

Quote: 198712

Mr. Chad MacPherson

General Manager, Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association

ssga@sasktel.net

Dear Mr. MacPherson:

Thank you for forwarding a copy of the resolutions from the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association's (SSGA) meeting of January 23, 2014. I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

With respect to resolution 3, on the topic of irradiation, I have taken the liberty of forwarding your correspondence to the Honourable Rona Ambrose, Minister of Health, to ensure that the SSGA's views are noted by her department. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) supports the development and adoption of technologies and tools that are demonstrated to be safe and effective ways to improve food safety.

In response to resolution 4, I can appreciate the SSGA's concerns about the uncertain future use of federal non-reversionary parcels in the divested community pastures. Canada remains committed to fair and open processes for the disposal of surplus federal Crown lands while respecting its legal obligations to Aboriginal peoples. As AAFC winds down operations at the remaining 52 pastures in Saskatchewan over the next four years and returns administration and control of the provincial lands to Saskatchewan, the federal lands within these pastures will be declared surplus. The Government of Canada's Treasury Board Directive on the Sale or Transfer of Surplus Real Property guides AAFC in the process to be used in disposing of federal land.

AAFC has arranged for Saskatchewan to assume interim use and management, solely for pasture purposes, of the federal land remaining in pastures divested to the Province of Saskatchewan. This arrangement is reflected in a temporary licence to use and occupy Crown lands granted to Saskatchewan by Canada. This allows for a period of stability; the federal land will remain available for use by patrons under a lease arrangement with the Province while the new management model is put into place. Ongoing communication between AAFC and Saskatchewan Agriculture will further enable the Province to work with its lessees and adjust to changing circumstances, if needed.

I trust that this information is of assistance. Again, thank you for sharing the SSGA's views on these matters.

Sincerely,

Gerry Ritz, PC, MP

c.c.: The Honourable Rona Ambrose, PC, MP