



*Welcome to APAS IN ACTION, bringing you the latest news on how your general farm organization is working on behalf of Saskatchewan farmers and ranchers. If you are receiving this as an APAS Member RM Rep, RM Administrator or Reeve (Member or Non-Member), we encourage you to share this information with your Council at your next scheduled meeting and with ratepayers in your RM whenever possible.*

## **APAS in Action August 2014**

### **Greetings from Alan Syhlonyk, APAS New General Manager**

"I am pleased to have joined the APAS team as General Manager on July 28. Coming from a small farm in Elmsthorpe (RM 100), and having worked within provincial government's agriculture ministry for nearly 30 years, I understand many of the challenges and opportunities facing producers. I had the opportunity to attend the Canadian Federation of Agriculture meeting two weeks ago and then the APAS midterm meeting on July 24<sup>th</sup> in Saskatoon. This gave me the opportunity to both meet representatives from different agricultural organizations and government, but more importantly, the elected producer representatives from APAS. It is at this grassroots level that the issues important to agricultural producers are identified and where practical solutions can be developed. This is what excites me and I look forward to serving APAS into the future as we build a respected, thriving agricultural sector."

*-Alan Syhlonyk*

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### **Upcoming dates**

**Oct/Nov** – Fall District Meetings  
**December 2** – 4APAS 2014 AGM  
(Moose Jaw)



## **Highlights of the 2014 APAS Summer Mid-term**

On July 24<sup>th</sup>, APAS held its summer mid-term meeting in Saskatoon, SK at the Saskatoon Inn and Convention Centre. The convention passed a number of timely resolutions and examined a range of important issues and challenges facing Saskatchewan agriculture; from plant breeder rights to transportation bottlenecks. This edition of APAS in Action provides a summary of the presentations, discussions and resolutions that took place at the mid-term convention.

APAS also continues to work hard on behalf of agricultural producers in a number of important policy areas including flood impact and response, the pending PFRA Community Pasture transfer, the future of the Indian Head Tree Nursery, the need for clarity for agricultural land owners facing oil and gas development and pending labour shortages that may impact the meat packing industry.

If you have questions, or wish to learn more about any of the topics discussed below, please email: [policy@apas.ca](mailto:policy@apas.ca) or call (306) 789-7774.

[Video Interview President Norm Hall](#)

[Link to Presentations from the Midterm Meeting](#)

### **Update from the Ministry of Agriculture, Jonathon Gruel**

The morning session kicked off with a presentation by Jonathon Gruel from the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture. Highlights included the Province's "Plan for Growth"; a summary of the emergency legislation on grain transportation and the Ministry's position on this important issue. Mr. Gruel finished his presentation with a brief overview of the options available for flooded farmers in Saskatchewan, which included Crop Insurance coverage, and PDAP assistance.

The Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture estimates that 2 to 3 million acres are either flooded or unlikely to produce a crop as a result of June/July flooding.

[Video Interview Mr. Gruel](#)

### **UPOV '91: a presentation from the Commissioner of the Plant Breeders Rights Office**

Anthony Parker from CFIA's Plant Breeders Rights Office gave an overview of the new seed rules, specifically, changes to the Plant Breeders' Rights Act and "UPOV '91" within Bill C-18, *The Agricultural Growth Act*. Mr. Parker offered a very broad presentation on

the legislation and the role of plant breeding in agriculture and was available to answer questions delegates had on this important piece of legislation. As Mr. Parker noted, these changes will afford breeders stronger property protection and expand their ability to curtail unauthorized seed sales. Practices in which breeders have exclusive rights include those commonly associated with preparing seed for sale, including commercial cleaning. The presentation stressed that the goal of Plant Breeders Rights legislation is to balance producers' and breeders' interests by allowing breeders to be compensated for investments and increasing producers' access to foreign germplasm.

There was some discussion from the delegation around increased seed costs for farmers. However, Mr. Parker emphasized these amendments do not necessarily provide a basis for an End-Point Royalty (EPR) system in which breeders would charge royalties on harvested grain. Any future development of an EPR system would require consultation and support from farmers and breeders to implement. The Act also provides a "Farmers' Privilege" clause, protecting farmers' ability to save, plant, clean and reuse seed on their own holdings. For breeders to seek royalties on harvested grain, regulations would first need to be developed around the Farmers Privilege clause.

Only crop varieties that are granted protection after the Act is in place will receive the expanded rights under the UPOV '91 rules. However, even though producers will continue to have access to crop varieties under the old rules, this legislation has major implications for the future of the seed sector, as old varieties are surpassed by the next generation of improved traits, fall out of favour with producers, or formally deregistered.

The legislation will be under review by the Standing Committee of Agriculture and Agri-Food this fall, and it is anticipated that Bill C-18 could become law as early as Christmas, 2014. APAS expects regulations to be developed fairly quickly under the Act and will be monitoring and participating in the process closely to ensure producers' long-term interests are adequately represented.

Please stay tuned to future editions of APAS in Action as we will continue to provide updates on Bill C-18 and Planter Breeders Rights.

[Video Interview Anthony Parker](#)

### **Mark Hemmes, Quorum Corporation**

Mark Hemmes from Quorum Corporation, Canada's independent grain monitor, offered the convention his assessment of rail road performance to date, with focus on what went wrong in the 2013/14 crop year. While average time in transit and car turnaround times within the system continue to decrease, service delivery remains very

unreliable, particularly over the winter months. This problem was especially acute beginning in October of 2013, when the supply of cars fell well below grain companies' weekly orders and waiting vessels continued to amass at West Coast terminals throughout the winter months with financial implications reaching back to producers' pocket books. Mr. Hemmes reported that vessel line-ups are beginning to approach normal levels, down from highs in February of up to 55 vessels reducing daily demurrage charges. The session also included discussion around captured position of grain shippers in the transportation system and the continued need to control grain freight costs for producers now and into the future.

Although Mr. Hemmes reports progress to date, APAS remains concerned that carry-overs in Saskatchewan will be higher than in other prairie provinces, since it is easiest for the railways to move grain closest to port, first. Of further concern is the lack of responsiveness to the needs of producer car shippers and short-line railways.

[Video Interview Mark Hemmes](#)

#### **Pulse Canada's Supply Chain Efficiency Initiative: an overview**

Greg Northey from Pulse Canada provided an overview of the Supply Chain Initiative that Pulse Canada is leading in partnership with stakeholders across the ag industry. The project is taking a comprehensive look into the grain handling and transportation system with an expanded focus to include shippers of numerous commodities. Data is currently being collected to examine performance measures and constraints by corridor across Western Canada and at Ports. The project is garnering increased interest across the shipping sector and Pulse Canada has partnered with other industries to create an AG Transport Coalition to oversee the work being done. The AG Coalition is currently examining supply chain performance, capacity building, and innovation in the logistics sector.

The information and data gained from this Coalition's work will prove critical to informing the agricultural sector's submission to the federal review of the Canadian Transportation Act (CTA) that was announced this past June. We will continue to update APAS Action on the CTA Review as more information is made available.

[Video Interview Greg Northey](#)

#### **Brett Halstead – President of Canadian Canola Growers Association**

Brett Halstead of the CCGA spoke on his sector's reliance on the rail system to get product to market and the need for a more predictable and responsive transportation system. This past May, the CCGA filed a level of service complaint with the Canadian Transportation Agency, arguing that CN and CP Rail failed in their statutory obligations

to shippers. The Level of Service complaint is part of a broader CCGA initiative to strengthen accountability within the Western Canadian supply-chain.

APAS strongly supports the CCGA in their Level of Service complaint. The outcome of this complaint is an important test case for the effectiveness of current legislation and will go a long way to help clarify the legal responsibilities of rail service providers within the supply-chain.

[Video interview Brett Halstead](#)

### **Farmers of North America**

Bob Friesen from Farmers of North America spoke about an update on Project N with some additional information on a new app called Ag Price Book found in the Android and Apple store.

[Video Interview Bob Friesen](#)

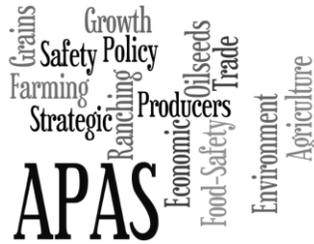
### **Policy Resolutions**

The APAS delegates discussed and passed a number of important resolutions in the afternoon's concluding session. APAS is calling for immediate action to address the following grading concerns:

- ✓ Compensation for extra dry grain;
- ✓ Freight costs to be levied on grain weight on final settlement;
- ✓ Removal of shrinkage allowance on all grain sales; and
- ✓ Investigation of differences in standards and commercial allowances between inland elevators and the international marketplace.

The APAS delegates also passed a number of resolutions to improve producers' position within the grain handling and transportation system including:

- ✓ Better price and logistics transparency through the publication of weekly, publicly accessible performance reports;
- ✓ The protection of small grain shippers, shortline railways and producer cars to ensure producers have viable, competitive options for the future; and
- ✓ An immediate call for the federal government to conduct a full costing review of freight charges on producers.



#### **Reminders.....**

##### **APAS Rep Elections Fall 2014**

APAS Rep elections will be held across Saskatchewan this fall with nominations ceasing September 17. Please find the link which provides you information on the nomination process for APAS member elections.

[Rep Election Link](#)

##### **APAS Youth Leadership & Mentorship Program**

If you are interested in developing your leadership skills, working with farmer leaders who have international experience, if you are between the ages of 18 and 39 and your RM is a member of APAS, you can qualify for the program. The program includes a 2015 trip to CFA in Ottawa. There are NO COSTS for participants. Complete an application form before harvest to ensure you meet the October 15 deadline.

##### **Canadian International Grains Institute (CIGI) Combine to Customer**

APAS has the chance to have 12 RM Member ratepayers attend this course in Winnipeg (4 APAS individuals for 3 sessions). Dates will be set by CIGI in October for the January to March 2015 sessions. APAS also has the chance to have an APAS sponsored Combine to Customer course if the demand exceeds 20 individuals. If you are interested, please contact the APAS office. There is no cost to participants (travel, hotel, meals included). If interested please contact Don Ross at

dross@apas.ca or 306-789-7774 ext 3.



##### **Chrysler Fleet Program**

APAS Fleet program with Chrysler, Dodge, RAM, Jeep, and Fiat, continues to receive positive reviews. If you know of any ratepayers in your RM that would like to save dollars off of a new vehicle, please share the following [link](#).

