

# RESPONDING TO DROUGHT JUNE 2019



Saskatchewan is facing a severe drought. Canada's Drought Monitor has classified large areas across the province as extreme, severe and moderate drought. Livestock grazing and forage production potential is dependent upon early spring moisture. For many producers, 2019 is the third consecutive year of below average precipitation. The livestock sector is now facing significant pressure sourcing grazing and feed supplies due to the emerging drought.

APAS calls on the Government of Saskatchewan and the federal government to help mitigate the impact of extremely dry conditions in 2019. APAS is specifically proposing the following initiatives from the Government of Saskatchewan:

1. Initiate AgriRecovery assessment process.
2. Establish a Provincial Drought Committee of government and industry representatives to monitor drought conditions and oversee AgriRecovery assistance measures, including potential for direct payment to affected producers for the purposes of herd retention and maintenance of provincial breeding stock.
3. Have Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation:
  - a. Expedite assessment of crops that are at the low-yield appraisal level (point at which it would be uneconomical to harvest a normal crop) as "zero yield" and allow them to be grazed or harvested as silage or green feed without producer penalty.
  - b. Establish new greenfeed incentive program that encourages the conversion of insured acres to livestock feed by deducting the low-yield appraisal amount from producers insured coverage for claim purposes without impacting the calculation of long-term yield averages.
4. Through the Ministry of Agriculture:
  - a. Develop a Temporary Fencing Program providing financial assistance for the construction of temporary fences to fully utilize emergency pasture lands.
  - b. Enhance the Farm and Ranch Water Infrastructure Program (FRWIP) by:
    - i. Initiating a new Agricultural Water Pumping Program, to source and make available loaned pumps and pipes for consolidation of existing water sources;
    - ii. Fast tracking water development applications for drought designated zones;
    - iii. Waiving limitations of eligible expenses so that program caps are removed for fencing of existing water sources (currently \$750) and for livestock water tanks (currently \$2,500 per applicant);
    - iv. Including installed solar water delivery systems as an eligible expense for existing water sources; and
    - v. Including mobile fire protection units for rural communities as an eligible expenditure.
5. Use land within the provincial government's control (Agricultural Crown Land, Crown Resource Land, Saskatchewan Provincial Parks and Wildlife Development Land), and also call upon First Nations, Ducks Unlimited, Nature Saskatchewan and the Government of Canada to make available any vacant lands that could be used for grazing or forage production for 2019.

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APAS is also seeking federal drought assistance, and calls on the Government of Canada to:

- a. Immediately designate the entire province of Saskatchewan as eligible under the Federal Livestock Tax Deferral
- b. Direct Environment Canada and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to fast track implementation of tools such as high intensity weather mapping, and digital and satellite mapping to monitor and provide early warning of conditions in Saskatchewan.
- c. Improved coverage levels and reference margin limits for AgriStability to protect producer income from drought and trade impacts.

The Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS) is Saskatchewan's general farm organization – formed to provide farmers and ranchers with a democratically elected, grassroots, non-partisan, producer-run organization based on rural municipal boundaries. As the united voice of agricultural producers in Saskatchewan, we strive to represent the views of a wide variety of agricultural stakeholders in order to form comprehensive policies that can benefit all sectors of society. APAS believes that it is time for Saskatchewan to act in the interest of helping to mitigate the impact of extremely dry conditions in 2019.