



February 27, 2024

The Honourable David Marit
Minister of Agriculture
Room 334
2405 Legislative Drive
Regina SK S4S 0B3

Sent Via Email: ag.minister@gov.sk.ca

RE: Establishing a Provincial Drought Preparedness Committee

Dear Minister Marit,

As President of the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan, I am writing as a stakeholder in Saskatchewan's agricultural sector to urge the establishment of a Drought Preparedness Committee. As you are aware, the impact of drought on our province's agriculture can be devastating, affecting not only farmers and ranchers but also our rural communities and the overall economy.

Saskatchewan is no stranger to the challenges posed by drought. In recent years, we have witnessed increasingly frequent and severe drought events, leading to crop failures, reduced livestock productivity, and strained water resources. These adverse effects not only threaten the livelihoods of our farmers but also jeopardize food security and economic stability.

The establishment of a Drought Preparedness Committee is crucial for several reasons:

- 1. Early Warning and Mitigation:** A dedicated committee can monitor the meteorological and climate data available to identify early warnings of potential drought conditions. By identifying drought risks in advance, the Committee can review and provide input on the province's drought response plan, policies, and proactive measures to mitigate the impact of drought on farms and rural communities. Furthermore, representing diverse stakeholders from rural Saskatchewan, the Committee can serve as a forum for local engagement and awareness about drought preparedness and best practices.
- 2. Resource Allocation:** During drought emergencies, resource allocation is essential to support affected farmers and communities. A coordinated committee can gather information and provide feedback on drought management activities and supports including water development and conservation strategies, relevant extension resources, business risk management program supports, and livestock management, feed and grazing supplies.



3. **Stakeholder Engagement:** The committee can serve as a platform for collaboration and engagement among various stakeholders, including government agencies, agricultural organizations, research institutions, and community representatives. By fostering partnerships and sharing expertise, innovative solutions can be developed to build resilience and adaptability in the face of drought challenges.
4. **Long-Term Planning:** Drought preparedness requires long-term planning and investment in infrastructure, technology, and research. The committee can facilitate the implementation, and modification, of the Ministry's drought preparedness and response plans, incorporating scientific knowledge, best practices, and stakeholder input to enhance our adaptive capacity and sustainability.

According to the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Drought Monitor January assessment, all of Saskatchewan is currently in at least a D0 drought, with many regions reporting a more advanced stage of drought including a large portion of the West Central region in a D3 drought.

Prioritizing drought resilience and preparedness in advance of the 2024 growing season, we can minimize the adverse impacts on our farmers and ranchers, communities, and economy.

To conclude, the establishment of a Drought Preparedness Committee is a proactive and strategic measure to safeguard Saskatchewan agriculture against the growing threat of drought. I urge you to give serious consideration to this proposal and take decisive action for the benefit of all Saskatchewan residents. Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to your response.

Respectfully,

Ian Boxall, President
APAS