unnoticed by most Canadians. In the cities, little is said about the human impact of these crises. Consider for instance the recent crisis in the railway industry that created a lot of uncertainty for farmers and producers who did not know if they could afford to start their new season. These situations are truly critical for certain farms.

That crisis is just one example. Nor can we forget the effects of climate change, the impact of a bad crop, or the damage to crops that certain insects cause. In short, there are many factors that can impact the daily lives of farmers in Canada.

This is a mental health issue. Let us not mince words: the suicide rate among farmers is much higher than the general public might think. It is important for parliamentarians to examine this situation. Although we might prefer not to talk about cases of suicide, we have to open the door to dialogue and talk about the factors that lead people to suicide. We have to talk about it to shed some light and see how we can help our farmers deal with this situation.

I think all MPs who live in rural regions have heard about the difficult situations that farming families face. That is why it is very important for me to point out that we in the opposition are in favour of this study. In fact, we strongly encourage it.

I would like to commend the government for its openness to conducting this study on mental health. Once again, I commend my colleague's initiative, which immediately struck a chord on the other side of the table. It should be noted that the sole purpose of this study is to find ways of helping farmers and producers deal with this difficult situation. If we can help even a single person through our work, it will have been worthwhile. We will have met an important goal.

You will have gathered from my comments that I support this study.

• (1535)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Berthold.

Are there any other comments?

Since there are none, we will proceed with the vote.

(The motion agreed to)

[Proceedings continue in camera]

The Chair: We will now proceed with committee business. We will suspend and then resume in camera.

Published under the authority of the Speaker of
the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Also available on the House of Commons website at the following address: <http://www.ourcommons.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité
du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante : <http://www.noscommunes.ca>