



Government
— of —
Saskatchewan

Minister of Agriculture
Legislative Building
Regina, Canada S4S 0B3

August 13, 2024

Chad MacPherson
General Manager
Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association
PO Box 4752
REGINA SK S4P 3Y4

Dear Chad MacPherson:

The Ministry of Agriculture would like to congratulate the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association (SSGA) on another successful and productive AGM and Convention.

Several provincial related resolutions passed by SSGA members are listed below along with our responses

Resolution #3

WHEREAS the Ministry of Agriculture is assigned the administration of the bed and shore as provincial Crown land pursuant to *The Provincial Lands Act, 2016*; and

WHEREAS constructing a fence across a non-navigable waterway requires permission from the administrator; and

BE IT RESOLVED that SSGA lobby the Ministry of Agriculture to no longer require landowners to receive permission from the Ministry of Agriculture to fence across non-navigable waterways.

The Government of Saskatchewan is the owner of the bed and shores of virtually all water bodies in the province. The Ministry of Agriculture is assigned the administration of the bed and shore as provincial Crown land pursuant to *The Provincial Lands Act, 2016*. Fencing cannot impede public right of access to waterbodies (including creeks). The public must have access to pass on the creek or beside the land on either side, which is protected by section 2-10 of *The Provincial Lands Act, 2016*.

Section 2-10(2) Out of every disposition of provincial land, the land forming the bed and shore of any river, stream, watercourse, lake, creek, spring, ravine, canyon, lagoon, swamp, marsh or other body of water is reserved to the Crown.

Section 2-10(1) If provincial land bordering on a lake, river, stream or other body of water is disposed of by the Crown, a public right of access is reserved with respect to that lake, river, stream or body of water that includes the right:

- a. to pass on or beside the land on either side of the lake, river, stream or body of water as necessary for use; and
- b. to pass over all existing or necessary portage roads past any rapids or falls that connect the lake, river, stream or body of water.

It should be noted that the public right of access does not include a right to damage or alter the bed, shore or adjacent land, and that such occurrences should be brought to the attention of the Ministry.

We will continue to work with the impacted landowner, local RM, and other provincial ministries on this matter.

Resolution #4

WHEREAS the Airbus GPI technology has been proven to be adaptable to western Canadian growing conditions.

WHEREAS a pilot is required to test the technology under real world conditions; and

BE IT RESOLVED that SSGA lobby the Ministry of Agriculture and SCIC to fund a desktop pilot for 2024 and a commercial pilot for 2025.

Resolution #5

WHEREAS a new interface for digital forage insurance product delivery is under development.

BE IT RESOLVED that SSGA lobby the Ministry of Agriculture and SCIC to fund a pilot to test the interface.

In response to resolutions #4 and #5 - SCIC continues to work with industry to improve existing programs and explore alternatives for forage insurance. In 2014, SCIC formed the Forage Working Group, of which the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association is a member and continues to consult this group to enhance risk management options. SCIC is also a member of the National Forage Insurance Task Team, evaluating several new forage yield assessment technologies. SCIC is actively collaborating with industry and contributing funding to the Airbus GPI project and other remote sensing products. Prior to initiating a pilot project on a digital interface, SCIC will continue to work with Airbus GPI technology developers and producers to assess the product and ensure it can accurately represent the forage growing conditions in Saskatchewan. SCIC will also continue to work with Airbus GPI technology developers to assess the product behind the newly developed interface.

Resolution #7

WHEREAS the Sustainable Canadian Agriculture Partnership is a beneficial program for producers to implement beneficial management practices on their operations.

WHEREAS there are items that are not on the list that are still beneficial to producers to ensure their operations are staying current with upcoming technology but are cost prohibitive.

BE IT RESOLVED that SSGA lobby the Government of Saskatchewan to expand the list of eligible equipment to include new technology such as Merck SenseHub tags, portable scales, calf catchers and virtual fencing systems.

The purpose of the Animal Health and Biosecurity (AHB) program is to increase participation in biosecurity and animal welfare initiatives such as meeting industry standards and seeking certification, building understanding of biosecurity and animal welfare needs, and adopting improved practices through education and awareness. Each sector has a list of eligible equipment which was established in conjunction with industry.

Industry and sector organizations have the opportunity to submit requests for additional equipment to be considered for eligibility. These requests are reviewed annually based on whether the equipment is considered normal management or has a significant benefit to animal welfare and biosecurity. Approved equipment is added to the eligible equipment list, and this is communicated to industry. The ministry will be in contact with Saskatchewan Verified Beef Production Inc. to ensure they are aware of the process in adding additional equipment to the approved eligible equipment list for beef cattle.

The equipment that the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association is requesting to include in the eligible list includes Merck SenseHub tags, portable scales, calf catchers and virtual fencing systems.

- Tag reading equipment, (which includes EID, RFID, antenna and controller) is eligible under the AHB program. The tags themselves are not eligible as they are considered ongoing normal management.
- Weigh scales – eligible components include load bars or load cells, platform, weigh indicator and cables. The program has yet to see any of these components described as portable. The purpose of the equipment being funded is to individually weigh an animal for the purpose of administering the correct dosage of medication. Portable group weigh scales are not eligible under the program as they are considered production based.
- Calf catcher - Under the Assurance Producer Rebate Program under the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) framework, calf catchers were an eligible equipment item. As the AHB program was being designed under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP) framework, it was determined that the ministry would not support the calf catcher due to concerns of animal welfare, producer safety of unstable terrain and low uptake on this piece of equipment, it was removed as an eligible item.

Virtual fencing systems – the ministry will review the eligibility of virtual fencing systems, and a response with the outcome will be provided to Saskatchewan Verified Beef Production Inc.

Resolution #8

WHEREAS WLPIP is a market-based insurance program; and

WHEREAS in the event of a border closure there is no active market, which causes a delay in settling contracts in claim.

BE IT RESOLVED that the SSGA lobby SCIC and the provincial government to define a settlement floor under WLPIP.

Livestock Price Insurance is administered in partnership with the four Western provinces and Canada, through a multi-lateral agreement, with Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC) acting as the service provider. Program methodology is in place to respond to an event such as a border closure, however, SCIC will consult with AFSC regarding this resolution. Any methodology changes would require the agreement of all parties.

Resolution #10

WHEREAS the Saskatchewan Cattlemen’s Association (SCA) was formed as an agriculture commission under *The Agri- Food Act* of Saskatchewan to oversee the expenditures and disbursement of the Beef Checkoff collected in the Province of Saskatchewan.

WHEREAS a resolution was passed at the 2024 SCA annual general meeting asking for a 75% increase in the refundable portion of the Saskatchewan Beef Check off with fewer than 70 producers in attendance.

WHEREAS the SCA represents approximately 12,000 producers in the Province of Saskatchewan, all checkoff contributing producers should receive annually, a full and transparent report on how checkoff dollars are spent in operating the SCA office and its board of directors.

BE IT RESOLVED that the SSGA request the Agri Foods Council of Saskatchewan to make the SCA financially accountable to all checkoff contributing producers in a transparent and precise detail regarding the operation of the SCA office and its board of directors.

The Cattle Development Plan Regulations grant the Saskatchewan Cattlemen’s Association (SCA) the power to set and collect a levy. The Agri-Food Council typically requires Agri-Food Agencies to display producer support for any levy change via a motion at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of producers.

At the time of the 2024 AGM, SCA’s quorum for conducting business was 50 registered producers. This is twice the quorum of any other agency under *The Agri-Food Act, 2004 (Act)*. At the AGM, producers in attendance discuss and vote on resolutions presented by the Board of Directors. These resolutions direct SCA policy, including the refundable levy.

Development Commissions, like the SCA, are producer led, producer funded, and producer run. The Agri-Food Council encourages all producers who want to direct the activities of their board to engage and participate in opportunities such as AGMs or district meetings. This is

where producers have the most opportunity to share their views and opinions and vote on resolutions.

The SCA is also required by its Regulations and the Act to prepare an annual report that must be made available to all producers. The report must contain a state of the industry report, an update on agency activities, audited financial statements, three separate audit reports, and a payee list outlining all expenditures over certain thresholds. Its most recent annual report, for the year ending July 31, 2023, met all the requirements stated above. If the SSGA has any concerns related to the report, I would encourage you to raise those concerns with the SCA or have the SSGA members who sit on the SCA board bring the concerns forward to a future meeting.

Resolution #11

WHEREAS the Saskatchewan provincial beef checkoff is a mandatory refundable levy; and **WHEREAS** a producer's checkoff contributions is consider a producers membership in the Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association (SCA).

BE IT RESOLVED that SSGA lobby the Agri-Food Council and SCA to have the beef checkoff refund form readily available on the SCA website.

I encourage the SSGA to work with the SCA to ensure policies related to levy refunds are accessible to producers, while also ensuring the SCA Board can verify that individuals paying the levy are the same individuals requesting a refund. Agencies want to minimize situations where third parties, like accountants, are requesting refunds for producers without the knowledge of producers.

Resolution #12

BE IT RESOLVED that the mandatory refundable beef checkoff will always be refundable.

Saskatchewan only has four Development Boards with the power to collect a mandatory, non-refundable levy. These agencies were established under *The Natural Products Marketing Act*, which was repealed with the passing of *The Agri-Food Act* in 1990. The ability to have Development Commissions and refundable levies was not an option under *The Natural Products Marketing Act*. Development Commissions were introduced with *The Agri-Food Act* in 1990 and since that time, there has been little appetite from producers or government to return to mandatory, non-refundable levies.

The SCA has been a successful Development Commission, as reflected in their historically low refunds rates since establishment. To date, the SCA has not expressed any interest in moving to a non-refundable levy.

Resolution #16

WHEREAS the ongoing TB investigation has financially burdened the producers involved; and **WHEREAS** it is no fault of their own.

BE IT RESOLVED that the SSGA request the Province of Saskatchewan to include CFIA quarantine and cleanup costs under PDAP.

The Provincial Disaster Assistance Program (PDAP) provides financial assistance to eligible claimants located in a municipality, First Nation or park that have been designated eligible for assistance as a result of a substantial loss or damage to uninsurable, essential property caused by specific natural disasters.

Types of Ineligible Disasters:

The Provincial Disaster Assistance Program (PDAP) does not apply to the following types of disasters as they do not meet the policy intent of being a distinct disaster (with a definable start, end, and spatial impact) for which the impacts stemmed from a natural hazard:

- Infestations, plant and/or animal disease outbreaks.

We continue to look forward to working with the SSGA in advancing the interests of our livestock sector.

Sincerely,



David Marit
Minister of Agriculture

cc: Honourable Paul Merriman, Minister of the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency
Marlo Prichard, President and Fire Commissioner, Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency