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### **Sask Agriculture Associations Join Forces on Strychnine Re-evaluation**

Saskatchewan's agricultural associations are joining forces to urge the federal government to extend its consultation period by 30 days on the re-evaluation of strychnine to allow producers an opportunity to submit comments post-harvest. The Pest Management Regulatory Agency issued its proposed re-evaluation decision June 29, 2018 with a 90-day consultation period.

The Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) is working with stakeholders to ensure the voice of rural Saskatchewan is heard.

"We understand that strychnine is the most effective way to control gopher infestations," stated SARM President Ray Orb. "We need adequate time to gather feedback from our agricultural producers because we know first-hand the significant damage gophers can have on crops and livestock without a means of effective control."

The Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS) is also concerned with the possibility of no longer having access to strychnine as a means for gopher control.

"Saskatchewan's ranchers and farmers are the only sector that would be impacted by the PMRA review," said Todd Lewis, President of APAS. "The time- period for the consultation is totally unreasonable, given that they are all completely involved in harvest and preparation for winter."

The Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association (SSGA) understands the detrimental effects that producers could face without the use of strychnine.

"Right now, producers have no equivalent alternative to strychnine available for controlling Richardson's Ground Squirrels on their crop and grasslands and they would experience major financial losses from gopher damage if they are not able to use strychnine," stated Bill Huber, President of SSGA. "An extension to the comment period would allow those most likely to use the gopher-control product strychnine the time to participate in the consultation."

The Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association (SCA) is also lending its voice urging the PMRA to consider an extension to the consultation.

"This is an important tool for cattle producers especially as dry conditions favour gopher proliferation. Unfortunately, a consult at this time has missed several people as they work to bring in their hay and other crops. An extension would help make sure all are aware of the opportunity to weigh in," concluded Rick Toney, Chair of SCA.

SARM, APAS, SSGA, and SCA stand united for farmers and ranchers in rural Saskatchewan in insisting that the consultation be extended to allow time for those affected by the proposed re-evaluation to participate.

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