



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 September 2014

"As the lead up to harvest seems to be taking its time, I am writing to you to let you know about some of the things that have been keeping me and the executive committee busy over the past month.

APAS and SARM held the first of what is planned to be recurring semi-annual meetings to discuss issues of common concern and common direction for possible joint action. Vice-president Todd Lewis and I attended a meeting in Saskatoon with Saskatchewan MP and Deputy Liberal Leader Ralph Goodale and the Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau to discuss with Dr. John Pomeroy his report on the Smith Creek and farm land drainage. To wrap up the month, the executive committee met with the Provincial Flood Committee, Ministers Stewart, Moe, Hepburn and Reiter to discuss issues that you, our membership have brought to our attention over the past number of months. One of the issues that was confirmed was that stored grain that is affected by overland flooding, whether it is in a bin or a bag, is covered by the Provincial Disaster Assistance Program, PDAP.

I hope that this month's APAS in Action is informative and brings you the information that you need and want about the activities of your organization. If not, please let us know. Call me (306)-530-3886, or contact the office at (306)-789-7774." - *Norm Hall, President.*

Meeting with the Provincial Flood Committee

At APAS's request, the Ministers responsible for Government Relations, Agriculture, Environment and Highways and Transportation met with the APAS Executive for a briefing on what APAS Board Members were hearing from their members.

The discussion identified concerns from producers for both the short term such as crop failure, inaccessible land and stored grain loss, and identifying the need for a more comprehensive, longer-term, water management plan for Saskatchewan. Clearly producer concerns vary in different parts of the province. For example, farmers and ranchers around areas such as Quill Lakes and Lenore Lakes Basins where water has no natural place to drain, may have land out of production for years, greatly impacting a producer's operation. In other cases, forage may need to be re-seeded, or infrastructure, buildings and yard sites may need to be relocated.

APAS is also concerned that current safety net programs will prove inadequate for those producers facing repeated flooding situations and the APAS Executive, on behalf of members, asked the Minister of Agriculture to look at related programs in light of recent weather events.

The meeting also re-enforced the need for producers and rural residents to work with the provincial representatives to take advantage of the current Provincial Disaster Assistance Program (PDAP). Through this recent meeting, **APAS was able to confirm with provincial officials that stored grain lost due to overland flooding, is eligible under the PDAP program, in municipalities who declared a local state of emergency.** APAS Executives also made clear that Saskatchewan communities and landowners need to begin managing water instead of the current piecemeal process that exists today. The sooner we get on with planning, the less we will be spending on cleaning up or repairing damage.

Speaking up on behalf of Saskatchewan producers

When politicians ask opinions, Saskatchewan's general farm organization needs to be prepared to provide it on behalf of its members. On August 14, President Norm Hall and Vice President Todd Lewis were invited to a meeting with Justin Trudeau, Ralph Goodale, and a Panel of Water "Experts" in Saskatoon. The session provided APAS an opportunity to further emphasize the need for more proactive investment in water retention structures, like reservoirs, to reduce peak flows.

The meeting was also an opportunity to clarify that agricultural producers are not the only ones contributing to where water comes from and how it flows. Cities and towns, roads, highways and rail development all impact on how and where water moves. Other highlights included a discussion around Manitoba drainage activity and permitting requirements, as well as a good discussion of the benefits of proper flood forecasting tools for the future.

Meeting with the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities

On August 12, at SARM's request, President Norm Hall, Vice Presidents Todd Lewis and Arlynn Kurtz and APAS General Manager Alan Syhlonyk met with the Agricultural Committee of SARM, made up of Vice President Ray Orb and Directors Norm Nordgulen and Harvey Malanowich. APAS briefed SARM on the major policy agricultural policy positions being advanced by APAS, including transportation reform, plant breeders' rights legislation, landowner surface rights and flooding. It was mutually agreed that the meeting was beneficial and that the two groups would meet twice a year to update each other and seek opportunities to collaborate.

Bill C-30, *Fair Rail for Grain Farmers Act*: Regulations now in force

On August 1, Minister Ritz was in Saskatoon to announce that regulations to Bill C-30, *The Fair Rail for Grain Farmers Act*, had been finalized. Although Bill C-30 became law on May 29, it was scheduled to take effect in the new crop year (August 1) and without regulations it was unclear how the bill would be implemented and what specific measures would be put in place.

Bill C-30 is a temporary Act of Parliament, with a repeal date of August 1, 2016. By that time, the statutory review of the *Canada Transportation Act* is expected to conclude whereby long-term solutions can be identified. During this interim period, Bill C-30 will have a major impact on grain movement in Western Canada.

During the development of the regulations, APAS provided comments to both the proposed changes to the *Canadian Transportation Act* and *Canada Grains Act*, two of prairie grain farmers' most important pieces of legislation. The consultation period for these regulations followed an abnormally tight timeframe so we needed to be swift and decisive to get our comments in. What follows is a status update on some of our recommendations. For background information, the Government of Canada has a useful overview of Bill C-30 and its measures in more detail: [Government of Canada Backgrounder on Bill-C30](#)

Changes to the *Canadian Transportation Act*

In June, APAS Representatives and other Saskatchewan agricultural stakeholders met with officials from the Canadian Transportation Agency in Regina to discuss volume requirements. The regulations seem to reflect some of what we proposed, such as the need to maintain current volume requirements to clear the backlog. Nevertheless, it appears the requirements will not be set on a shipper and corridor basis. As a result, inadequate service for domestic customers, southern routes and small grain shippers, including producer cars and shortlines, remains a concern as the legislation proceeds. There are also valid concerns that service to Saskatchewan elevators will take a back seat to Manitoba and Alberta where turnaround times are quicker.

Changes to the *Canada Grains Act*

In July, APAS submitted recommendations to the Canadian Grain Commission (CGC) on the proposed changes to the *Canada Grains Act*, in which we highlighted the need for producers to be compensated for non-compliance of contract delivery terms, and asked that these penalties be standardized and reflect up to date interest rates and storage costs. Through the Bill C-30 regulations, the CGC is now requiring some form of penalty provisions to be included in future grain contracts. However, our recommendation that penalties follow a standardized format was not accepted. As a result, the penalties sums and terms will be negotiated between individual producers and grain companies.

For more information on the changes to the *Canada Grains Act* and how this will affect future contracts, please visit [\[the following CGC webpage\]](#)

As we head into/resume harvest, we'd like to remind everyone to contact the CGC if you have any questions or concerns about your rights and responsibilities as a producer. An abundance of invaluable information on everything from producer payment protection to grade specifications can be found on the CGC website:

www.grainscanada.gc.ca

They also have two satellite offices Saskatchewan. One in Saskatoon (PH: 306-975-5714) and another in Weyburn (PH: 306-848-3350).

Extension for 2013 Cash Advances

APAS was also pleased to hear that Minister Ritz has extended the repayment deadline on 2013 cash advances. The extension applies to producers in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia who have an outstanding advance with Canadian Canola Growers Association for grain and oilseed production. As a result of this extension, producers with outstanding advances on the 2013 crop will now have a repayment deadline of March 31, 2015.

On behalf of Saskatchewan producers, APAS wrote to Minister Ritz thanking him for this decision. Considering the amount of grain that continued to be stored on the farm over the fall and winter months and the limited delivery opportunities, which were of no fault to the individual producer, this was an action we had been calling for. APAS continues to call for additional changes to the program so that it fits better current production costs and capital needs, which include increases in both the \$400,000 overall limit and the \$100,00 interest-free portion of the loan.

If you have questions on how this extension affects an outstanding loan or account you may have with the CCGA, visit their website www.ccca.ca or call their Winnipeg office, toll free, at 1-866-745-2256.

APAS Rep Elections – Nomination Papers Due by September 17

As this is a municipal election year, APAS will be holding our rep elections at the same time. Elections will be held October 22. Nomination forms need to be filled in by September 17 and given to your RM Administrator. Please click this link to find more information on the job description, nomination paper and guidelines to Expense Claims.

<http://myrm.ca/apas/apas-rep-election/>

If you have any questions regarding the APAS Rep position please give the office a call 306-789-7774. Feel free to share this information with others that might be interested in becoming an APAS Rep.

Accepting Applications for the “Youth Leadership and Mentorship Program”

APAS has an opportunity you do not want to pass up. Do you know young farmers between 18 and 39 that would like to improve their leadership skills and learn about Agricultural policy? APAS and the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture are hosting a [“Youth Leadership and Mentorship Program”](#) during the 2014-2015 winter season. Call APAS for more information or share this opportunity with potential farm leaders. Potential participants must [fill out an application form](#). Costs to participate are covered by the program (ie. registration, flights, materials and hotels).

Some highlights:

1. Participation in the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan AGM in MooseJaw
2. Opportunity to attend the Canadian Federation of Agricultural AGM in Ottawa
3. Work with experienced Saskatchewan farm leaders
4. Connect with other young farmers and learn from each other
5. Provide input and thoughts on agricultural policy – be the change

Welcoming New Members McCraney and Lumsden

APAS welcomed two new transitional members in August, the RM of Lumsden #189 and the RM of McCraney #282. Lumsden #189 is a diverse municipality of 1733 people with numerous acreages, surrounding towns like Lumsden, Craven and Regina Beach. Though primarily engaged in grain production there is a significant livestock component, including cattle and several large hog operations. McCraney #282, population 307, with significant pasture land, features more mixed farming. Its McCraney PFRA pasture was one of the first ten pastures taken over by patrons earlier this year. These two RMs bring to 15, the number of current new transitional members in 2014, for a total of 97 APAS members across the province.

Upcoming dates

September 17 - Deadline to submit [APAS Rep Nomination Forms](#)

October 22 - APAS RM Rep Elections

October 31 - Deadline for [Application for APAS Youth Leadership and Mentorship Program](#)

Oct/Nov – Fall District/Committee Meetings

December 2 – 4 APAS AGM 2014 (Moose Jaw)

On behalf of APAS, please have a safe and productive harvest!