

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)
National Union-Management Consultation Committee (NUMCC)
January 23, 2015 Minutes

Present:

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)

Andrea Lyon	Deputy Minister
Chris Forbes	Associate Deputy Minister
Pierre Corriveau	ADM Corporate Management Branch
Tina Namiesniowski	ADM Programs Branch
Greg Meredith	ADM Strategic Policy Branch
Jane Taylor	ADM Public Affairs Branch
Gilles Saindon	A/ ADM Science and Technology Branch
Louise Sénéchal	General Counsel and Deputy Executive Director, Legal Services
Michel Lessard	CIO Information Systems Branch
Marco Valicenti	Executive Director, Market Access Coordination, Market and Industry Services Branch
Michael Whittaker	Director General, Audit and Evaluation
Caroline Dunn	Director General, Human Resources Directorate, CMB
Ceci O'Flaherty	Director, Workplace Relations, HR Directorate, CMB
Roxanne Savage	Director, Workplace Relations, HR Directorate, CMB
Nathalie Jacques	Team Lead, Union Management Relations, HRD, CMB
Sandra Liston	Coordinator, Union Management Relations, HRD, CMB

Agriculture Union (PSAC)

Bob Kingston	President
Fabian Murphy	First National Executive Vice President
Milton Dyck	Third National Executive Vice President

Professional Institute of the Public Service Canada (PIPSC)

Catherine Keir	President, AAFC National Consultation Team
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Canadian Association of Professional Employees (CAPE)

Emmanuelle Tremblay	President
Salma Jaroudi	President, AAFC – NCR (Local 507)
Yves Rochon	Labour Relations Officer

Association of Canadian Financial Officers (ACFO)

Matthew Letourneau	Labour Relations Advisor, ACFO
Tessie Genise	Financial Officer, AAFC

Regrets:

Fred Gorrell	ADM Market and Industry Services Branch
Andrea Johnston	Corporate Secretary, Deputy Minister's office
Jean-François Prigent	Employment Relations Officer, PIPSC
Dale Woloshin	Steward, AAFC National Consultation Team, PIPSC
Paul Cameron	Assistant Business Manager, IBEW

Agenda Item

- 1. Opening remarks
A. Lyon**

Summary and Action

The Deputy Minister (DM) provided an update on recent departmental activities. The Department has an active agenda in the area of science and research and the DM has had the opportunity to visit AAFC Research Centres and see science in action.

Townhall meetings have taken place to ensure employees are kept up to date on changes that have occurred.

Accountability

- 2. Approval of Minutes
A. Lyon**

June 9, 2014, minutes were approved.

The only remaining issue from the last meeting was in regard to Quebec Regional UMC's being held by videoconference. This issue was discussed further and management agreed to try one annual face-to-face meeting for Quebec region only, as a pilot.

The agenda of the day was presented to the participants.

**No follow up
required**

- 3. Blueprint 2020
(BP2020)
Turning to Action**

J. Taylor has accepted the role of Departmental Champion for BP2020, having been involved in the initiative since the outset. She provided an update on recent BP2020 activities at AAFC since the last NUMCC.

Horizontal working groups have been engaging with employees to find ways to make the 2020 vision a reality. A summary of the working groups' activities were submitted on January 7, 2015, in the Report to the Clerk. A copy of the report is posted on GCpedia.

The ADM champions each provided an update on their respective areas.

**No follow up
required**

Results-Oriented Leadership

T. Namiesniowski explained how the work has been divided into 2 themes; leadership and continuous improvement (lean initiatives). These objectives are being advanced by raising awareness and engagement, by building knowledge and competencies, and through practice.

AAFC's approach in the area of leadership is to create a workplace where there is a common, shared understanding of what leadership is and how it can be practiced at all levels. Facilitated learning opportunities such as a "Lunch and Leading Together" series are being launched to practise peer coaching and address everyday leadership issues.

In the area of continuous improvement, the goal is to empower and engage employees in streamlining and simplifying work processes leading to greater efficiencies.

The emphasis is on the improvement of systems and processes.

Concrete examples which have been initiated include review and process program recipient claims; review and approve funding proposals submitted through the AgriInnovation Program. In both examples, employees looked for opportunities to streamline processes and improve outcomes. Work to date has been well received and will continue to emphasize communication and the achievement of tangible results.

E. Tremblay (CAPE) asked whether these streamlined processes have resulted in changes to the delegation of approvals. T. Namiesniowski stated that the ultimate final approval rests with the Minister, and this step has been incorporated into our service standards.

T. Genise (ACFO) asked whether a policy on professional development was in place at AAFC. C. Dunn stated that a program exists for EX minus 1 and 2's which has been very well received. P. Corriveau explained that the FI Development Program (FIDP) has been launched at AAFC and that the Financial Management Institute (FMI) is an excellent resource for learning. Individual employee performance plans should also be used as a vehicle for professional development planning.

B. Kingston (PSAC) asked what the engagement for systems and work process improvements entailed, and what feedback was received after the process reviews. T. Namiesniowski explained that processes were mapped, which inherently involved a high level of employee participation across a variety of different functional areas, which included the Regions, and Management.

Strong collaboration and partnerships:

G. Saindon explained that effective collaboration is based on a culture in which people feel well-informed and empowered to act, share, learn and engage. With this in mind, a DG-led working group has been meeting to discuss different approaches to support the sector and Canadians. There has been a great deal of emphasis on the methodology and technology (Information Management).

Implementation of collaboration tools remains at the grass-roots level. Some highlights include promoting the use of Mysite online profiles; examining case studies and developing best practices for external collaboration; appropriately reflecting collaboration in performance agreements and exploring ways to improve videoconference capabilities at AAFC.

Open Communications and Better Information Flow:

G. Meredith outlined the challenges in getting the right information, at the right time and how to make the technology work for us. Specific attention is being focussed on supporting AAFC scientists and their need for collaborative communication tools.

M. Whittaker stated that AAFC's internal governance has a commitment to remaining open, relevant and evolving, therefore senior committee calendar of events, agendas, and records of decisions are now available on AAFC's Sharepoint site for all employees.

An inventory of communication and collaboration tools has been developed to enable public servants to connect and share best practices based on common interests, knowledge and experience.

A number of social networking platforms are being used and ongoing improvement and development of new uses continue to be explored.

**4. Employment Equity
P. Corriveau**

P. Corriveau provided an update on recent consultation and collaboration activities which have taken place since our last meeting in June 2014.

**No follow up
required**

Two Human Resources-Union Consultation Committee meetings per year have been dedicated to Employment Equity consultations. These meetings include updates from Human Resources on employment equity as well as updates from AAFC's Diversity Networks and the Inclusiveness Management Committee.

AAFC consulted with the Unions over the summer of 2014 in preparation for the self-identification campaign. In October, a working group consisting of HR, the Unions and the Diversity Networks met to assess AAFC against the Canadian Human Rights Commission's Human Rights Maturity Model. The Semi-Annual Employment Equity Stakeholder meeting took place in December, 2014. The 2015 Employment Equity and Diversity Calendar was finalized in January 2015.

P. Corriveau indicated that there was no significant impact to Employment Equity representation resulting from past budget initiatives. With our current budget being stable, AAFC's focus is on supporting employee retention and preparing to recruit designated groups when staffing and recruitment activities resume.

The Diversity Network Chairs were invited to provide their respective updates.

**5. Diversity Network
Champions – update**

Visible Minorities Network (VMN)

**No follow up
required**

G. Meredith stated that the VMN now has two co-chairs, Augustus Reeves and Uttara Ahara. G. Meredith has been the network champion for the past three years.

The VMN has developed a 3-year strategic plan which provides members with an action plan to enhance learning and career development, health and wellness promotion, and how to influence departmental policies. The network is seeking support from HR to advance performance and change management amongst its members.

Aboriginal Network Circle (ANC)

G. Saindon replaced S. Mithani as the network champion. Darren Cook is the network chair.

The ANC has had excellent participation at AAFC. Their meetings are open to all, and facilitate an open dialogue on aboriginal related issues. Presentations have been made by ANC to the Deputy Minister and Associate on ANC activities. Lunch and learn events have taken place on topics such as treaties and their current impact. The ANC has participated in three economic and youth awareness events.

Persons with Disabilities Network (PWDN)

G. Saindon stated that Manon Roberge assumed the role of chair and Pamela Warburton provides a regional perspective as co-chair.

PWDN priorities were identified in September 2014 based on the results of a survey completed by its members. An action plan will be developed by early spring 2015 to address these priorities. The priorities include removing technology barriers, building a strong network, raising mental health awareness, and supporting career development for people with disabilities.

E. Tremblay (CAPE) asked whether the new Workplace 2.0 standards have been implemented. P. Corriveau stated that in leading by example, CMB has introduced the new configurations within their Branch before rolling out to all other branches (target completion summer 2015).

Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgendered (LGBT) Network

J. Taylor provided an update as the Diversity champion for the LGBT Network.

The terms of reference for the group have been finalized, and Donald Boucher and Gayatri Shankarraman have been selected as co-chairs. Membership is open to AAFC LGBT employees and anyone supporting the cause of inclusiveness for members.

The Network's objectives include increasing awareness and understanding amongst all AAFC employees, having a voice in department initiatives and policies such as recruitment and staffing, respect in the workplace and career development.

**6. Science & Technology
Branch - update
G. Saindon**

G. Saindon explained that the new strategic direction that was developed over the past two years has now moved into implementation.

**No follow up
required**

Nine sector science strategies have been created to set priorities for AAFC science activities over the medium term. Each strategy identifies the unique context, issues, challenges and opportunities for the sector as they relate to increasing agricultural productivity, improving environmental performances, improving attributes for food and non-food uses, and lastly, addressing threats to the agriculture and agri-food value chain.

An overview of these strategies has been communicated to employees and stakeholders.

M. Dyck (PSAC) asked whether STB's budget for this fiscal year has been fully allocated. G. Saindon stated that the Branch is currently on track, other than some re-allocation of funds between Research Centres.

B. Kingston (PSAC) inquired about the prognosis for the plant breeding program. G. Saindon stated that a few new Plant Breeders have been hired in Brandon and Morden, and further investments have been made in the Research Centres.

B. Kingston (PSAC) asked for clarification regarding the issue of germplasm ownership and its portrayal in the media. G. Saindon stated that although AAFC supports more industry and stakeholder involvement in bringing new varieties to the market by providing access to AAFC field crop germplasm, AAFC retains full ownership of germplasm.

7. Issues submitted by Unions

F. Murphy (PSAC) summarized the Union's position regarding Section 7 of the TBS Term Employment Policy in relation to the rollover provision.

ADM-CMB

It is PSAC's view that suspension of the policy is unfair to employees and that budget considerations should not be used as the rationale since budget will always be an issue. Y. Rochon (CAPE) stated support for PSAC's position, adding that other government departments have lifted the policy.

C. Keir (PIPSC) indicated disappointment in the Department's decision, suggesting that the policy be lifted at this time with the understanding that the suspension be re-introduced if conditions became necessary.

P. Corriveau reiterated that we are not closing the door on the suspension indefinitely. We looked after our employee's affected by WFA, and we will continuously keep an eye on the term employees.

The DM concluded by stating that every government department has a unique set of circumstances. AAFC has committed to an ongoing review of this policy.

Before ending the meeting, the DM acknowledged Ceci O'Flaherty's well-earned retirement. The Unions took this opportunity to thank Ceci and wish her all the best for her retirement.

Next meeting

Next meeting date will be confirmed and scheduled.

ADM CMB