

Quote: 203328

Mr. Chad MacPherson

General Manager

Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association

ssga@sasktel.net

Dear Mr. MacPherson:

Thank you for your email and the attached resolutions, adopted by the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association at its recent annual general meeting. I appreciate receiving a copy of these resolutions and am pleased to provide the following responses for the ones that are applicable to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC).

Resolutions 2 and 3

Ranchers and farmers have long been great stewards of the land, and this is why I support options that recognize the value of agricultural landscapes and the voluntary stewardship actions of landowners.

While the Order includes federal and provincial Crown lands, private agricultural lands are excluded and therefore will not be affected. In addition, grazing will not be regulated by the Order on Crown lands leased by agricultural producers. Instead, the Government of Canada has committed to providing funding for voluntary actions that support grazing management to improve Greater Sage-Grouse habitat.

Resolution 4

Effective November 1, 2014, community pasture land (formerly operated by the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration) will be transferred to the Province of Saskatchewan. After that date, AAFC will no longer control access to this land.

Please also be advised that leafy spurge is a “prohibited noxious” weed on the *Weed Seeds Order*. The proposed revision of the *Weed Seeds Order* will reclassify leafy spurge as a “primary noxious” weed as it is considered too widely spread to be listed as a “prohibited noxious” weed.

Resolution 5

The federal government is continually working with its provincial partners to make improvements to the insurance coverage available for forage. Recognizing that the majority of producers do not insure their forage crops, federal and provincial officials, joined by producers from provincial and national associations, established a dedicated task team to make recommendations to enhance forage insurance programs and increase participation across the country.

The task team has worked for over 18 months and has undertaken a review of the existing forage and pasture plans in each province and identified policy changes, enhancements and other program design features that could improve and strengthen insurance options for producers

(e.g. a forage insurance model based on feed need). The forage task team delivered a series of recommendations to governments in December 2013. Following up on these recommendations, the federal government worked with the provinces to adopt new forage insurance directives that allow seasonal forage production to be insured separately.

I am hopeful that the new directives will help increase uptake and provide a tool for administrators to develop insurance plans that are more responsive to the needs of livestock producers.

The implementation of other task team recommendations will be staggered, as the provinces are at different stages of implementation. Although some of them have already adopted improvements, most provincial agencies, including the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation, are currently analyzing the recommendations and working with producers to determine how they can be implemented and customized to meet regional needs. While the provincial government can choose which forage plans it wishes to offer, AAFC is supportive of provinces proposing new ideas or alternative models. As we move forward to implementing changes, it will be important to have the support of industry associations, like the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association, in terms of encouraging their members to participate.

Resolution 7

AAFC officials have advised Environment Canada to consider increasing its engagement and consultations with ranchers to clarify issues related to the Order, the commitment of funding for voluntary actions, and details in the Sage-Grouse recovery plan.

Resolution 8

The Government of Canada recognizes that the *Animal Pedigree Act* (APA) establishes a legal framework providing for the improvement of animal breeds and the protection of persons who raise and purchase animals. The APA has contributed to increased competitiveness of the animal production sector through the preservation and enhancement of its genetic pool. Genetic improvement remains a key component to ensuring competitiveness of the livestock sector and

its ability to compete internationally. The current consultations on the future of the APA will help determine how to best address the needs of the livestock industry with regard to animal genetics.

Resolution 9

When the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) created the Centre of Administration (CoA), the processes for issuing permissions were consolidated into a single office in order to provide consistent and predictable service on a national scale. Although the new processes replace previous personalized service at the regional/district level, the centralized process is aimed at placing the administrative functions solely within the CoA and allowing the specialists in the field to better serve clients where technical expertise is required.

The CFIA acknowledges that there were some communication challenges during the start-up phase of this initiative. Since that time, a number of significant improvements have been made to better inform stakeholders of the status of their submissions and to minimize processing times.

The CoA is committed to improving client services and has initiated the creation of a working group with industry associations to further explore issues and identify solutions.

Resolution 11

The Government of Canada recognizes that access to temporary foreign workers is a key issue for many industry stakeholders. Although the responsibility for labour-related policies and programs does not fall within the mandate of the Agriculture and Agri-Food Portfolio, AAFC officials liaise with key departments, such as Employment and Social Development Canada and Citizenship and Immigration Canada, to ensure understanding of the agriculture and agri-food sector use of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. AAFC will examine the impacts of further reforms on the sector, working together with industry.

I trust that you find this information informative and that it will help clarify these matters. I appreciate your sharing these resolutions with me and allowing me to respond. This information helps to keep me informed with regard to issues that are of concern to producers in the beef industry in Saskatchewan.

Again, thank you for writing.

Sincerely,

Gerry Ritz, PC, MP