



APAS Calls for Early Action for Livestock Producers

June 15, 2015 – For Immediate Release - Livestock numbers could be detrimentally affected in most of Saskatchewan as dry conditions continue to persist.

Normal or below normal snowfall during the 2014 winter and inadequate rainfall since April over most of the crop land south of Prince Albert is leaving pasture and hay land parched. Grass is becoming dormant, new growth is sparse and open water sources are dwindling.

“Livestock production has been steadily decreasing in Saskatchewan since 2005 driven primarily by the BSE crisis and the US Country of Origin Labeling requirements,” says Norm Hall, APAS President. “With the weather pattern we are facing right now, livestock production will clearly decline given the feed and water available to producers at the moment. Immediate action by the Government of Saskatchewan to look at stopgap measures to maintain the current herd would demonstrate forward action and minimize the selloff of animals.”

The west side of the province is in the greatest need of water. Looking at the provincial precipitation map as of June 7, other areas are in a similar situation. Early action by the Saskatchewan Government, and other organizations such as the Wildlife Federation and conservation agencies, could provide an opportunity to source emergency summer grazing and hay land for livestock producers. APAS is calling for:

- Allowing that agricultural Crown leases be allowed to be subleased for 2015
- Allowing for transfers of patron cattle from Southern Provincial pastures to northern pastures that may have shortfalls
- Opening up of Saskatchewan Wildlife Development Fund Lands to grazing
- Encouraging conservation agencies holding lands to make them available for agricultural use.
- Early assessment and write-off of spring seeded crops by SCIC to allow for cattle grazing
- Initiation of a temporary fencing program to allow for crop lands to be grazed
- Increased promotion and awareness of the Forage and Grain listing service to match up individuals that need feedstocks with individuals having surplus supplies

Where necessary increased funding to the Farm and Ranch Water Infrastructure program to ensure adequate water supplies are maintained

“We had hoped that higher cattle prices would help Saskatchewan producers to turn the corner and grow the livestock sector,” says Hall. “However, for many, there will be limited or no hay harvested this year. Livestock producers need to find grass and water for the summer months and find alternate hay sources for the coming winter months if



our breeding herd is to be maintained. We would encourage producers with wet acres that could not be seeded to sow those acres to green feed and for other farmers with extra hay to contact Forage and Feed registry. When natural disaster strikes, collectively we rally to overcome the obstacles and help out our neighbours to get over the hurdles. Hopefully these measures, and others, will reduce the hurt caused by drought for our ranching community.”

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For more information,
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APAS is Saskatchewan’s general farm organization formed to provide farmers and ranchers with a democratically elected, grassroots, non-partisan, producer organization based on rural municipal boundaries. As the united voice of thousands 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.