



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri- Food

AGRI • NUMBER 125 • 1st SESSION • 42nd PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Tuesday, January 29, 2019

—
Chair

Mr. Pat Finnigan

Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food

Tuesday, January 29, 2019

• (1105)

[Translation]

The Chair (Mr. Pat Finnigan (Miramichi—Grand Lake, Lib.)): Good morning, everyone. Welcome to the beginning of this session.

[English]

I want to wish everyone a happy new year. Hopefully you had some time to recharge your batteries and have some time with your family.

Today is going to be our final meeting on mental health challenges. Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the committee on Monday, April 23, 2018, the committee is resuming its study of the mental health challenges that Canadian farmers, ranchers and producers face.

I would like to welcome Ms. Shanahan, who is replacing Mr. Peschisolido.

With us today we have from 4-H Canada, Erin Smith, interim chief executive officer and director of programs; and Elizabeth Jarvis.

Thank you for being here.

From Farm Credit Canada, by video, we have Michael Hoffort, president and chief executive officer.

Can you hear me, Mr. Hoffort?

Mr. Michael Hoffort (President and Chief Executive Officer, Farm Credit Canada): I can. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you for being here.

Also, by teleconference, from Farm Management Canada, we have Heather Watson, executive director.

Can you hear us, Ms. Watson?

Ms. Heather Watson (Executive Director, Farm Management Canada): I sure can. Good morning, everyone.

The Chair: Good morning. Thank you for being there.

We shall start with the opening statements of six minutes each.

If you want to lead the way, Ms. Smith, go ahead, please.

Ms. Erin Smith (Interim Chief Executive Officer and Director of Programs, 4-H Canada): Good morning, and thank you to the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food for welcoming

us here today to participate in the study on mental health in the agriculture sector.

My name is Erin Smith. I'm the interim CEO of 4-H Canada, as well as the director of national programs.

4-H Canada has over 100 years of history in the agricultural sector, bridging generations and building deep community roots. Over that time, we have evolved. We are one of Canada's most respected positive youth development organizations, delivering relevant programming to more than 25,000 youth across Canada in the areas of agriculture, food security, science, technology, environmental sustainability, healthy living, communications and community engagement.

While 4-H has changed over the years, our agricultural ties have not, as 83% of our youth members across Canada live in rural and agricultural communities, with 51% of those living on farms. We know that these rural and agricultural youth, when compared to their urban peers, face additional risk factors and barriers.

It is estimated that one in five Canadian youth are affected by a mental illness or disorder and that suicide accounts for 24% of all deaths among 15- to 24-year-olds. This is the third-highest youth suicide rate in the industrialized world. Research also tells us that rural youth under the age of 20 are four to six times more likely to complete suicide than those living in urban areas.

While only one out of five Canadian children requiring mental health services receives them, for rural youth this is an even greater challenge, for three main reasons. One, there are fewer services available in their communities. Two, transportation and access to those services are often limited. Three, when services are available, rural youth may be less willing than urban youth to use them. This may possibly be due to concerns of confidentiality and anonymity in small communities.

In consultation, 4-H youth across Canada have identified mental health as one of their greatest challenges and have indicated the need for more support and resources in this area. In their own words, they say they are stressed out about being stressed out. They sometimes feel discouraged about talking about or experiencing their own stresses when compared to some of the adult stresses. They are not fully experienced to deal with the big things in life. Sometimes they will need someone to step in, support them or lead the way. They want to be listened to and respected, but they aren't adults yet and sometimes they need help.

Well, 4-H Canada is listening and responding to the needs of the youth members we serve.

We are incredibly proud of our newest partnership with Farm Credit Canada. The generous support of FCC will contribute to the launch of 4-H Canada's healthy living initiative, which focuses on supporting the mental and physical well-being of 4-H members across Canada. This investment and that of industry partners like UFA Co-operative Limited, Corteva Agriscience, the agriculture division of Dow, Dupont and Cargill, as well as Employment and Social Development Canada, will ensure that 4-H Canada is able to address the needs identified by our 4-H youth.

The healthy living initiative will roll out in three phases, each focusing on a different area of well-being. Phase one is already under way and focuses on mental health. It will provide 4-H leaders with the tools and supports they need to recognize youth mental health issues and connect young people to resources. Working with our strategic partner, Kids Help Phone, 4-H leaders will have greater capacity-building opportunities, and youth will have access to the education, tools and opportunities they need to develop strengths and navigate the challenges they face.

Phases two and three will be launched later this year and will focus on active living and nutritional health. We recognize that mental health has strong correlations to overall well-being and believe that taking a holistic approach will be incredibly beneficial to 4-H youth, as they develop the knowledge and skills to empower them in their pursuit of healthy living.

A 2006 study conducted in eastern Ontario by Armstrong and Manion confirms the importance of positive youth-adult partnerships, noting that youth engagement in extra-curricular activities is a protective factor against rural youth suicide. In rural areas, youth engagement can empower youth to build resilience, strengthen their sense of identity and purpose, and develop other skills that will serve them throughout their lives. These are all key developmental assets that the 4-H movement is based upon, contributing to overall well-being and helping youth build coping strategies that they need when facing mental health challenges.

• (1110)

Given that more than half of youth members surveyed by 4-H Canada indicate their desire to pursue careers in the agriculture sector, we can't afford not to invest meaningfully in the well-being and future of our rural youth. In this regard, we are gratified to see the recent creation of the new rural economic development department, and we congratulate Minister Jordan on her appointment.

We believe this represents a unique opportunity for the government to invest further in the future of rural youth by supporting organizations such as 4-H in continuing to deliver skill-building and career-focused programs. We look forward to working more with the agriculture industry, rural communities, the government and industry experts in child and youth mental health, as well as the 4-H movement across Canada. Together, we can help ensure that youth in rural communities have access to the caring adults, the programs and the resources they need to not only survive but thrive.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Smith.

You must have practised that, because you're right on six minutes. That's great.

Ms. Erin Smith: Oh, that's good. I have my fearless leader here, my co-pilot.

The Chair: It was a good job.

Now we have, with Farm Credit Canada, Michael Hoffort.

Mr. Michael Hoffort: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*Translation*]

Good morning, everyone.

[*English*]

It's a pleasure to be back before the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food on behalf of Farm Credit Canada. My name is Michael Hoffort. I'm the president and CEO of Farm Credit Canada or FCC as you may know us.

I last spoke to you in June when I outlined FCC's plans to address mental health challenges faced by Canadian farmers, ranchers and producers. Today I'm pleased to provide you with an update. I'm also honoured to be here with our partners from 4-H Canada and Farm Management Canada.

FCC supports the industry and its customers by being more than just a lender. Our deep commitment to agriculture means we care about the wellness of our customers. We make our customer support programs available following agricultural disasters like floods and droughts. The ag crisis fund has supported hundreds of customers dealing with unexpected difficult circumstances like a farm accident or a death in the family.

When it came to mental health, we knew that we could do more. We set out to support awareness and access to mental health resources for those in the agriculture industry. By collaborating with industry partners, FCC is helping to remove the stigma around mental health. We're focused on promoting general awareness of mental health, encouraging dialogue and enabling people throughout the agriculture industry to seek support if they need it.

FCC partnered with mental health experts and relied on customer research to guide our decisions on how to design a mental health publication, public service announcements and partnerships with interested groups.

Earlier this year FCC contributed \$50,000 to the Do More Ag Foundation to fund 12 mental health first aid workshops. One hundred and two applications were received, a clear indication that rural communities see the need for this knowledge and training. Those who go through the workshop will be trained to help someone who's experiencing a mental health problem or crisis. The evidence behind mental health first aid training shows that it builds mental health literacy, decreases stigmatizing attitudes, and helps people identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illness. The workshops begin in February and they will run until April.

We're also excited to partner with 4-H Canada in the launch of their healthy living initiative, which will begin this year. As we just heard, this program supports the emotional and physical well-being of rural youth across Canada. It's an investment in our young people who will play a large role in shaping the future of Canadian agriculture.

Another important initiative is the publication titled "Rooted in Strength", and I believe you all received one on your chairs today. At FCC we're not mental health experts, so the booklet was created with the assistance of people who are. Those experts included psychologists and mental health groups, and 176,000 copies of the booklet were mailed to Canadian producers last November. The publication offers personal stories as well as tools producers can use to better understand and address their own mental health challenges. The publication has been well received and is described by many in the industry as a "must-read booklet".

In addition to the publication, we created a series of print and radio public service announcements that direct people to resources they can access in times of need. We're honoured that Canadian country music recording artist Paul Brandt offered to voice the English radio spots for us, knowing that his endorsement will go a long way in amplifying these messages with a rural audience.

The response we've received from the agriculture community since the mental health initiatives began shows the need for this conversation. Producers have said they appreciate FCC acting as a catalyst to encourage dialogue and promote awareness of available resources. FCC is committed to supporting the agriculture industry and proud to partner with others who share our mission.

FCC is also committed to supporting our employees. Mental health first aid training is offered to managers so that they're equipped to help their staff. The training is extended to front-line staff as well to help them serve our customers. We're also assessing our internal practices against the 13 factors of psychological health and safety in the workplace, as approved by the Standards Council of Canada. These are the same standards recognized by the Government of Canada joint task force on mental health in the workplace. This will help determine next steps in our mental health strategy. This is also FCC's second annual mental health awareness week. The focus this year is on taking care of ourselves and our families. The week includes daily articles aimed at employees and managers to help raise awareness and increase comfort in using services like our employee and family assistance program and the Kids Help Phone.

Tomorrow is Bell's Let's Talk Day, when Canadians engage in a national dialogue around mental health. FCC will participate on social media by sharing our content from the "Rooted in Strength" publication and launching three new mental-health-focused videos. We will also share a special edition of our online customer newsletter focused on mental health.

•(1115)

FCC is also partnering with Farm Management Canada to explore the connection between business management practices and mental health and the benefits of executing a mental health study to gain more insights on this front. At FCC, we're committed to agriculture. We're here for the industry and for our customers. We will continue

to be a steady partner, both in times of celebration and in times of challenge.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. I look forward to any questions the committee may have.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Hoffort.

Now, from Farm Management Canada, we have Ms. Heather Watson, by telephone.

Ms. Heather Watson: Mr. Chairman and honourable members, and colleagues, Erin, Liz and Mike, thank you for inviting Farm Management Canada to speak before you today.

I'm Heather Watson, executive director of FMC, and I'm sorry I couldn't be there in person. We are pleased to provide an update on the collaborative project with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada that will explore the link between mental health and its impact on farm business management decisions.

As a brief reminder of our mission and mandate, FMC was established in 1992 to increase the awareness and adoption of farm business management practices to position Canada's farmers for sustainable growth and competitiveness.

As we stated in our testimony in October, we see an inherent connection between mental health and farm business management. We're happy to announce that we have recently secured a three year contribution agreement under the AgriCompetitiveness program with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, which includes a number of initiatives that explore the connection between mental health and farm business management. We have started to gain valuable insight into this topic already.

In November, in anticipation of our agreement, we hosted a healthy farmer, healthy farm discussion panel at our annual agricultural excellence conference in Winnipeg, where we welcomed 289 delegates. Gerry Friesen, the self-proclaimed "recovering farmer", shared his compelling story. He spoke of his struggle with mental health as a hog farmer and the effects it has had on him, his family, his farm and his community.

We learned that while someone's striving for success and encountering challenges can have a negative effect on their mental health, likewise, achieving success and the immense pressure to grow the business and continue the farm and family legacy can also compromise mental health. Understanding oneself, including one's limitations and needs, is crucial. Gerry has since left farming to provide counselling and crisis intervention to fellow farmers. Farm safety specialists and social workers also shared their insights on the connection between managing the farm, mental health, and opportunities to support one with the other.

With our funding agreement now secured, we're eager to commission our national study to explore this connection further. Our study is set to start April 1, 2019. However, since announcing the study in December, we have received requests from industry groups and individuals to be part of the project. As such, we are ready to issue a request for expressions of interest to provide an opportunity for anyone interested in contributing to the study to come forward.

While we know that our farmers are incredibly stressed, and we know that stress can crowd and disrupt decision-making, through this groundbreaking research we hope to further explore the factors influencing mental health, how we can support mental health through business management, how we can support business management through mental health, and the critical path forward. We further seek to explore whether demographic differences exist between regions, production sectors, gender and age, and what steps we can take to meet these individual needs.

We anticipate that this study will involve a mixture of qualitative and quantitative primary research methodologies, including interviews, focus groups, case studies and surveys. To avoid duplication of efforts and maximize resources, we are reaching out to those already working in this space in Canada and abroad. We have also started reviewing secondary research to help inform the scope, format and content of our study.

New Zealand, for example, has done some incredible work on factors that influence decision-making, as well as work on farmer mental health, leading to their farmstrong program. Recently, the American Veterinary Medical Association conducted a study on the mental health of veterinarians and recommended next steps for their industry.

We are incredibly interested in the results of the study and what the findings mean, both in terms of our approach as an organization and for the industry at large, in supporting business development, competitiveness and the adoption of farm business management practices to achieve sustainable growth for the Canadian ag sector.

Over the next three years, we are also planning to establish a national leadership development program to help farmers develop the best version of themselves, not only to build confidence but also to sustain mental health and well-being to lead and empower leadership by others. The insights gained from the mental health and farm management study will be used to inform program development.

As our funding agreement with Ag Canada is a fifty-fifty cost share basis, we continue to actively seek to secure our portion of the cost share. Since announcing the study in December, we are pleased to note that we have been in discussion with Farm Credit Canada, with plans to work together to leverage our resources for maximum reach and impact. We're looking forward to reading the committee's report on the topic as well. We would be happy to keep you informed of our progress and to report back to committee once the study is under way and/or complete.

• (1120)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members and guests.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Watson.

We'll now go to questions. I want to remind members to indicate to whom they're directing their questions, because we have one person via video and one via telephone.

We'll start with Mr. Dreeshen for six minutes.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to all our witnesses. We certainly appreciate your interventions and this opportunity to hear what you plan to be doing while we work our way through this particular study. As we recognized Bell Let's Talk Day, I know that it was a year ago that I was honoured to first introduce this request for a study to deal with the mental health issues among farmers, ranchers and producers.

As a farmer myself, I can say this is certainly something we have seen in our communities. I'm pleased that we've had this important discussion. I thank all of the witnesses who have come forward to contribute to this report.

As was mentioned, I'm also pleased to hear that you're looking forward to hearing from this study and from all of its different aspects. These are so important, because sometimes not everything is presented. I'm sure your organizations will read through all of the testimony and understand all of the different things that have affected farmers and ranchers particularly.

I'd also like to specifically thank the amazing women farm operators who have been such strong advocates for mental health within the rural communities, as well as in their family farm operations. I think this was probably what instigated this in my mind—to know how committed these different groups were and just to make sure that things were working well in their communities.

Of course, the 4-H pledge is the head to clearer thinking, the heart to greater loyalty, the hands to larger service and, of course, the health to better living. That is for themselves and their club and, of course, for their nation. These are critical points. As a former 4-H'er, I'm so honoured that you've taken on this particular task.

In terms of the concerns that I do have, we had anticipated that some of these initiatives would come forth after our report and we had had a chance to discuss some of these issues. I think now we can simply take the commitment that all three organizations have and move forward with it and to try to give you the best facts we have. We can't lose sight of the fact that agriculture is being attacked in many different ways. There was the comment that we need to talk about food nutrition and so on. However, for many of these farm groups, we see food nutrition being compromised by some of the outside actors who are trying to take on Canadian farmers and minimize their relevance.

As a beef producer, I understand that. I certainly feel that we need to be sure to keep in mind how we will react to anti-farm activists, the social media trolls who demonize our agriculture industry, and the specific things that matter to a farm—the carbon taxes in the tens of thousands of dollars per farm, the massive red-tape hurdles, and the aggressive CRA tactics that have demonized small business owners and farmers particularly. We have to make sure that all of that is brought into the discussion. Every one of the kids in 4-H that we've spoken about hear this every day. They're not going to be hearing government messages; they're going to be hearing the messages that come around the kitchen table. They see the effects of it on their parents.

I think one of the major concerns you had, Ms. Smith, was how that affects the young person as well. Those effects arise because of what is happening in the community and what is happening around the kitchen table. I'm wondering if you can address how we will be able to use what we have seen in the study, in all of the testimony, and if in your mandate you'll be looking at ways to integrate that so that we can also find a way to push back and put some pressure on those groups that are out there simply to demonize agriculture.

● (1125)

Ms. Erin Smith: I have two ways to respond to that. The first is that I think it is such a relevant discussion to be having, considering the fact that when we surveyed them, over 50% of our 4-H members were interested in pursuing careers in the agriculture sector whether that is related to science or technology and all of the areas that impact agriculture. I think that if we are investing in our young people now, we're essentially investing in the future workforce and the health of our communities. This is a very important conversation to be having.

Our approach to our programming and to working with young people is to create platforms for them to learn all the information and to make their own informed decisions and opinions about the information out there. It's not our job necessarily to prescribe what they are going to believe or the opinions they're going to have; it's more for us to put that information in front of them and allow them to make those informed decisions, which I think is so important.

Having young people at the table to hear these kinds of conversations is our main priority. The work we do is allowing those young people to have a voice and to hear all of the different opinions and to form their own opinions.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Smith.

Thank you, Mr. Dreeshen.

That's all the time we have, unfortunately.

Mr. Longfield, you have six minutes.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you all for being here for our final meeting. There are always more questions.

I want to focus on the research piece with Ms. Smith, if I can. You mentioned the Manion study back in 2006. I know that Dr. Manion has been working on mental health at the Royal. One of the areas he's worked on is wraparound support, looking at integrated services. How do we provide youth services that will include housing, mental

health, addictions, the use of cannabis and alcohol, the cross-addictions and the adverse effects in early childhood?

Some youth mental health centres have been set up within the network. Most of them are in urban centres, but there is one in Chatham-Kent. Is that something your group has looked at in integrating or wrapping around support that the federal government possibly could be helping with?

I'll next flip over to Michael Hoffort and Heather Watson with the same question.

● (1130)

Ms. Erin Smith: We are very much looking forward to working with our strategic partner, Kids Help Phone, the experts in this field specifically when it comes to child and youth mental health. One of the great things we're so happy to be partnering with them on is access and rural youths' feeling of isolation, which is one of the main challenges. Kids Help Phone now has chat, text and calling options. That will eliminate some of the barriers youth face in accessing services directly.

The conversation about those local community-based services, especially in rural communities, is an extremely important conversation to be having with those experts in child and youth mental health. I would encourage that conversation to continue. It's not necessarily the role of 4-H. Our role is to put our young people and our volunteer leaders in touch with those services, to give them access to those services and to let them know they exist.

Through this initiative we're hoping to break that stigma so that they don't feel afraid to let us or their volunteer leaders know when they need help, when they need to talk to someone.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: That's very good. Thank you.

Mr. Hoffort, congratulations on the "Rooted in Strength" document. You've done great work there.

Would this be in terms of a national network? Andria Jones-Bitton from the University of Guelph had a recommendation for us to create a national network, which might find its way into our report—again looking at the wraparound services.

Do you have any comments on that?

Mr. Michael Hoffort: Regarding the specific comments on wraparound service, I have to be honest with you that I'm not extremely familiar with the recommendation. I know that some great work has been done on the subject by the University of Guelph.

We are a national organization, with 100 offices across the country, many of them in rural Canada. There are some differences in the need for services in rural Canada compared with what's available within urban centres. If there is an ability to create more support within rural Canada, I can only see that as a positive factor. A lot of what we've tried to do, for sure, is to raise awareness and to be able to direct people to where they would be able to access the services they would need.

Farm Credit Canada itself is not an expert in mental health services, as you imagine. We try to do the best we can to support and use partners to provide the extra services.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: You made that point in June, but I think you were being humble. You've really helped to bring the network together through your partnerships and the document you presented to us back in November.

Thank you for that.

Mr. Michael Hoffort: Thank you.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Thank you for the great work.

Ms. Watson from Farm Management Canada, along the lines of the theme of wraparound services, I'm looking at the over 55-year-old farmers who are not wanting to give up their farms. They're at the stage of their careers where there's transition planning. On the wraparound services between generations, is that something you're working on through the farm management and leadership programs to help the older farmers and the younger farmers determine a future for the farm together?

Ms. Heather Watson: Yes, absolutely.

We're actually doing a program called bridging the gap. I'm in Alberta right now at FarmTech, and we're having a panel of farmers to talk about bridging the gap when it comes to moving the transition conversation forward. We're recognizing now that mental health has been put in the spotlight, thanks to FCC, and want to hold more groups like that.

We're seeing it permeate through all these conversations. It's as if that now we've recognized it, we're seeing it come up everywhere, especially in these transition conversations. There's an awful lot of pressure on the existing generation to carry on the farm legacy and hope that the next generation will do the same. There's a lot of fear that they might not be on the same page when it comes to that. But, of course, the weight of the world is resting on the current generation of farmers. The next generation, equally, is afraid of failure, and so afraid to fail their parents' and grandparents' generation.

It's a huge mental health consideration when it comes to transitioning the farm. We're definitely working on that right now. It will be part of this.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Is that part of the three-year contribution agreement you've been awarded?

Ms. Heather Watson: Absolutely.

Yes, we'll be holding two workshops in collaboration with Farm Credit Canada at the end of March, just as a start.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Watson.

Thank you, Mr. Longfield.

We have Mr. MacGregor for six minutes.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Thank you very much, Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for appearing on our last day of this study. We've had some fantastic testimony and are looking forward to bringing it altogether into a very comprehensive report on this very important subject.

I will start with Ms. Smith.

When I was listening to your opening statements, you were talking about the challenges for rural youth. You listed three main things. There's the fact that fewer services are available. Getting transportation to services is problematic. But also there's that stigma, because you're in a small community, that people are more likely to find out that you are in fact seeking help.

It struck me that currently western Canada is experiencing problems with Greyhound bus service. Have you had any feedback from your members on the impact?

Going directly to point number two, the transportation to services, with the elimination of Greyhound bus routes, can you provide any feedback on how that's impacted people?

• (1135)

Ms. Erin Smith: I haven't heard anything specifically on that. I'm sure it is impacting our clubs and our communities and rural youth up in that region.

I would say that it's not just transportation; it's access to broadband and technology. It's really the feeling of being isolated and not being able necessarily to even get to services, if that is something that young people have the courage to speak out about and say they need.

No, I haven't heard anything specifically around that. I would assume it is definitely having an impact.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Thank you.

Mr. Hoffort, perhaps I could start with you.

On the \$50,000 that was committed by the FCC for the mental health workshops, with respect, \$50,000, I think, would be a welcome announcement just for an area the size of my riding, or even Vancouver Island. You can see that there are a 102 applications and that 12 were funded, or 10% of them. Given the level of interest and the demand for these kinds of workshops, I'm just worried that \$50,000 for a nationwide program is really just a drop in the bucket for the demand that's out there.

Looking ahead, can you see allocating more resources to these types of workshops given the demand you've seen?

Mr. Michael Hoffort: Yes, I think the answer to that would be positive.

With the first workshops starting in the weeks ahead, we will see their impact and how they go over. We'll then look at what the next steps will be for the FCC.

Your study will definitely feed into that. Are there opportunities from having speakers and events that we might put on to invest more in partnerships and sponsorships with organizations that have the skill sets to put these workshops on? I would say there's a high likelihood that we'll continue into the next fiscal year, for sure, with that.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Fantastic. I also want to offer my congratulations to you for your "Rooted in Strength" document. I know we're not allowed to use props in the House, but at committee we're a little bit lax with the rules, so I just want to hold that up so people can see it, because I think, looking through it, it's got some fantastic recommendations in it. So thanks for doing that.

For the next question, I think I want to open it up, and maybe I'll start with Ms. Watson. We've already seen a series of announcements from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada with respect to mental health in the agriculture community. I think a few of us were taken by surprise with the November 20 announcement. It's a welcome announcement, but our committee has been doing this parallel work on this subject and have been involved in this study for a long time. I just hope that when our committee's hard-worked report comes out with its recommendations, we'll actually have the federal government acting upon them.

Ms. Watson, given what has already been announced and what you see going on into the future, what specifically are you hoping to see in terms of recommendations in our report, given all of the incredible witness testimony we've had so far? What areas do you still see need to be addressed from our committee's report and from the federal Government of Canada?

Ms. Heather Watson: Thanks, Chair. Thanks for the question. It's a great one.

I obviously can't speak on behalf of the federal government, but I can say that I think the exciting thing about this is that we're just getting started, right? Andria Jones-Bitton's work has really launched us into this good place of saying, "Hey, we're finding out some new information. What else do we need to know, and what do we do with that?"

Reading through the testimony that you guys have received has just been phenomenal, because I think we're even seeing a suggestion of a national effort. As a national organization, I cannot agree more that we really need to do something that gives equal opportunity for success to everyone across Canada, for all of our farmers and future farmers across Canada.

I can hear your concern about putting the cart before the horse and making sure that we have recommendations from the committee, but I think the good news is that we're taking it slowly. We're doing something, because we know something has to happen. Every day we're hearing some pretty scary news out there about how our farmers are feeling and what they're thinking about doing.

I think in one case we do need to act, and we need to act fast. I'm really happy to see that we, FCC, and Do More Ag and groups like that are hitting the ground running, but I think there's lots and lots of room left to hear the committee's recommendations.

I think the fact that the testimony is available.... I think all of us have probably been following it and making sure that our efforts are open and flexible enough to take it in and to continue to evolve as the conversation evolves and as we learn more information, because we can only act on the information that we know. The more we understand, the more we can meet the needs, which is a really exciting thing.

I hear your concern, but I will be really excited to see the committee's report—

• (1140)

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Heather Watson: —and to see how we can integrate every single piece into what we're doing moving forward. Thank you for that.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Watson, and Mr. MacGregor.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Drouin, you have the floor for six minutes.

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

My thanks to all the witnesses who are here today to take part in this study. Some of you are appearing for a second time. Thank you.

[*English*]

My first question will probably be for Mr. Hoffort. First off, congratulations on this. I'm going to echo the sentiment of Mr. MacGregor. We do get along on Parliament Hill once in a while, and I think we can all get along and rally around this.

I see that you're offering mental health first aid training to some of the managers and employees, and I know that your employees would be the front-line employees working with farmers. I assume that if there is financial stress, they probably have that conversation with some of your employees. In an ideal world, I think and I believe that employees would be able to identify that someone was probably not feeling well. Are you training your employees to identify those stress levels and to offer help?

Mr. Michael Hoffort: Yes, we have really focused our training on our managers, as I mentioned, and then our front-line staff. We started the mental health first aid training with our group of employees who deal with our customers who are experiencing some financial challenges, our special loans group. For sure, again, they're not experts in the mental health profession, but our goal in this has been to recognize the stresses that a farm family might be experiencing, to really recognize if there's something that might be a bit extraordinary in the circumstance and to be able to suggest some level of service and to point people in the right direction.

In a rare circumstance, we have seen customers who have been under extreme stress and almost despondent, and have intervened with them just to help make sure that their animals get fed or things like that until they can work their way through, but that's quite rare. Normally, people are working their way through it, but with our team, we want to make sure that they can recognize where there could be some extreme concerns, and at least be supportive and proper in their counsel.

Mr. Francis Drouin: That's great, thank you.

Ms. Smith, I want to congratulate your organizations for doing a good job. I know they're very present in rural Canada and rural Ontario, and I often have chats with them at the local level.

Since I know you have partnerships with FCC and others, I'm wondering if you are building workshops through 4-H to address mental health.

Ms. Erin Smith: Yes. Our strategy with our healthy living initiative is to create a series of tip sheets and resources not only for our young people but also our volunteer leaders. One of the main pieces we're identifying is that our volunteer leaders who support our club-level programming for our young people need to have training and capacity-building to be able to not only identify, but also support, the youth in their clubs who may be experiencing mental health challenges.

We have webinars and workshops that we're working to develop, as well as hands-on resources, similar to what you have in front of you, that we can hand to our volunteer leaders and to our youth so that they have quick tips and they know exactly where to go or who to call. We're working, again, with Kids Help Phone in developing that.

Absolutely, training and capacity-building is—

• (1145)

Mr. Francis Drouin: Yes.

Ms. Erin Smith: —key for the adults who are supporting the young people.

Mr. Francis Drouin: Are you tracking how many 4-H local clubs have been doing their training and whatnot?

Ms. Erin Smith: We will be, yes.

Mr. Francis Drouin: You will be soon.

Ms. Erin Smith: Yes, when it's all rolled out.

Mr. Francis Drouin: If we invite you a year from now, you'll be able to report on where you are?

Ms. Erin Smith: Absolutely, you bet. We'd welcome that.

Mr. Francis Drouin: That's great. Thanks for your input.

Heather, I'm just wondering if you can hear me?

Ms. Heather Watson: I sure can.

Mr. Francis Drouin: I won't say it's nice to see you, but nice to hear you.

Ms. Heather Watson: It's nice to hear you too.

Mr. Francis Drouin: You've mentioned the study that you're doing through your organizations, and I'm wondering if part of that study will track whether or not those who have followed.... Or have you noticed, I should say, those who you would qualify as having good financial management practices as being obviously less stressed or facing fewer mental health issues? Have you noticed that early in the onset?

Ms. Heather Watson: Yes. To be clear, the study is not officially starting until April 1. That's when we're allowed to start spending resources on this. It's what we want to look at: what management practices are in place, what the mental health status is, and whether there's a correlation between them so that we can identify that when farmers are doing, X, Y and Z, they seem to have lower stress, or lower this, or lower that.

Or maybe the opposite is true. Something we've been coming across recently is that it's really stressful to think about and start adopting these management practices. So we're almost thinking that a hypothesis would perhaps be that it's incredibly stressful in the short term when you're looking at adopting a management practice

for your farm, but there is the long-term gain. With something like having a business plan, where a quarter of our farmers have a written business plan, the task seems very daunting and stressful, and therefore it's not getting done. But once it does get done, we're hoping that we can measure, now that someone does have it in place, that they are less stressed because they have their roadmap to success and a guide to keep them on the right track when their mind might become clouded in stressful situations, or when they're trying to weather a storm.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Watson.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Francis Drouin: Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Unfortunately, we're out of time.

[*Translation*]

Thank you, Mr. Drouin.

I will now give the floor to Mr. Poissant for six minutes.

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (La Prairie, Lib.): I would first like to thank all the witnesses.

Mr. Dreesen and Mr. Shipley will probably share my opinion, given that they used to be farmers like me. When we were young, we worked hard. However, we were able to stop in the evenings and on weekends. On Sundays, we could sit on the porch and chat with the neighbours passing by. Today, things have changed a great deal. There are fewer farms, but there are a lot more responsibilities and paperwork.

Ms. Smith, are our young people getting enough training in school to handle what's in store for them?

As we know, this is the best job in the world, but I don't envy them in light of all the changes that have taken place in agriculture.

Are our young people sufficiently prepared?

[*English*]

Ms. Erin Smith: I would say that we can always be doing a better job of informing young people of the opportunities that are out there and also giving them the tools to cope with the stresses they face.

One of the things 4-H is very involved in is creating career opportunity exploration programs, so that young people can look at the opportunities and the avenues for career development that are out there for them. Over and above going to school and learning the regular subjects they learn in school, being involved in 4-H will help them explore career opportunities not just in agriculture but also in other sectors as well. I think that's one of the things we're hearing from our young people—a need. That may speak to your question. They are asking us to create career development opportunities and develop programming around that. We can always be having those conversations with young people to help them navigate the career path and the career decision they need to be making.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant: Thank you very much.

My next question is for Ms. Watson.

Do you have any idea how many farms across the country are in a management pool?

How do you do promotion to attract farms that are not part of a management pool?

When I was with the organization called Au coeur des familles agricoles, the primary stressor was finances.

So let me ask you the question again. Do you have any idea of the number of farms that deal with a management pool?

• (1150)

[English]

The Chair: Ms. Watson.

Ms. Heather Watson: That's a great question.

If I understand the question correctly, it is how many farms across Canada are adopting business management practices. Is that it? Or is the question more about our reach in terms of our farmers and our members? It's just to clarify.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant: For instance, on the farm, we dealt with a management pool that used to come on a regular basis when we had projects or to follow up on finances. It made regular recommendations for us.

Do you have any idea how many farms subscribe to such a system?

[English]

Ms. Heather Watson: I don't know for certain. I know that every province is different.

The way we see it is that we have a network of provincial-territorial ministries of agriculture, and specifically business development departments. I'm not completely familiar with how it's working in Quebec, but I know that across the rest of Canada it's more up to the farmer to reach out and to get these services and get this help. I think that's one of the barriers to success, as well. Sometimes the application process can be quite daunting, even for an organization that's fully staffed. It's even daunting for us. For a farmer, we hear, anecdotally, that it is quite difficult to access funding even if it's there.

The other factor is awareness of the program. The CAP program, the Canadian agricultural partnership, was launched last April, of course. I go pretty much weekly to meetings and give presentations, and I find that, for the most part, there is a complete lack of awareness of the resources and opportunities out there for funding skills development in farm business management or advisory services. The advisory services are there, but not the mechanism to gain funding in order to take advantage of those opportunities. So perhaps they're not being taken advantage of as much as we would like to see.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant: Is there any promotion to suggest that farms join a management pool or commit to sound management? Is there enough promotion?

[English]

Ms. Heather Watson: Yes, for sure.

Our specific interest, of course, is farm business management, so we focused on those. But we published a document—it's available on our website—that tells farmers exactly what's available to them in their province and through what program and how to apply.

In terms of people to actually help them apply to this program, I think that, for the most part—and again, I'm not familiar with how it works in Quebec—is up to the farmer to apply for the program. I'm not aware of a resource person who can facilitate that, except for ministry personnel. I'm not aware of advisers who do that.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Watson.

[Translation]

Thank you, Mr. Poissant.

I will now give the floor to Mr. Berthold for six minutes.

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

My thanks to everyone for joining us.

Over the holidays, I had the opportunity to go around my riding and to meet with a number of people. We talked at length about the mental health of farmers. Since we have started talking about it, it seems that people feel like talking about it more. Folks from suicide prevention organizations told me about the challenges facing farmers for the first time. They said that it was unfortunately one of the most serious problems facing their organizations. They are there to intervene, in general, in cases of attempted suicide and to respond to all those who, unfortunately, are thinking about it as the ultimate answer and need help. I realized that the problem facing farmers was truly very significant for those organizations.

Last November, when I attended the presentation of the program, I found it interesting that people are getting together to address this problem. However, 4-H Canada is not very present in Quebec's rural areas. I know that you are doing a great job everywhere. All my colleagues tell me about what 4-H is doing elsewhere in Canada. However, the organization is not very present in Quebec.

I was wondering whether, at Farm Credit Canada, you are hoping to have the same sort of agreement with groups in Quebec. I was also wondering whether 4-H Canada thinks that similar programs should be offered to young Quebecers. There's no 4-H in Quebec.

Ms. Smith, would you like to answer?

• (1155)

[English]

Ms. Erin Smith: Thank you for your question. I'm going to respond in English. I hope that's okay.

Mr. Luc Berthold: That's fine.

Ms. Erin Smith: We do have active programs in Quebec. We work with the AJRQ, the Association des jeunes ruraux du Québec. Essentially they are 4-H for francophone youth in Quebec. We also have a 4-H association of mainly anglophone youth, which is quite small, but any program that we are developing and implementing across the country would be available to them as well, absolutely, and we hope that they will be engaged as much as any other group. We really want to be able to provide the same supports and tools and resources across Canada. All of our resources and tools and workshops will be available in French as well.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: So we have that organization, but in Quebec, we don't reach out to as many young people as quickly. Would it be possible to form other groups in order to speed things up?

As you mentioned, we had to act quickly. As a result, we made this announcement even before the end of this study. I think it is important to act quickly when it comes to young Quebecers.

[English]

Ms. Erin Smith: Absolutely. I think that when our plan is in place and our resources are available, we'll have a very customized approach to rolling out those programs and working with all of the communities, because, as everyone knows, Canada is very diverse and we have a lot of different needs in various communities. For example, in Quebec we're working right now to develop programs on the Lower North Shore for 4-H. Those communities have unique needs. We'll be looking at every different community and working with provincial partners to really make sure that this training and these resources are available and can be delivered in the context that's appropriate.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Since we started studying this issue, we have realized that there are many provincial, municipal and federal initiatives such as the ones you mentioned today. They are on the rise. Unfortunately, there seem to be no coordinated efforts.

At Farm Management Canada, you announced a major study for which you are looking for funding partners. At Farm Credit Canada, you have agreed to contribute to this study and provided your help. However, I am worried that we may be in a situation where a lot of programs or people are asking for funds from the same people to solve the same problem. Perhaps that can be a recommendation from the committee.

Ms. Watson, do you think it would be appropriate to create a national project to prevent money from being spent left and right without the left hand knowing what the right hand is doing?

[English]

Ms. Heather Watson: Yes. I am definitely a supporter of national initiatives. I think it really depends on what the initiative looks like. I would say that perhaps, instead of launching a national program, we start with a national conversation. I'm thinking of what Andria Jones-Bitton was talking about in striking up... Can we start a round table? Can we have a national engagement session where we get folks together who are interested in this, figure out who's doing what and then figure out the critical path forward? I would, I think, hazard a guess to say it would be really nice to establish some sort of round

table or some sort of place where we can come together on a regular basis, all of us stakeholders, and share what's going on so that we can reduce duplication and maximize our resources, which as you've noted, are very slim. We want to be very strategic about how we go forward. We don't want this to be a one-hit wonder. We want to make sure we create the capacity to sustain and grow these activities.

• (1200)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Watson.

[Translation]

Thank you, Mr. Berthold.

Mrs. Shanahan, you have the floor for six minutes.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

First, I would like to thank all the witnesses who are here today. I am fortunate to have in my constituency a good number of the region's farmers and they have taught me a lot about agriculture.

Also, Mr. Poissant, who is my neighbour, has taught me that it's a very rewarding, but also challenging, life. I even found a point of reference. Since I was a former banker and I had a lot of experience working with entrepreneurs, succession problems are that reference point for me.

[English]

I'll continue in English, so I can ask my question of the gentleman from Farm Credit.

Mr. Hoffort, I'd like to ask you about how you came to observe financial management practices that were contributing to stress and to mental health issues. What is your definition of those practices? Was it because it's a sort of father-to-son intergenerational difference? I'd like you to just talk to me a little bit about that, and then I'd like to address the same question to Ms. Watson, who is doing the research project.

Mr. Michael Hoffort: In terms of the relationship between farm management practices, risk management practices and mental health on farms, there is some interest in doing some research in that space. I don't know if FCC would have an opinion on whether there is a strong link between them. That would be some of the basis for the research that would be done by Farm Management Canada, perhaps, in the years ahead.

Speaking more broadly in terms of succession and succession management, and in looking at farm transitions, there's a business function that takes place, for sure, and there's a family dynamic function. There are always going to be some complexities to that. As well, the sheer capital required for Canadian farms today and the value of those farms make those transitions complex. It's something that happens over years, and even a decade, versus maybe something that happened as an event in years past.

I would suggest that there can be some stress in those, even if they're done well. If they're not done particularly well, from a communications perspective, the stress can even be more. Those would be the more anecdotal observations that I've made over my career at FCC.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: What brought you to the place where you thought that? I see that Farm Credit is looking at partnering with Ms. Watson's group on the study. Was that really the overriding factor, the farm management practices, the financial practices?

Mr. Michael Hoffort: Really, it's just trying to dig in and to understand what some of the underlying factors are that may contribute to different levels of stress on an operation. If we can find some of those, what might be areas that then operators or business partners like FCC could encourage to take place in those operations, that could manage some of the stress that could be dealt with? When you think of a farm, whether it's weather, markets or all those things that are inherently external factors, are there internal things that our operators could do that would contribute to being able to manage through just the day-to-day nature of being a Canadian producer? It's super-rewarding and it's a challenging career choice.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Very good.

Ms. Watson, I know your study has not begun yet, but I'd like to continue the line of questioning Mr. Poissant started. That is on the use of consultants or accounting or financial experts, whether it would be a *conseil* or a firm that would specialize in this kind of work. I would venture that it's very particular to the farming industry how financial management practices evolve and how they are passed on given the particular circumstances of family succession.

• (1205)

Ms. Heather Watson: Yes, absolutely.

To answer your question right away, we know that a third of farmers are using business advisers for their farms, and we're hoping to increase that number. Our anecdotal little piece to our farmers is to "do your best and hire the rest", recognizing that farmers can't be all things to all people at all times. It's very, very stressful for them to take the weight of the world onto their shoulders.

We want to look at not only how we can equip farmers with the practices and tools and whatnot to help increase positive mental health but also how we can equip the advisers and those positioned to help—kind of the front-line folks—to help farmers. Knowing that farmers traditionally go to their accountants and their lawyers for help first, we also want to look at what other players are out there who can play a positive role in helping the mental health piece—

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Watson. Sorry, I seem to cut you off all the time. You're the last one to speak, but—

Ms. Heather Watson: It's nothing personal. It's okay. I have lots to say.

The Chair: We'll have Mr. Shipley for six minutes.

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Thank you very much.

The Chair: Sorry, I mean five minutes.

Mr. Bev Shipley: I'm actually on the committee.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Bev Shipley: I want to say thank you. I know that my colleague, Mr. Dreeshen, really did the job in recognizing and acknowledging some of the issues and the need to recognize individuals. Thank you and your organization for what you do for

children—it used to be for those up to 12 years old, and now I think it's from five up to 18.

Ms. Erin Smith: It's six.

Mr. Bev Shipley: Oh, okay, six.

At 18, they're pretty much wrapped up and heading for post-secondary education. By then that 51% who are rural likely have some contact with farming. What are they telling you in terms of the concerns about agriculture and the opportunities moving forward, and balancing those against what they're hearing at home, in terms of some of the stresses, or from their family or friends?

Ms. Erin Smith: I might throw Liz some of this too.

First of all, 51% of the youth whom we surveyed are interested in pursuing a career in agriculture. Of those, over 80% live in rural communities, so they may or may not live on the farm.

Mr. Bev Shipley: Okay.

Ms. Erin Smith: What we are hearing overwhelmingly is that young people are looking for support in exploring career opportunities that are out there, and exploring a broad range of careers that affect the agriculture sector—science, technology, the environment. That's one of the roles we're playing, in terms of connecting them to information, to mentorship, to career internships and placements to explore some of those opportunities.

Mr. Bev Shipley: Okay.

Ms. Erin Smith: I would say, from what I'm hearing from youth—and we don't get a lot of specifics—is that there is definitely stress about whether or not to take over the family farm and to look at agriculture more broadly. That decision and the impact it has on families is often stressful, I would say.

Mr. Bev Shipley: Okay.

Ms. Erin Smith: But in general, our youth are telling us that they want to explore career opportunities.

Mr. Bev Shipley: Okay. I need to keep moving, and thank you so much.

Heather, we talked about a national initiative. In terms of coordinating it and bringing in all the stakeholders—and by that I mean all stakeholders—if you were to take a vision out, how long do you think it would take to bring it together so that we would have a national initiative?

Ms. Heather Watson: That's a good question. I guess it depends on the stakeholders as well, because of course we have to acknowledge everyone's availability and time, and if there are producer organizations, we want to make sure that we're not doing something at their busy season. Again, good planning and good practices depend on the right place and the right time, so you don't want to do something like this when everyone's completely overly stressed.

I mean, I don't know. I would definitely think that we could look at hosting a first national engagement session, I would say, this fall. It would be a great opportunity, a great round table. It's timely. We're continuing to do our work. Andrea's continuing to do her work. I think the sooner the better, but in terms of dictating when we can launch—

• (1210)

Mr. Bev Shipley: Yes.

Ms. Heather Watson:—national initiatives thereof, it's a bit of question depending on who's in the room and what path we can put forward. But I think the important part is to have a sustained commitment from the stakeholders and from government to make sure that it's not a one-hit wonder and that we've taken time to build the capacity to do something really meaningful.

Mr. Bev Shipley: The chairman has told me I have to wrap up here in a minute.

Since my colleague introduced “Rooted in Strength”—I really appreciate that—when I look at common stressors in the farm, if you go to that page, there's something, quite honestly, really missing. It talks about finances, and we understand why finances are at the top. There are family disagreements, often with succession planning. If we try to understand how that works, the lack of sleep and the workload, I can tell you that if government is not part of those stressors, you're missing a huge component of this book. We cannot continue to move forward by putting barriers in front of our agriculture industry. We went through that last summer when our industry and succession planning was going to be under attack.

Ms. Heather Watson: Yes.

Mr. Bev Shipley: The interest rates are increasing somewhat. We're going to be penalizing farm businesses sharing incomes. We have to talk about governments staying out of our business only for the reason of collecting taxes.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Shipley. Unfortunately, that's all the time we have.

Mr. Bev Shipley: I was supposed to have another minute, but thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: You have three minutes, Mr. MacGregor.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Thank you, Chair, for my three minutes.

Mr. Hoffort, I'm going to use the last three minutes I have to talk to you.

In the debate that we are having on climate change right now, we know the costs that are going to affect producers, whether it's forest fires, droughts or floods. Unfortunately, the debate that's raging in Ottawa right now is about the costs of meeting the challenge, but what we often don't talk about and I wished we talked about more are the long-term economic costs of not doing anything and what our producers will face as a result.

From Farm Credit Canada's perspective, when you look at the range of programs and services that you offer—I'm thinking of loan insurance and so on—have you done any kind of analysis of what this will mean in the long term for the products you offer to farmers,

how the changing climate and conditions are going to be impacting the kinds of services that you offer to farmers? I know that's one of the variables that really do affect their mental health.

Mr. Michael Hoffort: In terms of FCC's offer, our primary role is to provide financing to agriculture producers, agribusinesses and agri-food operators from coast to coast. The only insurance program we have would be more of a credit or life insurance or disability insurance. We're not in crop insurance or revenue insurance or those types of products. I'm certain that individuals in that space would be able to answer your question much more fully in terms of some of the assessments they do and stresses. The other area that we do offer

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: But nothing in terms of the insurance premiums on loans? Do you foresee people maybe not being able to meet their loan obligations because of the increased effects of climate change?

Mr. Michael Hoffort: In terms of doing a stress test on those types of climate changes, we haven't done something that's forward-looking and goes into the ranges involved. We'd be looking more at things like rapid escalating interest rates, and other things that would be top of mind, I would say, and the potential stresses that would directly impact Canadian agriculture. We haven't done that study at this time.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Okay. Thank you.

I'll wrap up there, Chair. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay.

That will conclude this session and our study, other than preparing our report. This has been a tremendous achievement. We're going to put something together that, hopefully, will lead the way to dealing with this very important subject that's often not talked about enough. Now we've brought it to the surface. Hopefully we can have a report that will put forward a path for resolving some of these issues.

I want to thank everyone who was here today.

From 4-H Canada, Ms. Erin Smith, thank you so much for your testimony, and also Elizabeth Jarvis for being here with us today.

From Farm Credit Canada, Mr. Michael Hoffort, thank you so much for taking the time to join us via video conference.

Also from Farm Management Canada, Heather Watson, thank you for taking the time on the telephone. Again, I apologize for having to cut you off so often, but your input was certainly very important.

• (1215)

Ms. Heather Watson: That's okay. Thanks so much.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, everyone.

We will suspend the meeting for a few minutes before going in camera.

[*Proceedings continue 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>