



June 14, 2024

The Honourable Robert Black
Chair, Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry
Senate of Canada
Ottawa Ontario K1A 0A4

Sent Via Email: robert.black@sen.parl.gc.ca

RE: Critical Ground: Why Soil is Essential to Canada's Economic, Environmental, Human, and Social Health

Dear Senator Black,

On behalf of the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan I wish to extend our congratulations and gratitude for the comprehensive study and ensuing report titled "*Critical Ground, Why Soil is Essential to Canada's Economic, Environmental, Human, and Social Health*," recently published by the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry.

The report's unambiguous message underscores the urgency and gravity that soil health, or the lack thereof, poses to our nation's agriculture, environment, and overall wellbeing. Climate change, extreme weather, pollution, and urban sprawl challenge us to acknowledge and address the fundamental role of soil in not only sustaining Canada's agricultural legacy but also ensuring food security, biodiversity, and climate mitigation.

Saskatchewan farmers have long been at the forefront of adopting and innovating soil management practices that not only enhance productivity but also fortify the health of our land. The acknowledgment of the committee towards the intrinsic challenges posed by externalities such as climate variability, pollution, and urban expansion underpins a shared understanding of the complex landscape we navigate.

Our farmers and producers have been exemplary in implementing sustainable practices such as zero-tillage, crop rotation, and integrated nutrient management, which are pivotal in combating soil degradation. In particular, the report's emphasis on tailored soil management practices underscores our belief in a proactive, knowledge-driven, and field-tested approach to addressing soil health challenges unique to Saskatchewan.

The recommendations advocated by the committee, especially those suggesting long-term investments in soil health data capture and the promotion of sustainable practices across diverse agroecosystems, are essential for enhancing the resilience and productivity of Canadian agriculture. APAS is especially supportive of fostering collaboration among federal, provincial, territorial, Indigenous governments, and the agriculture sector to safeguard this invaluable resource and promote voluntary adoption of beneficial practices.



We are pleased to note that several recommendations from APAS's presentation are reflected in the Report's recommendations. These include supporting the development of viable and valuable voluntary carbon markets, further investment in the AgriScience Cluster Programs, and the implementation of financial incentives that support best practices, such as rotational grazing - an initiative that recognizes the efforts of early adopters.

In relation to utilizing crop insurance as a model to incentivize ecological outcomes, it is important to emphasize our commitment to ensuring that such programs are specifically designed to address production and economic risks. Saskatchewan producers have significant investment in ensuring that the actuarial basis of these programs remains robust, responsive, and effectively protects against yield and quality losses that threaten farm viability.

We appreciate the committee's holistic and forward-thinking recommendations aimed at elevating soil health to a national policy priority. APAS is keen to engage and contribute to the process, leveraging our insights and the pioneering spirit of Saskatchewan's agricultural community to champion the cause of soil preservation and enhancement.

Thank you again for your leadership and the committee's diligent work. We are enthusiastic about the opportunities for collaboration that lie ahead and are committed to contributing to the realization of the report's vision for the sustainable stewardship of Canada's soil resources.

Respectfully,

Ian Boxall, President
APAS

Cc Senator Paula Simons
 Senator Sharon Burey
 Senator Brent Cotter
 Senator Pierre J. Dalphond
 Senator Mobina S.B. Jaffer
 Senator Marty Klyne
 Senator John M. McNair
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