

Honourable Gerry Ritz
Minister of Agriculture
Floor 9, 1341 Baseline Road, Tower 7
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0C5

April 19, 2013

Dear Sir;

We are writing to you on behalf of Canadian agricultural and botanical scientific societies concerning an issue we consider a matter of urgency. We appreciate that the Government of Canada is being prudent with its resources by adhering to the Treasury Board policy on travel. Strict adherence to directive 6.5, which restricts departmental expenditures for a single event to \$25,000, will substantially reduce attendance at Canadian conferences by AAFC scientists. The reduction in society conference participation threatens the future of the professional societies. We understand that adherence to directive 6.5 is a Ministerial responsibility, but we ask that the annual meetings of the Canadian scientific societies be exempt from this directive to allow a greater participation of AAFC scientists.

Canadian agriculture and botanical scientific societies are comprised of researchers from industry, universities, and provincial and federal government departments of agriculture. They play an essential role in facilitating the discovery and dissemination of knowledge for the well-being of Canadians and the sustainability of the economy. Annual society conferences are assembly points where scientists share knowledge and ideas, discuss and solve problems that face Canadian producers, exchange information and research results, and develop collaborations and networks. For students, who represent Canada's future scientists, attending a society conference is often the first opportunity to present their research, and establish lifelong national, cross-sectorial associations and collaborations. Society business meetings, which require quorum to be official, are held at an annual conference. AAFC scientists take active roles on the executive of many societies as well as planning the annual conference and chairing sessions. Reduced attendance at a society conference will initiate a course of events which could result in the eventual loss of a scientific society and all of the benefits it brings to Canadians.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

[A list of signatories and their affiliations follows; signed copies are attached]

Signatories

David Burton, Ph.D., P.Ag.
President-Elect, Canadian Society of Soil Science

David R. Clements, Ph.D.
President, Canadian Weed Science Society

John Cranfield, Ph.D.
President, Canadian Agricultural Economics Society

Fouad Daayf, Ph.D.
President, Canadian Phytopathological Society

C.F.M. de Lange, Ph.D.
Vice-President, Canadian Society of Animal Science

Frederique C. Guinel, Ph.D,
President, Canadian Botanical Association

Lynn Lashuk, P.Ag.
President, Agricultural Institute of Canada

B. Staffan Lindgren, Ph.D.
Vice-President, Entomological Society of Canada

William Plaxton, Ph.D.
President, Canadian Society of Plant Biologists

Steve Sheppard, Ph.D., P.Ag.
Executive Director, Canadian Society of Agronomy

Karen K. Tanino, Ph.D.
Western Executive, Canadian Society for Horticultural Science

Phillip Lee Wing, Ph.D.
President, Canadian Institute of Food Science and Technology

Qiang Zhang, Ph.D., P.Eng.
President, Canadian Society for Bioengineering