

2019 SARL Conference – Calgary

Opening Session

Sen. Brian Munzlinger of Missouri introduced Minister Ralph Eichler of Manitoba who welcomed everyone to Calgary.

Marie Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture & Agrifood, addressed the gathering of legislators and agribusiness representative who had gathered for this annual meeting of State Agriculture & Rural Leaders. Minister Bibeau noted that it was important for agriculture legislators from both countries to meet and learn from each other. 'We make great food together, not only for us, but for the world. Trade brings great benefits, and signing of the new NAFTA (USMCA) will ensure access to biotech and trade. We must implement this agreement.'

Minister Bibou also discussed the critical need for collaboration between our countries in planning for a potential African Swine Fever outbreak.

Canada looks forward to working with the US in the future. If we continue to grow agricultural trade, we grow the economy. 'Let's keep a good thing growing'.

The second portion of the Opening Session featured **Dr. Jason Henderson** spoke next on **The Ag & Rural Economy**. Dr. Henderson is Associate Dean and Director of the Cooperative Extension at Purdue University, as well as an agricultural economist. Despite the bad decade for the economics of agriculture, Dr. Henderson thinks we are in an upward cycle, based upon the data showing farmers buying land and equipment. However he stressed Agricultural and Rural areas need to work together, forming an ecosystem where both can flourish.

Dr. Henderson sees a need for value added and demand oriented products in order for agriculture to grow. Agriculture needs to think regionally, and to blaze a new trail with different opportunities going forward.