

Quote: 232845

Mr. Chad MacPherson
General Manager
SK Stock Growers Association
ssga@sasktel.net

Dear Mr. MacPherson:

Thank you for your email and attached copy of the resolutions reached at the 104th Annual General Meeting of the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association, held in Moose Jaw on June 13, 2017. I regret the delay in responding.

Regarding the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) pastures in Saskatchewan mentioned in resolution #1, as you may be aware, the decision in 2012 to end federal involvement in the Community Pasture Program (CPP) operations and return lands to the provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan was based on the fact that the CPP had successfully achieved its objectives and that there was sufficient local capacity in place to support grazing operations and maintain the sound ecological and land management practices established under the Program.

As part of this continued effort, AAFC has been working actively with Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), as ECCC has shown an interest in assuming control of federal pasture lands at Govenlock once CPP operations cease, with a further interest expressed in exploring expansion of this area to include lands in adjacent pastures, specifically Battle Creek and Nashlyn. ECCC has engaged pasture patrons and key stakeholders, including the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association, to outline their intentions and discuss how to continue grazing operations. ECCC recognizes that the healthy native prairie and species-at-risk habitat in the pastures in southwestern Saskatchewan are the result of many years of well-managed cattle grazing. For over 40 years, ECCC has permitted cattle grazing on National Wildlife Areas in Saskatchewan and clearly supports grazing practices that are beneficial to wildlife. I am confident that an arrangement that benefits all parties can be established and that grazing, which is critical in the management of these lands, will continue.

Concerning resolution #11, recruiting and retaining a sufficient supply of both skilled and unskilled labour is critical to the competitiveness of Canada's agriculture and agri-food sector and continues to be a major challenge for employers. AAFC is working closely with Employment and Social Development Canada and with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, who lead on federal labour-related policies and programs, to discuss ways that labour market policies and programs can better support the labour needs of the agriculture and agri-food sector.

In addition, the Government continues to bring together and engage key stakeholders to ensure a common understanding of the agriculture and agri-food sector's unique labour requirements. For

example, on July 21, 2017, AAFC invited the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council to the Annual Conference of Federal, Provincial, and Territorial Ministers and Deputy Ministers of Agriculture, in Newfoundland and Labrador, to present its analysis of the depth and breadth of labour issues facing the agriculture and agri-food sector and how these issues are impeding the sector's ability to meet its full potential.

I trust that this information will be of assistance. Again, thank you for writing and for your interest in community pasture lands.

Sincerely,

Lawrence MacAulay, PC, MP

c.c.: The Honourable Catherine McKenna, PC, MP