



SASKATCHEWAN STOCK GROWERS ASSOCIATION

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Media Release

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Stock Growers Welcome Lessee Purchase Plan

Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association (SSGA) President, Ed Bothner, of Beechy SK, welcomed this week's announcement of a new five-year Crown land sale program.

"For over a decade, the Saskatchewan Stock Growers have been calling on the province to adopt a program that would make Crown land available for sale under reasonable terms to the people who are currently leasing it," said Bothner, "We applaud the government's responsiveness to the concerns of our members."

Bothner added, "As with many new policy initiatives the devil is often found within the details and the chance that unintended outcomes emerge during the implementation phase exists. That said, we are optimistic that the same degree of concern within government for producer interests that prompted the development of the lessee purchase plan will apply if problems are identified over the coming months."

According to Eric Lawrence of Maple Creek, SK, Chair of the SSGA's Land Use Committee, "The Lessee Purchase program recognizes that members of Saskatchewan's ranching community have been conscientious stewards of the province's grasslands resource for over 100 years"

Lawrence added, "Giving producers title to the land they manage can enhance the economic sustainability of their operations. It also acknowledges that those who have lived and worked on our grasslands for generations are among the most knowledgeable and stalwart protectors of the resource."

Lawrence cautioned that some concerns remain regarding particular aspects of the program. "It will be interesting to see what the outcome of the appraisal process used to determine sale values is. For example, it could be a problem if grazing lands are valued according to their potential for other uses such as recreation, suburban development and gentrification."

"It is no secret that our industry has been under significant financial stress over the past several years", stated Lawrence, "it will be interesting to see whether the modest incentives contained in the program are sufficient to encourage significant uptake."

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