



You Make THE Difference: Strengthening the Future of Manitoba Fairs

The Manitoba Association of Agricultural Societies (MAAS) is proud to announce that our province has been awarded a grant to bring the You Make THE Difference National Initiative to Manitoba. This groundbreaking program will officially launch at the

2026 Manitoba Association of Agricultural Societies Annual Convention on March 28, 2026 in Brandon.

Equipping Ag Societies boards and volunteers across the province with powerful tools, training, and inspiration to meet the challenges facing fairs today.

What Makes You Make THE Difference?

At its heart, You Make THE Difference is about people. Created and led by award-winning humanitarian Ian Hill, the initiative exists because rural communities and fairs are facing real headwinds: aging leadership, fewer volunteers, and increasing demands with limited resources. Hill believes the future of fairs—and the communities they serve—rests not in distant institutions, but in everyday people who roll up their sleeves and say yes when their towns need them most.

The program provides practical strategies to recruit and inspire volunteers, strengthen leadership, and build long-term sustainability. It combines high-energy, face-to-face sessions with an innovative digital follow-up system that keeps support and resources flowing long after the workshop ends.

What the Grant Provides

Thanks to this grant, Manitoba will receive the full benefits of the You Make THE Difference program at no cost to MAAS or our agricultural society communities. The grant includes:

- A provincewide training tour that will bring in-person workshops directly to Ag Society boards members, organizers, volunteers, community leaders & sponsors.
- Access to a digital training platform and mobile app with videos, guides, and on-demand tools for ongoing support.

This blended approach ensures fairs receive immediate, hands-on training and long-term reinforcement to sustain new practices and ideas.

Why It Matters for Manitoba

Fairs in Manitoba are more than events. They are vital community institutions—part of the cultural fabric of our province—that showcase agriculture, provide opportunities for youth, and bring generations together. Yet many fairs are facing challenges in volunteer recruitment, financial pressures, and leadership fatigue.



The You Make THE Difference initiative is designed to meet these needs head-on. By equipping local boards with practical tools and ongoing support, the program helps ensure fairs remain strong, resilient, and relevant for decades to come. This isn't just about sustaining fairs—it's about empowering the people who make them possible.

Looking Ahead

The official kickoff at the 2026 Manitoba Association of Agricultural Societies Convention is just the beginning. From there, the provincewide training tour and digital tools will help every fair board strengthen leadership, inspire volunteers, and create lasting community impact. *Who Should Attend?*

Manitoba has a proud tradition of fairs, and this grant is an investment in their future. Together, with You Make THE Difference, we can honor that tradition while building the capacity to thrive in the 21st century.

To learn more, visit www.youmakethedifference.ca

This grant is made possible through the generous support of Fairs.com.