



## **POLICY MANUAL**

January 2016

# APAS Policy Manual

The Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan is instrumental in the development of innovative farm policy to both address many of the issues currently affecting agriculture and with a vision for creating new opportunities for Saskatchewan agricultural producers.

APAS policies are developed from resolutions, committees and members. The purpose of this policy manual is to present, record and communicate existing policy and positions. The manual is updated annually to represent current APAS policy. Amendments are made to the manual when new policy is established by APAS.

---

Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan

140 – 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue East

Regina, Saskatchewan S4N 4Z4

Phone: 306-789-7774

Email: [info@apas.ca](mailto:info@apas.ca)

Website: [www.apas.ca](http://www.apas.ca)

Twitter: @AgProducersSK

Facebook: APAS (Agriculture Producers Association of Saskatchewan)



# Table of Contents

1. Business Risk Management .....	1
2. Crops and Marketing .....	2
3. Transportation .....	4
4. Livestock .....	6
5. Farm Inputs.....	7
6. Research and Biotechnology .....	8
7. Food Safety and Labeling.....	9
8. Trade.....	9
9. Rural Infrastructure and Government Services.....	10
10. Farm Finance and Taxation .....	11
11. Workplace Safety and Labour .....	12
12. Land Use and Surface Rights .....	12
13. Climate Change.....	13
14. Water Management and Conservation .....	14

# 1. Business Risk Management

## 1.1 INCOME STABILIZATION PROGRAMS

Agricultural producers face significant economic and production risks outside of their immediate control. These risks can lead to wide fluctuations in producer income which threatens stability in the agricultural sector and broader economy. APAS believes that effective income stabilization program must be capable of mitigating income losses associated with these risks. APAS supports income stabilization programs that are:

- Compliant with Canada's international trade obligations
- Production neutral in their treatment of farm types
- Reflective of the marketplace in terms of timing of payment and coverage levels
- Simple and transparent in program administration and delivery
- Supportive of proactive forms of risk management, such as mixed farms and other forms of on-farm commodity diversification

## 1.2 SELF-ADMINISTERED ACCOUNTS

APAS believes that investment matching risk management programs like Agri-Invest must be maintained. APAS supports changes to Agri-Invest that would increase government matching contributions and allow producers to withdraw their non-taxable funds first, provided the funds are used for a set of pre-approved industry projects.

## 1.3 PRODUCTION INSURANCE

Crop insurance is a very important tool for Saskatchewan producers in managing production risks. APAS believes the following principles should guide the development and delivery of production insurance programs.

- The administration and delivery of the program should be as simple and transparent as possible for both the Corporation and producers.
- The program must offer affordable and effective options for producers.
- The program must be market neutral
- The program must effectively reflect the costs-of-production
- Sufficient funds must be made available to meet the needs of the program

#### **1.4 DISASTER PROGRAMS**

APAS supports a targeted disaster program that is adequately funded by the provincial and federal governments. These disasters could be natural (prolonged droughts, wide-scale flooding, frosts) or man-made (trade challenges or trade barriers).

When additional funds are allocated in disaster programming, they should be defined clearly as disaster related and come from outside the existing safety net system. They must also be adequate to address the needs, be delivered in the year needed, and should treat all producers equitably. This should include the deferral of tax liabilities which may be incurred as a result of the forced liquidation of livestock.

#### **1.5 ADVANCED PAYMENTS**

APAS believes the Advance Payment Program must be maintained to help producers market their products and meet their payment obligations in a timely fashion. APAS supports an increase to the interest-free portion and the overall limit of advanced payments to ensure the program keeps pace with rising production costs. APAS believes that program deadlines should provide flexibility when producers are facing marketing and production delays beyond their control.

## **2. Crops and Marketing**

#### **2.1 CANADIAN GRAINS COMMISSION**

APAS supports a Canadian Grain Commission (CGC) mandate that works in the interests of grain producers. The CGC must be provided with adequate resources to deliver producer protection in areas of grain grading, weights and measures, payment protection, dispute resolution and access to transportation. APAS believes that CGC services provided in the public good, such as market development, grains research, statistics, and monitoring of food safety, should be funded by government.

#### **2.2 GRADE ASSESSMENT & QUALITY**

APAS supports the development and introduction of new grading techniques that reduce industry's reliance on the use of subjective methods of assessing quality. APAS believes the grading system must evolve with the introduction of new techniques (like the Hapsburg falling number) to enhance the accuracy and reliability of quality assessment.

APAS believes that all elevator agents who grade grain at primary elevators should be required to complete a mandatory certification/training program (Grain Grader Certification 2012) APAS believes changes to Canada's grain classification system must maintain or enhance Canada's reputation as a supplier of high quality grain. Canada's classification system for grain must also be flexible to accommodate evolving customer and producer preferences.

### **2.3 VARIETAL REGISTRATION**

APAS supports a registration system for new varieties that subjects candidate varieties to high agronomic, disease, and quality standards, while providing sufficient flexibility to accommodate evolving market demand and producer preferences. APAS believes that any reductions in supervised trial requirements, merit, or quality assessment must be directly approved by a recommending body that is accountable to producers

### **2.4 MARKETING CONTRACTS**

APAS supports the development of standardized grain contracts to improve commercial accountability between producers and grain buyers. APAS believes these contracts should follow a standardized format to clarify the obligations and responsibilities agreed between the two parties. A standardized contract should also include reciprocal penalties for nonperformance

### **2.5 MARKETING TRANSPARENCY**

APAS believes that Canada should impose reporting requirements on grain exports similar to those that exist in the United States. Information such as forward export sales, vessel lineups and port unloading are necessary to enable producers and other market participants to make informed marketing decisions and to assess overall system performance.

# 3. Transportation

## **3.1 RAILWAY MONITORING**

APAS supports the creation of a third-party oversight body to assess ongoing operations within the grain handling and transportation system. This oversight body must include representation from agricultural producers who ultimately bear the cost associated with inadequate planning and capacity shortfalls.

## **3.2 RAILWAY PENALTIES AND PERFORMANCE**

APAS supports the use of government mandated performance targets when rail service is found to be damaging producer incomes and undermining Canada's reputation as a reliable grain exporter. Volume requirements must be set in accordance with corridor demand and regional stocks. The commercial needs of small shippers, including producer cars and shortlines, must also be accommodated. Penalties for non-performance must be enforced and of a sufficient amount to serve as an effective deterrence

## **3.3 MAXIMUM REVENUE ENTITLEMENT**

APAS supports the Maximum Revenue Entitlement (MRE) to ensure the railways are compensated fairly and producers are protected from excessive freight rates in a rail environment.

## **3.4 RAILWAY COSTING REVIEW**

Railway costs for grain movement have not been fully reviewed since 1992. Since then, elevator consolidation, siding closures and the trend towards multi-car blocks have created efficiencies that would, under effective competition, translate into lower freight costs for producers. APAS believes a costing review is necessary to update the railway costing used to calculate the Maximum Revenue Entitlement.

### **3.5 RAILWAY COMPETITION**

APAS believes that competition is the best approach to dealing with rail service and cost issues. APAS supports legislative measures to increase competition, including expanded interswitching limits and the application of open running rights provisions in the Canada Transportation Act.

### **3.6 SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS**

APAS believes shippers, including producer car shippers, must have access to a responsive and meaningful dispute resolution processes to resolve rate and service issues. Service level agreements must also clarify mutual service obligations and include reciprocal penalties for nonperformance.

### **3.7 PORTS**

APAS believes the Port of Churchill and Hudson Bay Rail Line should be maintained as a cost-effective shipping alternative for Saskatchewan producers.

### **3.8 RAIL LINE ABANDONMENT**

APAS believes that interested parties must be provided legitimate and meaningful opportunities to purchase unused rail lines and sidings. APAS believes the Canada Transportation Agency should be empowered to investigate and rule on a railway's true operational interest in rail lines to ensure that unused track can quickly move through the discontinuance process and be put up for commercial sale.

### **3.9 PRODUCER CARS LOADING**

APAS believes the right to order and load producer cars must be maintained in the Canada Grains Act. Government transportation policy should encourage and support producer car loading as a cost effective and environmentally sound shipping alternative.



## 4. Livestock

### 4.1 MARKETING

APAS supports marketing systems for cattle and other livestock that are open, transparent, and competitive. APAS believes a full network of livestock auction markets must be maintained to ensure market access is located within reasonable proximity to the distribution of cattle production in Saskatchewan. APAS supports government incentives and reducing barriers to entry for farmers that want to pool resources and start-up farmer owned auction marts. APAS believes livestock producers should have the legal opportunity to defer payment for tax purposes.

### 4.2 PAYMENT ASSURANCE

APAS supports a payment protection program for livestock that adequately protects producers from payment default and assures compensation at prices that reflect market value.

### 4.3 MEAT PROCESSING

Under review pending ongoing provincial consultation

### 4.4 SUPPLY MANAGEMENT

APAS supports the supply management system and its main components, including import control, production discipline and cost of production assurance.

### 4.5 CROWN LAND

APAS believes that government decisions about the future of crown land leases should include meaningful and respectful consultation with lease holders, conservation groups, municipalities, and producer organizations.

Source: (Crown Lands Sales Program 2015).

### 4.6 FORMER PFRA PASTURES

APAS believes that the transition of the former PFRA pastures must meet the economic requirements of the pasture patrons while maintaining a high level of professional

management needed to ensure the integrity of the grasslands and the environmental and conservation legacy inherent in the PFRA pastures.

## 5. Farm Inputs

### **5.1 PEST MANAGEMENT PRODUCT REGISTRATION**

APAS supports a science-based regulatory system for crop protection products that is efficient, safeguards public safety, the environment and protects human health. APAS supports fast-tracked testing and registration of foreign crop protection products that are proven to be more effective than products currently available on the Canadian market.

### **5.2 ON FARM SEED TREATMENT**

APAS believes that producers must retain the opportunity to purchase seed treatment products and treat seed on farm.

### **5.3 SEED PURITY**

APAS supports periodic review of seed standards to ensure tolerances for weed seeds and other foreign material are consistent with modern seed cleaning technology.

### **5.4 COMPETITION**

APAS believes that producers must be protected against excessive or monopolistic pricing of privately developed technologies. Canada's Competition Bureau must be provided the legislative authority and resources to review proposed mergers and acquisitions to prevent business practices that would lessen competition in the agriculture input industry.

# 6. Research and Biotechnology

## **6.1 GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS (GMOs)**

APAS believes that federal and provincial governments should provide a scientific and evidence-based approach to biotechnology regulations. APAS supports consumer education to create awareness and trust of biotechnology.

## **6.3 PLANT BREEDERS' RIGHTS**

APAS believes farmers must have the right to retain seed from a protected variety for their own use without paying additional royalties. Protected varieties must be available to researchers for further varietal development.

## **6.4 PUBLIC SECTOR RESEARCH**

APAS believes that agricultural research is critical to the economic and environmental viability of the agricultural sector. APAS supports a strong and continuing public presence in agricultural research to ensure the knowledge and technology generated through research is maintained in the public realm and available to all producers. Agricultural research programs must be provided with stable and predictable funding, focusing on both discovery science and applied research outcomes.

## **6.5 PRODUCER LED RESEARCH**

APAS believes that producers must be involved in setting research agendas and informing industry, government and other partners of the research needs in primary agriculture. APAS supports producer investment in research through check-offs, provided the organizations administering these funds remain producer driven and accountable to those paying the check-off.

## **6.6 UNIVERSITY LED RESEARCH**

APAS recognizes the important role of university led research in maintaining Saskatchewan's status as a world leader in agricultural science and innovation. APAS believes that universities

must be provided with adequate funding to attract and retain the competent scientists and agricultural researchers.

## 7. Food Safety and Labeling

### 7.1 FOOD STANDARDS

APAS believes Canadian Food Inspection Agency must implement equivalent standards of inspection for imported and exported food. APAS supports harmonization of inspection regulations with other countries, provided this does not result in a reduction of Canadian food safety standards

### 7.2 FOOD SAFETY

APAS believes that producers must be involved in setting the agenda and vision for food safety planning. The agriculture sector must play a strong role in implementation, delivery, and promotion of food safety programs. As food safety concerns are shared by society, society must be prepared to share in the costs of implementing and maintaining food safety programs.

### 7.3 ORGANIC FOOD LABELING

APAS believes that agricultural products produced, marketed, and sold within Saskatchewan as organic must conform to the national standards set out in the Canadian Organic Regime.

## 8. Trade

### 8.1 INTERNATIONAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

APAS believes the Canadian government should approach international trade agreements focused on achieving positive economic results for agricultural producers.

APAS believes that trade agreements should be negotiated in an open and transparent manner with meaningful input from affected stakeholders.

## **8.2 TRADE DISRUPTION & DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

APAS recognizes the World Trade Organization as the appropriate international governing body for establishing trade laws. If trade disruptions are found to have injured an agricultural sector, APAS believes that the funds raised through retaliatory tariffs or penalties should be made available to the affected industry for research and market development initiatives.

## **8.3 INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE**

APAS supports provincial and federal efforts to harmonize provincial trade laws.

# 9. Rural Infrastructure and Government Services

## **9.1 ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE**

APAS supports improvement and maintenance of Saskatchewan's road infrastructure to meet the social, economic and product transportation needs of rural residents.

## **9.2 WEATHER RADAR**

Monitoring and predicting weather is an increasingly important risk management tool for Saskatchewan farm operations. APAS believes that all agricultural regions in the province should have access to a functional, accurate and reliable weather radar system.

## **9.3 WASTE MANAGEMENT**

APAS believes that an agricultural plastics recycling program is needed to encourage sustainable and environmentally sound management practices. APAS supports enhancements to Saskatchewan ag plastics recycling systems that provide producers convenient access to recycling services.

#### **9.4 RURAL INTERNET BROADBAND**

APAS believes that access to broadband internet is an essential tool for primary agriculture to fully participate in the global marketplace. APAS supports federal and provincial regulation and investments to improve high speed internet access in rural areas

#### **9.5 RURAL SERVICES**

APAS believes that reasonable proximity to schools, hospitals and other services is required to sustain a vibrant and thriving agricultural community in Saskatchewan. APAS encourages provincial standards for school bus travel to ensure no elementary school students spend more than two hours per day on the school bus.

## **10. Farm Finance and Taxation**

#### **10.1 FUEL TAX EXEMPTION**

Recognizing that the majority of farm fuel is consumed off road, APAS believes the Farm Fuel Tax Exemption Program must be maintained to ensure that producers are not paying more than their fair share for the maintenance and improvement of Saskatchewan's road infrastructure.

#### **10.2 INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSFERS**

APAS supports the reduction of tax barriers to intergenerational farm transfers. APAS believes that farm owners should be able to transfer privately owned farm land to family members without triggering excessive and unfair taxes.

Most farms are family owned businesses and APAS supports the availability of succession planning resources to ensure that farm families have the knowledge and professional support in place to assist the transfer of farm assets between generations.

#### **10.3 REGISTERED RETIREMENT SAVINGS PLANS**

APAS believes that investment in new generation co-ops should qualify as an eligible RRSP investment.

# 11. Workplace Safety and Labour

## 11.1 FARM SAFETY

APAS commits to working with government and industry to develop farm safety programming and planning for the benefit of farmers in Saskatchewan. APAS believes that sustained public awareness campaigns must emphasize education, best practices and the promotion of safe work culture on Saskatchewan farms.

APAS supports and acknowledges the role of Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA) and the Agricultural Health and Safety Network in Saskatchewan in researching, promoting and evaluating farm safety in Saskatchewan.

## 11.2 FARM LABOUR

APAS works with government and advocates for policies to address the acute labour and training shortages that exist in Saskatchewan agriculture. APAS support changes to the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program that provide Saskatchewan producers better access to foreign labour sources when domestic labour sources are not attainable.

APAS supports the work of the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council and acknowledges the important work they are doing in moving forward with a Workforce Action Plan to address labour issues in Canada.

# 12. Land Use and Surface Rights

## 12.1 PROPERTY RIGHTS ADVOCATE

APAS supports the establishment of an independent Property Rights Advocate Office in Saskatchewan where producers can go to access information and obtain legal support when dealing with development on their farmland.

## 12.2 RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT & REGULATION

APAS supports a strong environmental regulatory framework that ensures resource development on farmland poses minimal disruptions for the environment, farm operations and

rural residents. APAS believes that environmental approval of resource development projects should be contingent on an assessment process that fully addresses the concerns that farmers and ranchers may have with resource development occurring on their lands and in close proximity to their private dwellings. Government regulators must be provided with the staff, resources, and legal authority to promptly respond to the environmental, health and safety concerns of producers and other rural residents.

### **12.3 RECLAMATION OF OIL AND GAS SITES**

APAS believes the Provincial Government should monitor abandoned oil and gas wells in Saskatchewan to ensure prompt reclamation of abandoned and orphaned well sites. APAS believes a fund should be created to compensate producers when oil and gas operators become insolvent or are unable to fulfill their lease obligations.

### **12.3 ENERGY PIPELINES**

APAS supports the expansion of energy pipelines as a means of increasing rail capacity for agricultural commodities that cannot be transported by pipeline.

## **13. Climate Change**

### **13.1 CARBON TAX**

APAS believes governments need to recognize the unique impacts of policy proposals like carbon taxes on the agricultural sector, including the negative impacts on our ability to compete internationally and the potential disincentive to produce food that the world needs. APAS does not support the imposition of a carbon tax on fuel and other agricultural inputs.

### **13.2 CLIMATE CHANGE RESEARCH & ADAPTATION**

Agriculture is one of the sectors that is most vulnerable to climate change and needs tools to adapt. APAS supports research into all aspects of adapting to climate change, including improved crop varieties, nutrient management, soil science, and water management. APAS believes that incentives are the most effective way to encourage the implementation of practices and technologies that reduce carbon emissions.



# 14. Water Management and Conservation

## 14.1 WATER MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

APAS supports the creation of comprehensive plan for water management with goal of enhancing our capacity to deal with periods of excessive moisture or drought while limiting the adverse impacts. APAS believes the comprehensive water strategy should include the following principles:

- Resources need to be allocated for continued mapping and modelling of water basins.
- Sufficient resources must be allocated to administration and regulation.
- Economic support for landowners that manage water for the public good, by storing or retaining water.
- Adequate support for watershed community organizations to perform coordination activities.
- Agricultural producers must be fully engaged and consulted in the development of provincial water management regulation, conservation and development policies.

## 14.2 ECOLOGICAL GOODS AND SERVICES

Agricultural producers are the largest group of private sector land managers in Canada, and their property provides many of the environmental goods and services enjoyed by society. APAS believes in a conservation approach that includes financial support to farmers providing these public goods and services.

APAS supports the Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) model that provides economic incentives for environmental stewardship projects, including wetland retention and restoration, shelterbelts, grassing and native prairie establishment, stream channel and riparian restoration and stabilization, wildlife habitat, soil conservation and fishery habitat projects.

## 14.4 CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

APAS believes conservation easement holders must be held responsible for the cost of managing water, maintaining culverts and providing storm surge holding capacity to avoid flooding of adjacent lands and roadways.

#### **14.5 AGRO-FORESTRY**

Shelterbelts provide environmental benefits enjoyed by society, including soil conservation, wildlife habitat preservation, and enhanced carbon sequestration. APAS supports a publicly funded shelterbelt centre to provide producers in western Canada access to affordable trees.

#### **14.6 HUNTING & WILDLIFE**

Producers frequently make their lands available to hunters and should be fully compensated when farm assets are damaged because of hunting activities on farmland. APAS supports public awareness and strengthened laws to prevent on-farm damage to land and property caused by hunters

APAS believes that regular and detailed reviews of wildlife population must be conducted at the rural municipal level to ensure the number of hunting tags issued reflects actual wildlife population within rural municipal boundaries