

**NUMCC – Minutes**  
**May 13, 2024 from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm ET**

**In attendance**

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC):

- Stefanie Beck, Deputy Minister
- Alec Nicolls, Chief of Staff, Deputy Minister's Office
- Justine Akman, Director General (for Shannon Nix), Strategic Policy Branch
- John Corbeil, Chief, Office of Audit and Evaluation
- Mary Dila, Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM), Public Affairs Branch
- Kathleen Donohue, ADM, International Affairs Branch
- Liz Foster, ADM, Programs Branch
- Andrew Goldstein, Associate ADM, Science and Technology Branch
- Marie-Claude Guérard, ADM, Corporate Management Branch (CMB)
- Tom Rosser, ADM, Market and Industry Services Branch
- Gilles Saindon, ADM, Science and Technology Branch
- Vidya ShankarNarayan, ADM, Information Systems Branch
- Tammy Abel, Corporate Secretary
- Elianne Hall, Workplace Well-Being Ombuds, Agriculture and Agri-food Canada
- Shauna Guillemin, A/Director General — Human Resources, CMB
- Leanne Whelan, A/Executive Director — Workforce and Wellness Services, CMB

Resources — Labour Relations, Centre of Expertise

- Erica-Tessy Constant, Associate Director, Labour Relations, CMB
- Alexandre Guilmaine, Manager, Labour Relations, CMB
- Lydia Barsalou, Human Resources Advisor, Labour Relations, CMB
- Annie Einarsson, Administrative Specialist, Labour Relations, CMB

Unions:

*Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) Agriculture Union*

- Milton Dyck, National President
- Randy Olynyk, Second National Executive Vice President
- Aaron Swerdlyk, Fourth National Executive Vice President

*Professional Institute of the Public Service Canada (PIPSC)*

- David McKenzie, President, AAFC National Union-Management Consultation Team
- Tim MacKay, Vice President, AAFC National Union-Management Consultation Team
- Jiali Shang, Vice President, Sciences — AAFC National Union-Management Consultation Team

*Canadian Association of Professional Employees (CAPE)*

- Granda Kopytko, President, Local 507
- Isabelle Michaud-Germain, Vice-President, Local 507
- Tristan DiFrancesco, Labour Relations Officer

*Association of Canadian Financial Officers (ACFO)*

- Carole Mailloux, NCR Departmental Representative
- Matthew Létourneau, Labour Relations Advisor

*International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW)*

- Paul Cameron, Business Manager

**Regrets**

- Patrick St-Georges, First National Executive Vice President (PSAC)
- Audrey St-Germain, Third National Executive Vice President (PSAC)
- Éric Beaulne, Labour Relations Officer (CAPE)

**1. Introduction and Opening Remarks****Presenter: Stefanie Beck**

- Participants were welcomed and received an update on changes to the AAFC senior management team and ADM Champions since the last meeting.
- Management indicated using innovative IT solutions for language interpretation at the HRUCCs.
- Management welcomed a new PSAC Union representative.

**2. Approval of Agenda****Presenter: Stefanie Beck**

- Agenda was approved by all parties.

**3. September 7, 2023 Minutes | follow up items****Presenter: Marie-Claude Guérard**

- Minutes from September 7, 2023 meeting were reviewed and approved secretarially.
- Follow-up items:
  - **Harassment and Violence in the Workplace Prevention**
    - The data on the supervisor/manager completion rates of the WMT102 course were sent to the Unions on December 8, 2023.  
**Item closed.**
  - **Science Integrity Report**
    - The presentation on Science Integrity Policy Training and Monitoring Plan was sent to the Unions on December 19, 2023.

**Item closed.**

- **Refocusing Government Spending**
  - Management updated the Unions on progress in budget modifications in January and February 2024.  
**Action item: Management will consult the Unions on the communication strategy prior to sharing budget modifications.**
- **Chemical Software Inventory Agreement**
  - CMB ADM committed to meeting monthly with the Unions to provide resolution updates.
  - Meetings have occurred on March 20, 2024 and April 17, 2024. Next meeting was on June 5, 2024.
- **Public Service Employee Survey (PSES) Results**
  - The branch Action Plans were sent to the Unions on February 12, 2024.
  - The Unions were invited to share feedback; none was received.
- **Round Table – Joint Panels on Telework**
  - The Unions have each requested their own tables for the Joint Panels on Telework.
  - Management has started contacting the Unions to establish the panels.

**4. Ombuds Report****Presenter: Elianne Hall**

- Presentation in English and French sent to the Unions on May 9, 2024.
- Over the past year, the Ombuds has met with approximately 150 employees (55% were employees and 45% were supervisors/managers/executives) from various branches and across the country. This resulted in approximately 300 meetings.
- The top issues raised were leadership/management style, harassment and incivility and conflict.
- The most common psychological factors of the issues raised in the Ombuds report are civility and respect, psychological protection, and clear leadership and expectations.
- The Ombuds has made recommendations to AAFC management for improvement in 4 areas based on the issues raised during their meetings with employees and supervisors/managers/executives:
  - Fostering a respectful workplace by addressing harassment and harmful behaviors.
  - Difficult leadership styles and their negative impacts in the workplace.
  - Barriers to inclusion.
  - Mental health and well-being in the workplace.
- The Unions were appreciative of the work performed by the Ombuds office.
- The Unions asked if the Ombuds has worked with the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Policy Committee subcommittee on mental health. The Ombuds is an observer and a participant on the OHS mental health subcommittee.

- The Unions expressed interest in management’s response to the Ombuds recommendations. Management has committed to sharing their response to the Ombuds recommendations.
- Management indicated that making changes to management style is ongoing.
- Management mentioned AAFC’s AgriSource dashboard on Harassment and Violence Complaints and Disciplinary Measures Statistics: Accountability Report as a way of increasing AAFC employees confidence in the outcomes of the harassment and violence complaints.
- The ADM champion for Diversity and Inclusion indicated they meet with the co-chairs of the networks to discuss ongoing issues and how to address them departmentally.  
**Action item: Management to provide the link to the dashboard on Harassment and Violence Complaints and Disciplinary Measures Statistics: Accountability Report.**  
**Action item: Management to provide their response to the Ombuds report.**

## 5. Standing Item: Harassment and Violence in the Workplace (HVWP)

Presenter: Shauna Guillemin

### Status update on harassment and violence in the workplace prevention training

- As of April 1, 2024, AAFC’s completion rate for “Preventing Harassment and Violence in the Workplace for employee” (WMT101) is 69%.
- As of April 1, 2024, 59% of managers/supervisors/directors have completed the mandatory “Preventing Harassment and Violence in the Workplace for Managers and Health and Safety Committees” (WMT102) course.
- The Unions voiced concerns with the completion rate of the WMT101 and WMT102. They are expecting the completion rate to be higher and AAFC to follow-up more tightly with employees and managers that have not yet completed the courses.

### AAFC harassment and violence in the workplace (HVWP) cases

- In the fiscal year 2023-24, HVWP Program received 58 notices of occurrence with an average resolution time of 10 months.
- Currently, there are 44 active cases working towards resolution.
- From January 1st to March 31, 2024, the HVWPP received 38 inquiries.
- Since 2019, 43% of cases investigated were deemed unfounded or did not meet the definition of harassment or violence in the workplace.
- The rate of founded or partially founded cases is gradually rising – from 44% in 2022, to 50% in 2023, to 57% as of April 1, 2024.
- There are currently more active HVWP files than in the past. Management believes this trend is caused by the enhanced awareness of the program, and employees are increasingly confident that the outcomes of the resolution process will benefit them and their workplace.
- Management continues to increase awareness of harassment and violence in the workplace by:

- Enhancing the AgriSource content with links and information to internal and external resources.
- Designing AAFC-specific HVWP prevention training.
- A web-based notice of occurrence form was created.
- Increased focus on prevention, psychological health and safety and training.
- The Unions expressed concern about “off the mark” comments relating to union representatives in the investigation reports from external investigators.
- Management mentioned that they work with companies if investigation reports have “off the mark” comments.

**Action item: The Unions requested a plan to address workplace harassment systematically.**

## **6. Standing Item: Scientific Integrity Report**

**Presenter: Andrew Goldstein**

- Scientific Integrity Report in English and French provided to the Unions secretari ally on May 9, 2024.
- AAFC held a Science Ethics and Integrity Week from February 19-24, 2024, as part of Values and Ethics (V&E) awareness month.
- The Canadian School of Public Service (CSPS) hosted an online, bilingual interactive event on May 7, 2024, featuring Canada’s Chief Science Advisor.
- In February 2024, AAFC submitted its fifth annual SIP compliance survey to OCSA, demonstrating full compliance with 14 out of 15 measures. The pending compliance measure pertains to the SIP monitoring plan.
- The Unions were impressed with AAFC’s work on science integrity.

## **7. Renewing Telework Agreement – Duty to Accommodate**

**Presenter: Shauna Guillemin**

- Management addressed the Unions question regarding accommodation.
- Management indicated that telework agreements are not permanent.
- Telework agreements are periodically reviewed, especially those related to duty to accommodate to ensure the accommodation in place is still appropriate and to make adjustments if it’s no longer the proper measure.

## **8. Prescribed Presence in the Workplace**

**Presenter: Marie-Claude Guerard and Stefanie Beck**

- On May 1, 2024, AAFC employees were informed that as of September 9, 2024, all federal public servants who are eligible for hybrid work arrangement will be required to work on-site a minimum of 3 days per week.
- AAFC is committed to continuous improvement in its on-site presence reporting approach and methodology.

- AAFC is reviewing and assessing it's current practices to ensure alignment with TBS guidelines, *Privacy Guidance on the Common Hybrid Work Model for the Federal Public Service*.
  - In January, February and March 2024, the compliance rates were 98%, 98.9% and 98.2% respectively.
  - LR will be releasing new tools and guidance to support managers in addressing non-compliance or patterns of concern.
  - AAFC's current process to address non-compliance, includes:
    - Step 1: Conversation with employee outlining the importance of complying with the directive and reminding them that failure to do so will have consequences
    - Step 2: Non disciplinary written letter of expectations
    - Step 3: Revocation of Hybrid Telework Agreement (Administrative measure, non-disciplinary)
    - Step 4: Discipline
  - Management is interested in hearing from the Unions on the new on-site direction.
  - The Unions expressed significant frustration on the new Direction on Prescribed Presence in the Workplace.
  - The Unions mentioned that presence in the workplace should have a purpose and does not allow managers to manage their employees.
  - Management is reviewing on-site workspace availability.
  - The Unions indicated that employees want to be treated as valued professionals.
  - The Unions shared their concerns regarding:
    - On-site workspace availability, particularly in NHCAP.
    - Availability of OHS and first aid attendants in GC co-working sites.
    - Privacy with the use of IP addresses for on-site presence monitoring.
  - Management is reviewing on-site workspace availability.
- Action item: Management to share links for the transformation projects.**

## 9. Budget 2024-2025

### Presenter: Stefanie Beck

- AAFC's approach was approved by the Treasury Board in February 2024.
- Management will continue to share the latest information available and actions to implement new budget measures with the Unions and employees.
- The \$17.5M savings in 2024-25 will be mainly achieved through:
  - A reduction in travel and professional services expenditures (\$9M)
  - A small reduction in Grants and Contributions (\$4.6M)
  - Reductions to operating expenditures through administrative efficiencies and increased use of digital tools. (\$3.9M)
- These savings are estimated to have minimal impacts on AAFC staffing levels and programs.
- The reduction in professional services expenditures should result in less reliance on external support.

- Management is not anticipating any major program or activity to be discontinued as a result of the Budget 2023 savings identified.
- AAFC continues to implement its plan under the Refocusing Government Spending commitment from the 2023 Federal Budget.
- Management is waiting for details from Central Agencies concerning the budget saving announcements in the 2023 Fall Economic Statement and 2024 Federal Budget  
**Action item: Management will provide a breakdown of the 17.5M savings in 2024-25.**  
**Action item: Management will engage the Unions on the communication strategy prior to sharing budget modifications.**  
**Action item: Management to provide more detailed information on departmental savings (i.e., where FTE lost and what programs they were transferred to).**

### National Fleet

- Management is focused on a sustainable, well managed, affordable, and green fleet.
- Management's goal is to get the fleet to a size and distribution that adequately supports departmental priorities, without waste or surplus, and enables AAFC to meet GoC required targets:
  - 100% Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEV) in Light Duty Fleet by 2030.
  - Sufficient internal budget to support the life cycle fleet costs.
- The first round of reductions took place at the end of fiscal year 2023-2024; this represented a 15% reduction of the fleet.
- The Unions expressed concern over the prioritization of electric over gas vehicles in isolated work locations.

### 10. UMC Meeting Dates

#### Information provided secretarially on May 10, 2024.

- AAFC will ensure to provide the Unions with various dates and times to choose from.
- Going forward, AAFC will make efforts to schedule meetings on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday.

### 11. Public Service Employment Survey

#### Information provided secretarially on May 10, 2024.

- AAFC requested feedback from the Unions on the branch plans, however none was received.
- AAFC is interested in Unions feedback on these plans. As such, they are invited once more to comment on AAFC's branch plans.
- The next PSES survey is scheduled to be launched in the Fall 2024.  
**Action item: Management has requested the Unions feedback on AAFC's branch PSES action plans.**

## 11. Sensitivity Labels

### Information provided secretarially on May 10, 2024.

- As per TBS-Policy on Government Security (E.2.2.2.1. – security labeling), the determination of document sensitivity and corresponding labelling is mandated by TBS for all GC.
- Security labeling and the process of evaluating the content applies to all documents processed and reviewed by AAFC employees.
- AAFC had implemented data labelling for all GC data sensitivities ranging from Unclassified to Secret.
- AAFC has planned and is currently in the process of implementing a means of labelling in a “transparent” manner. This means the label will not show up on the document as a header, it will be included in the document properties or metadata only.
- The implementation of the transparent sensitivity labels should be completed by June 30, 2024.

**Action item: PIPSC requests that a follow-up consultation be held at the next NUMCC.**

## 10. Round Table

### Presenter: Stefanie Beck

- The next National Union-Management Consultation Committee meeting will be held in the Fall 2024. The new date will be communicated secretarially.