

SASKATCHEWAN Farmers' Voice

WINTER 2018 EDITION

The Official Publication of the
Agricultural Producers Association
of Saskatchewan



MEMBER PROFILE

Ivan and Danny Ottenbreit

*Succession
Success Story*

PLUS:

October 17th
Wildfires

Access to Farmland

ALUS Saskatchewan





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Succession success story

A father and son from Grayson talk about passing on the farm the right way **BY COLLEEN HENNAN**



Ivan and Danny Ottenbreit, on their farm in eastern Saskatchewan. Danny is about halfway through the process of taking over the family operation.

Ivan Ottenbreit is going through the farm succession process for the second time in his life.

It was always the plan that Ivan would eventually take over farming full time, on the land that his father purchased in the Grayson area around 1940. First though, after graduating high school in 1965, Ivan trained as a mechanical engineering technologist and worked for engineering firms in Regina until 1986. That's when Ivan's father got glaucoma and lost his sight. His parents moved into town and the farming operation transitioned to him.

Ivan and his wife Vicki built a house at a nearby lake and raised three kids there, while farming the Ottenbreit's acres in Grayson. His son Danny, the APAS representative for the RM of Grayson, has fond memories of lake life and being a farm kid.

Danny lives in the farm house we are sitting in, which was built on the home quarter by Ivan's parents in 1960. Before Danny moved in, the house sat empty for 25 years, ever since Danny's grandparents stopped farming. But in 2011, Danny decided to farm full-time after living in Toronto for a while and working in the film and television industry.

"It really showed me," Danny says of his time in Toronto, "that if I could actually live on the farm and farm full time, then I would rather do that."

This is when Ivan interjects about house prices in Toronto, and a lively debate ensues about what you can buy in Grayson, Saskatchewan, for the price of a down payment on a house in the Big Smoke.

This is how a conversation between the Ottenbreits seems to go. The pair finish each other's sentences, the topic of farming is never far off, and a good debate is clearly relished, although remarkably amiable. In short, they come across as a team; a functional, healthy, multi-generational farming unit.

Ivan says the process of transitioning the farm to Danny has been different from his experience of succeeding his parents.

"When you took over from Grandpa, was there as much focus on the business side, having a crop plan, having a work plan... that was written down on paper?" Danny asks his father.

"Not really," Ivan says, adding that a lesson he took from his own transition process was the need for more detail.

Ivan and Danny are still about five years out from fully completing the transition process, but in the meantime, the Ottenbreits have a strategy in place that has been working well for them and some recommendations for other producers navigating the potentially murky waters of farm succession.

"It takes about five to 10 years to get it done," Ivan says. "A transition is multi-faceted, it's a number of things over a period of time."

Although, Ivan wasted no time in involving Danny in key elements of the farm.

"I put him in charge of banking right off the bat. So, he's the guy that puts the money in the bank and he writes the cheques. That gives you a good idea if you're going to stay in farming or not," Ivan chuckles.

"A lot of people have trouble turning over the major workload. I made him do the major operations, everything from seeding to spraying," Ivan says. "It gave him confidence, but under the watchful eye of Dad."

Danny also handles all of the marketing and works closely with their agronomist, interpreting all recommendations on seeding, fertilizing, and fungicide and herbicide operations.

It is here, when the conversation detours into an enthusiastic discussion about the new online options for marketing grain, (Danny: "I was riding the chairlift at Asessippi and I got an offer on our wheat...") that a side benefit of having a defined, well-thought-out, farm succession plan that unfolds over several years becomes clear: that the farming operation itself benefits from the overlap of the wisdom and ideas of two generations at once. >>



“That’s tough, letting the next generation take over, its about letting go. I’ve seen in other farm families, it can be really, really tough.”

lies, it can be really, really tough,” he adds, admitting that his parents ‘absolutely’ had trouble letting go as well.

It is clear, sitting around the kitchen table with Ivan and Danny, that the Ottenbreits have tackled the issue of farm succession head on. They understand that there may be some difficult conversations along the way, but it is better to have those conversations now, rather than put them off.

“Communication is a big one. On a daily basis or as frequently as possible. We talk all the time. We might not talk about farming all the time,” Ivan says, to which Danny cuts his father off, laughing, “No, we pretty much talk about farming all the time...”

It’s not all work though, and that is an attitude that Ivan is adamant is part of a healthy farm succession process.

“You have to allow both generations to take time off. Time to renew. Fishing, hunting, skiing, whatever it is,” he says. “Your mental health, you’ve gotta take care of that. Farming is stressful, you’ve got to take care of yourself.”

It’s probably for the best, then, that Danny’s first year farming full-time coincided with, as Ivan puts it, ‘the most adverse conditions this farm has ever seen.’ An extraordinarily tough year that father and son faced together.

“We seeded 900 out of 2,000 acres in 2011 because it was extremely wet,” he says.

“We seeded winter wheat in the fall, and it was like, my whole life the way I thought farming was and then 2011 was just not even close,” Danny shakes his head.

“A reality check,” Ivan chimes in.

Did Danny have second thoughts in that first year?

“No,” says Danny, without a second’s hesitation. *FV*

“Most farmers want to experiment,” Danny says, “but some of your parents have already tried this stuff. You really have to tap into your parents’ wisdom. Maybe they tried it in the ’80s and it didn’t work, or maybe it worked really well.”

One thing the Ottenbreits have made sure to include in their succession plan, is a few different options that allow for either of Danny’s two siblings to become more involved in the farm, should they choose to at some point.

“If they decide they want to come home, we have a base that we can expand,” Danny says.

Too often you hear of rifts happening in farm families because of disagreements over the succession plan or lack there of. The Ottenbreits have made sure that everyone in the family knows what the plan is, and agrees that it is fair to all, although Danny also points out that it is important to be a bit flexible.

“If you have a plan, you don’t have to stick to it 100 per cent,” Danny says, “but at least that stress of not knowing what is going to happen is gone.”

“The uncertainty,” Ivan nods.

One thing Ivan is certain about is that the Ottenbreit farm is in good hands.

“In the end, you have to have confidence in the generation taking over. If you have some doubt, you’re going to run into some problems,” Ivan says. “I have confidence in Danny taking over.”

“That’s tough, letting the next generation take over,” Ivan continues. “Its about letting go. I’ve seen in other farm fami-

A look back at 2017

BY TODD LEWIS, APAS PRESIDENT

MY FIRST YEAR AS APAS PRESIDENT has been as busy as our farming year.

It’s been an interesting and challenging year in many ways for Saskatchewan agriculture. It has also been a prosperous and successful year in many ways.

A typical APAS year is a lot like a common production year on any farm or ranch.

There are busy times like seeding or calving, or having an AGM or Carbon Summit. There is lots of planning and hard work to get ready for any of these events on a farm or for an organization like APAS. Then something unexpected happens — no rain, cash ticket deferral — too much rain, major-tax reform, unexpected yields — a prime minister’s visit, cut worms, aphids, anthrax, clubroot, fusarium, and A&W commercials — provincial and federal budgets.

We started the year in February with a very successful trip to the Canadian Federation of Agriculture’s annual meeting in Ottawa. APAS brought 11 delegates, which included both current and former members of our mentee program as well as our executive, some board members and staff.

It was a great week with many lobbying opportunities and good policy discussions with our partner agricultural organizations from across Canada.

One of the highlights of the week was the election of Norm Hall as Vice President of the CFA. It’s great to have a Saskatchewan voice speaking on behalf of Canada’s producers.

The Youth Leadership and Mentorship program had another successful year. Training our young producers for leadership is important to the future of our industry. APAS thanks the five mentees from last year and welcomes nine new participants in 2018. I would also like to thank and recognize the Provincial Ministry of Agriculture for continuing to provide funding for this program.

In March the provincial and federal budgets were announced on the same day. The provincial budget included a number of measures that impact agriculture and have

been felt in a number of ways in the weeks and months following these announcements. Services have been reduced in some cases and taxes have increased. APAS has put forth the position that producers are paying their fair share and if the province is going to prosper than agriculture must be allowed to flourish.

The federal budget contained a lot of references to agriculture. Generally, at the federal level there is a heightened awareness of our industry. We have noticed in our lobbying efforts that a number of Ministries are interested with what is happening on the farm. Doors are opening and it’s important that a strong voice is there with a common message for producers.

“A typical APAS year is a lot like a common production year on any farm or ranch.”

In April I attended the Hudson Bay Route Association meeting in Swan River, Manitoba. APAS and its membership has recognized the importance of maintaining this valuable infrastructure. Even though the Port of Churchill is located in Manitoba it is supported by much of eastern Saskatchewan. APAS supports the route and the Port of Churchill and will continue to lobby on their behalf.

In late April, my family was pleased to host Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and show him our operation.

Our community at Gray and surrounding area is small, under 200 people. Many thanks to all the volunteers who helped out for the big event. Tuesday night we got official confirmation that the visit would happen and Thursday morning at 8 a.m., the Prime Minister, Minister MacAulay, Minister Goodale, their staff, 30 security members and 30 media people as well as a bomb sniffing dog were all at the top of the driveway at my brother’s yard after the 8-vehicle motorcade parked on the gravel road.

The Prime Minister and Minister MacAulay were there to talk and learn about canola. Mr. Trudeau said he knew what it looked like, had negotiated a multi-billion trade deal about it, but had no idea how it was produced. He was scheduled to be at the farm for 45 minutes. He was there for an hour and a half.

We couldn’t get him away from the sprayer, air drill and combine. At the farm it was all about farming. My brother Rod ran him through the drills and the combine. I knew he would do a good job of explaining farming and what we all do. My Dad and I explained our operation to Minister MacAulay and Minister Goodale. After the farm tour we proceeded to the Gray Rink where the PM made some remarks and answered questions from the media. Many Agricultural groups and producers from across Saskatchewan attended on very short notice. Our Ottawa visitors left with a better understanding of how modern agriculture works in Saskatchewan.

July was busy with our annual midterm meeting and a large policy initiative that resulted in the Carbon Summit. A highlight of the policy discussion at the midterm convention was a long over due conversation about mental health and stress management in agriculture. Producers responded well and participated in a good discussion on a sensitive subject that is not well recognized or understood.

APAS is opposed to a carbon tax. We learned from experts at our Carbon Summit that agriculture is a key part of the solution and not part of the problem when it comes to carbon emissions. The Summit was successful in highlighting a number of good research projects, agronomic practices, and policies that all support the concept of low-carbon food production.

APAS attended that Canadian Federation of Agriculture summer meeting in St. John’s, Newfoundland. This is held at the same time as the federal, provincial, terri-

Continued on page 9

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www.APAS.ca/my-rewards

Continued from page 7

torial meeting of Ag Ministers. The new Agricultural Policy Framework was signed and re-named the Canadian Agriculture Partnership or CAP for short. It included a Business Risk Management review process this year. We look forward to participating in this process over the next few months with the provincial and federal governments.

More unexpected business occurred in August, when the Federal Finance Department launched a short consultation on major changes to small business corporation taxation, scheduled to take place during the busy harvest season.

We quickly understood that these proposals could have a serious impact on our family farms.

An intense lobbying effort came together and we and our partners at the CFA in Ottawa did a good job of raising these concerns with politicians and bureaucrats. Canadian agriculture came

together as a team and put forward a position that was listened to and the federal government did announce a pull-back on many of the initial proposals. APAS is continuing to make comments and work with federal officials to make positive changes and mitigate issues in tax policies.

Our executive members attended the CFA October board meeting in Ottawa. It included a lobby day on Parliament Hill with more than 40 meetings with MPs, Senators, and staff. It was a focused and effective effort. It was recognized that agriculture did the best job as far as putting forward a focused position on the tax reform issue. Ag is being recognized as a leader in effective advocacy and policy influence.

This November, I appeared before the Senate Committee on Finance when they visited Saskatoon. I made comments regarding the tax reforms and the potential impacts that farmers face.

Our year was capped off by a very successful APAS Annual General Meeting in

late November. We learned from many expert speakers, and had excellent panel discussions. Our representatives discussed and developed almost 40 policy resolutions, which are listed in this magazine. APAS is a grassroots organization, because of the input from all of our members from all sectors across the Province, we are able to recognize issues as they arise and offer solutions that can help maintain and grow our industry.

I would like to acknowledge the dedication and participation of our retiring members of our Board of Directors, and to welcome five new board members. We are looking forward to another successful year.

The story of agriculture is important. Farmers and ranchers often do the right thing as a common practice. We need to tell an interested public how we do this and why. Our industry is a major driver of the economy and exists because the hard work and investment from the producer's that we represent. *fv*



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APAS activities

The latest from Saskatchewan's general farm organization

FEDERAL TAX CHANGES

► The federal government's "Tax Planning Using Private Corporations" consultation was a major focus for APAS in the fall of 2017. In July, Finance Canada released a paper, outlining a series of tax reforms for Canadian small businesses. Business owners and tax practitioners were alarmed both by the breadth of the reforms and the condensed timeline for consultation. The comment period closed on October 2.

From August to October, APAS was involved in an intense lobby over this issue. In September, APAS met with the Finance Minister's Parliamentary Secretary, Joel Lightbound, and in October, the APAS Executive met with Regina MP and Public Safety Minister Hon. Ralph Goodale. On November 6, president Todd Lewis presented before the Senate Finance Committee in Saskatoon. APAS also launched an advertising campaign to encourage producers to sign petitions and raise concerns with their elected MPs.

On October 2, APAS submitted its report to Finance Canada, asking for the withdrawal of the proposals and a new approach to tax reform. In absence of a new approach, it was recommended that qualified farm properties be provided exemptions from key aspects of the proposals, as it was unclear how the changes could be applied fairly in a multigenerational, family farm context. Written in support of the more detailed CFA submission, the APAS submission also requested that Finance Canada launch a separate consultation with farm stakeholders to specifically look at how Canada's tax code treats the transfer and sale of businesses between family members.

Later that month, Finance Canada

announced a series of changes to its original proposals. The proposed changes to capital gains exemptions were withdrawn and Finance Canada provided additional clarity into how income sprinkling and passive investments would be treated under the proposals. Finance Canada also accepted APAS' recommendation to review intergenerational business transfers in separate consultation.

The APAS response has been positive. On December 14, the federal government announced further clarity about the new income sprinkling rules, which appear to provide a number of accommodations to ensure that legitimate family member contributions to the farm business will be exempt from a reasonableness test. While the proposed \$50,000 of passive income threshold has provided much-needed clarity, it is still unclear how farm land rental income will be treated or whether the limit will be set up like an RRSP to allow for carry-over from previous years. The federal government's final decision on passive investment income is expected in the 2018 Budget.

Finance Canada is continuing to finalize and implement tax changes that will impact private corporations, with some taking effect in the 2018 tax year. Producers are encouraged to speak with their tax advisors about the new rules and potential tax implications.

2017 CFA LOBBY DAY AND HARVEST RECEPTION

► In late October, the APAS Executive Committee joined other CFA members in Ottawa for their annual fall Lobby Day and Harvest Reception. The Tax Planning Using Private Corporations tax proposals and NAFTA negotiations

were major topics addressed at this year's event. Forty MPs and Senators from all parties attended the event, as well as parliamentary staff and senior bureaucrats.

CASH TICKET DEFERRAL DECISION AND LIVESTOCK DEFERRALS

► APAS was pleased with the federal government's announcement in early September that cash purchase ticket deferrals would be maintained in Canada's Income Tax Act. Cash purchase ticket deferrals are special provisions in the Income Tax Act that allow grain producers to defer the income from grain sales into the next tax year upon receipt of a cash purchase ticket. In March, Finance Canada announced a consultation on cash ticket deferrals, seeking feedback on why they are needed and the potential consequences of eliminating these provisions from the Income Tax Act.

Deferring grain sales is a longstanding business practice for western Canadian farmers. Income deferrals help producers manage the income uncertainty that is inherent in agricultural production. The practice has also evolved to support Canada's "just in time" grain handling system by reducing the influence of tax considerations on producers' delivery decisions. In May, APAS submitted a report to explain these issues in more detail and to strongly recommend that Finance Canada keep cash ticket deferrals in the Act.

APAS is pleased with both the outcome of the consultation, and that Finance Canada extended the comment period to accommodate seeding as requested.

In the same announcement,

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada also released the areas in Saskatchewan that are eligible for livestock tax deferrals due to drought conditions. The Livestock Tax Deferral is a federal program that allows producers who have experienced drought in designated RMs to defer a portion of their livestock sale proceeds into the following tax year. 181 RMs in Saskatchewan have been designated as eligible under the 2017 program.

WILDFIRES AND DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

► APAS has been advocating for disaster assistance programming in response to the wildfires that occurred in southwest Saskatchewan in October. On November 6, APAS formally submitted a request for federal and provincial governments to trigger AgriRecovery, a 60/40 cost shared program designed to assist producers recover from extraordinary disaster events. The specific APAS request is for the provincial and federal governments to provide the same level of relief that was provided in response to the BC fires that occurred earlier in the year.

On November 17, the province of Saskatchewan announced it would match donations to the relief fund set up by the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association. On December 6, the province also announced that the Provincial Disaster Assistance Program would be made available to help with uninsurable losses, including feed costs caused by fire damage on uninsurable pasture.

The APAS Annual General Meeting featured a special session on wildfires, which included presentations by Don Connick, APAS District 3 Director from Gull Lake, SK, and Duane McKay, Saskatchewan's Fire Commissioner. See page 22 for more on this session. APAS also passed several resolutions requesting specific policy responses to the wildfires. These are included on page 14.

PROVINCIAL CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

► On December 4, APAS president Todd Lewis was in the legislature for the provincial government's climate change strategy announcement. Key aspects of the strategy include the development of an offset program that creates additional value for enhanced carbon sequestration and emissions reduction, the implementation of "output based" performance standards on large emitters, and a commitment to begin assessing Saskatchewan's resilience to the effects of climate change.

APAS has issued a statement endorsing the principles contained in the Saskatchewan Climate Change Strategy, as it aligns well with APAS policies on carbon and climate change. There is no economy-wide carbon tax on fuel and other inputs, such as natural gas, and the plan commits to creating opportunities for producers to be recognized for ongoing improvements and for the role that agriculture plays in sequestering carbon in the soil. The emphasis on adaptation and resilience is also positive, as there are commitments in the strategy to look at flood and drought preparedness in the province.

Climate change policy has been a major focus for APAS in 2017. In June, APAS provided a submission to Environment and Climate Change Canada, responding to the carbon pricing "Backstop Policy" that has been proposed for jurisdictions that don't have a plan in place by 2018. The APAS report centred around competitiveness and why carbon taxes are counterproductive in the agricultural sector. In July, APAS hosted the Prairie Agricultural Carbon Summit in Saskatoon. The event brought together leading agricultural researchers from across western Canada to address carbon sequestration, advances in agronomy and plant breeding, and the economic impacts of government climate change policies. The Summit formed the basis of an APAS report, published in September. That report

informed several policy resolutions that were carried at the 2017 APAS AGM. These are included on page 14

APAS FARM INPUT PRICE SURVEY

► APAS is undertaking a project on price transparency in farm input markets. A key component of this project is a feasibility study examining the potential for a new, online database that producers can access to view average, up to date prices for key farm inputs. Part of this study is an online survey of Saskatchewan producers, which takes about five minutes to complete and can be found at APAS.ca.

2018 YOUTH LEADERSHIP AND MENTORSHIP PROGRAM AND FARMLEAD

APAS is proud to announce that nine participants have been chosen for the APAS Youth Leadership and Mentorship program, almost doubling its size. Welcome Dennis Clarke (RM #185 McLeod), Lynn Crossman (RM #520 Paddockwood), Ashten Douhaniuk (RM #184 Grayson), Seraina Giovanoli (RM #395 Porcupine), Matthew Hunter (RM #95 Golden West), Adrienne Ivey (RM #246 Ituna Bon Accord), Megz Reynolds (RM #228 Lacadena), Karlah Rudolph (RM #138 Webb), and Jessica Raycraft (RM #380 Tramping Lake). APAS is also very pleased to announce its partnership with FarmLead in support of the APAS Youth Leadership and Mentorship program. For every farmer who registers their free FarmLead account at FarmLead.com using the referral code "APAS," FarmLead will make a \$25.00 donation to the APAS Youth Leadership and Mentorship program.

2018 APAS POLICY CONFERENCE

► APAS will be holding a policy conference in late March to discuss priority issues. Details are still being finalized, updates will be posted at www.APAS.ca. *FW*

2017 APAS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

TODD LEWIS RE-ELECTED; RESOLUTIONS DEALING WITH WILDFIRE RESPONSE, TRESPASSING AND RIGHT TO FARM PASSED

The Agricultural Producers Association held its Annual General Meeting November 28-30, 2017 in Regina. 38 resolutions were passed and the APAS Board of Directors re-elected Todd Lewis, APAS representative for RM of Lajord #128, as president for the 2017-18 year. Todd farms at Gray, Saskatchewan, with his family and was first elected to the position in 2016. The Board also elected Ian Boxall of Tisdale, and James Vogt of Francis as Vice-Presidents for the Association. Several new Directors were elected to the APAS Board. Those individuals are highlighted in bold.



The 2018 APAS Board of Directors.

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DISTRICT 3

Don Connick, Gull Lake RM of Carmichael #109
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DISTRICT 4

Ian Boxall, Tisdale RM of Connaught #457
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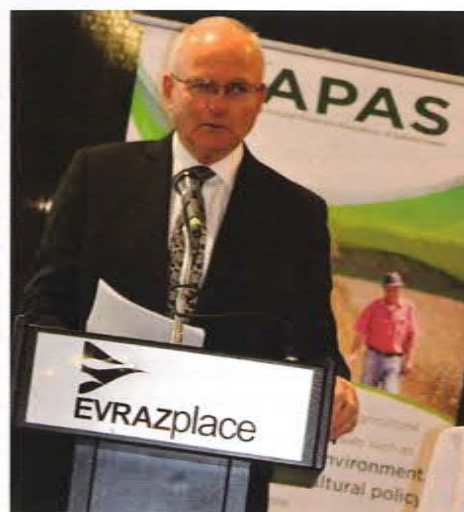
Donavon Block, Leroy RM of Leroy #339
Mickey Palfy, Viscount RM of Viscount #341

DISTRICT 6

Scott Owens, Maidstone RM of Eldon #471
Bill Warrington, Loverna RM of Antelope Park #322



The 2018 APAS Youth Leadership and Mentorship program mentees. From L-R: Dennis Clarke (RM #185 McLeod), Ashten Douhaniuk (RM #184 Grayson), Karlah Rudolph (RM #138 Webb), Adrienne Ivey (RM #246 Ituna Bon Accord), Megz Reynolds (RM #228 Lacadena), Lynn Crossman (RM #520 Paddockwood), Seraina Giovanoli (RM #395 Porcupine), Matthew Hunter (RM #95 Golden West), and Jessica Raycraft (RM #380 Tramping Lake).



Saskatchewan Minister of Agriculture, Lyle Stewart, addresses the audience at the 2017 APAS AGM.



The Saskatchewan Women in Ag panellists, Katelyn Duncan (Saskatchewan Women in Ag board member), Adrienne Ivey (Ag Blogger and APAS Youth Leadership and Mentorship program mentee) and Wanda Reid (APAS representative, RM #95 Golden West).



Norm Hall, CFA Vice President and APAS representative (RM #277 Emerald), Nicole Sarauer, interim leader of the Saskatchewan NDP, and Carmen Sterling, Vice President of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities.



APAS District 6 Director Scott Owens, RM #471 Eldon.

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Leland Kimpinski
FarmLead
Nelson Motors
D3H Hotels
FP Genetics
Sask Organics

FRIEND

Chicken Farmers of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon Inn and Conference Centre
Sask Milk
Red Coat Road and Rail
Sask Egg Producers
Dudley and Company
Saskatchewan Association of Watersheds
Western Canadian Short Line Railway
Ag-West Bio
McKercher LLP

Resolutions

THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

- ▶ Work with Young APAS Producers Committee to develop comprehensive policies on farm succession and young and beginning producers.
- ▶ Lobby federal and provincial governments for a financial incentive program that increases the capital gain exemption to \$2,000,000 for farmers who sell land to producers 40 years of age and under.
- ▶ Work with federal and provincial governments to ensure that Business Risk Management programs recognize the unique needs of young and beginning producers.
- ▶ Work with agencies such as crop insurance and farm lenders to examine ways of providing financial incentives to producers for their participation in farm management and risk management education programs.

LIVESTOCK

- ▶ Support a review of the Agricultural Operations Act to ensure Saskatchewan's "right to farm" legislation protects the ability of producers to use accepted and standard practices in both existing and new operations without unreasonable regulation or nuisance complaints.
- ▶ Support a full review of the Agricultural Operations Act, alongside municipal discretionary authority, to ensure Saskatchewan's legislation encourages investment and expansion of livestock production in the province.
- ▶ Continue lobbying the provincial and federal governments to initiate the AgriRecovery disaster assistance program for producers affected by wildfires.
- ▶ Lobby to have lease fees on crown grazing land waived if the land cannot be grazed due to wildfires caused by wind and drought.
- ▶ Lobby the provincial government to delay the sale of crown grazing lands that could be made available to assist producers experiencing pasture shortfalls due to wildfire.
- ▶ Work with the Canadian Federation of Agriculture to lobby the federal government to make it mandatory that seed purity declarations, specifying weed seed content, be provided to producers prior to the purchase of pedigreed forage seed.

GRAINS AND OILSEEDS

- ▶ Call on the Canadian Grain Commission to reinstate the membership of prairie general farm organizations on the Western Grains Standards Committee.
- ▶ Lobby the Canadian Grain Commission to ensure that APAS be provided representation to the Canadian Grain Commission review of the grain grading system.
- ▶ Lobby provincial and federal Governments to ensure that crop insurance premiums and insured coverage levels provide incentives to producers who utilize best management practices and crop rotations that reflect the need for enhanced biosecurity and disease management.

BIOSECURITY, WEEDS AND DISEASES

- ▶ Call on producer associations, industry, and governments to mitigate the risk of clubroot contamination in Saskatchewan by providing investment in the following activities:
 - Improved mapping and identification of clubroot contamination in the province
 - Increased testing and surveying of fields and soils for clubroot
 - the development of new clubroot resistance varieties of canola that have competitive agronomic traits
 - a province-wide approach to the regulation and reporting of clubroot, which includes all Rural Municipalities
- ▶ Work with government agencies, crown corporations and the private sector to identify and implement best management practices to reduce the risk of transmitting disease and weeds through the movement of equipment, vehicles, and people across farmland.
- ▶ Request the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture to investigate enhancements to weed mapping through platforms like the Saskatchewan Conservation Data system.
- ▶ Request that the Government of Saskatchewan to clarify the respective roles of Rural Municipalities and the Ministry of Highways in the Weed Control Act to eliminate inconsistencies.
- ▶ Work with the Canadian Federation of Agriculture and the federal government to clarify the roles and responsibilities of federally regulated entities, such as railways and pipelines, in controlling weeds in their right of ways.
- ▶ Lobby federal and provincial governments increase funding to study, monitor and test for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in wild cervids.

CARBON POLICY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

- ▶ Reaffirm APAS's opposition to the imposition of a carbon tax on agriculture. Lobby the federal government for increased financial support for the expansion of the Prairie Soil Carbon Balance Project to include test sites in Manitoba and Alberta and to include the measurement of crop rotations, forages, and grasslands.
- ▶ Call on the Canadian Government to work with the other international signatories of the Paris Agreement to accurately measure and recognize agricultural carbon sinks.
- ▶ Lobby the federal and provincial governments, crop commissions and other funders to invest in research programs for the development of crop varieties that would increase carbon sequestration through innovations such as enhanced root mass and increased photosynthetic efficiency.
- ▶ Support the development of voluntary carbon offset programs that reflect the following principles:
 - Offset protocols should be designed to provide meaningful recognition of agricultural activities that reduce carbon;

- The maintenance of existing carbon sinks like wetlands, forests and grasslands should be eligible for financial support;
- Verification systems must be effective and cost-efficient;
- Offset protocols must provide a fair price to producers for voluntary sequestration or emission reductions;
- Offset protocols must allow for the aggregation and stacking of credits;
- Offset protocol programs must reflect the diversity of different agricultural sectors.
- ▶ Support the development of Farm Stewardship funding for Best Management Practices (BMPs) that enhance and support agricultural producers to:
 - Reflect the cost of retaining and enhancing carbon sinks like wetlands, trees, and grasslands,
 - Adopt management practices that enhance carbon sequestration,
 - Implement climate change adaptation measures such as flood and drought proofing,
 - Encourage innovation in dealing with adaptation and carbon management.
- ▶ Lobby the federal government to ensure that changes to federal rail policies consider carbon emissions and road maintenance costs.

LAND AND ENVIRONMENT

- ▶ Call on the Government of Saskatchewan to take immediate action to make changes to trespass legislation and regulations to reflect the following principles:
 - The legal definition of Civil trespass and access to farmland be covered under a single piece of provincial legislation
 - That all enclosed private land be considered posted for all purposes
 - All cultivated lands be considered posted for all purposes
 - That maximum fines for civil trespass increase to \$10,000

- ▶ Lobby the Province of Saskatchewan (Water Security Agency) to refurbish all transitioned PFRA dams for use for irrigation and water management.
- ▶ Lobby to have renewable energy projects, such as wind and solar, to be covered under provincial surface rights legislation and allow producers to be compensated for nuisance or loss of use related to these projects.
- ▶ Call for legislative changes to ensure agricultural producers can seek compensation when third-party infrastructure is impacting the productivity and efficiency of their land and farming operations.

ECONOMIC, TRADE AND STRATEGIC GROWTH

- ▶ Support a model for the new Canadian Radio Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) funding regime that maintains Saskatchewan's share of funding at the same proportion that is provided under the voice service subsidy fund.
- ▶ Support the continuation of a North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) for agriculture and call on the Government of Canada to ensure the updated agreement includes a fair and transparent dispute resolution mechanism.
- ▶ Call on the Government of Canada to fill the vacant CRTC Commissioner position for Saskatchewan prior to proceeding further with decisions on broadband internet and voice service subsidies.
- ▶ Encourage CTV to reassess its decision to cancel the Farm Gate TV program.
- ▶ Work with provincial commodity groups to lobby the provincial government to include mandatory agricultural education in all appropriate aspects of Saskatchewan's school curriculum.
- ▶ Lobby the federal government to include grains and livestock as eligible commodities under the Agricultural Stream of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. ¹⁴



Do not enter!

APAS seeks changes to provincial laws governing trespass and farmland access

BY DELANEY SEIFERLING

EVERY YEAR SASKATCHEWAN producers deal with the threat of weeds and diseases in their crops.

And a growing concern right now is how those weeds and diseases are being spread onto their farms by activity that could be better regulated in our province.

Biosecurity, which involves the movement of soil by wind, water, vehicles, equipment and human activity, is a major threat to Saskatchewan farms says Garth Burns, who farms at Lanigan Creek, about 100 miles north of Regina.

"There is no way of controlling this that we know of today and once you're affected by it, your farming as you know it today has changed," he says.

"It could almost destroy agriculture as we know it."

Burns, who is also a member of the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS) Grains and Oilseeds Committee, says the issue is especially relevant for canola farmers who have problems and concerns with clubroot.

"Canola is our best paying crop in agriculture and lots of producers are growing it every second year," he says. "So it becomes a shot to your stability and agronomics start coming into play."

Clubroot is a serious soil-borne disease that affects the roots of cruciferous field crops such as canola. Once a field has become infested with clubroot,

there are no economical control measures that can remove the pathogen from the soil. Clubroot spores have been found to persist in soils for up to 20 years.

David Aldred, who farms at Dundurn, SK, also has major concerns about biosecurity issues on his farm. Every year he deals with people who illegally use his farmland for recreational activities such as snowmobiling, ATving and hunting, causing major damage and frustration.

"Most of the time we don't see them — they come and go and we come along afterwards and see the damage," he says.

Aldred says he has tried several ways to prevent people from illegally entering his land, putting up signs, fences and hay bales as barriers to entry. These measures have had some impact, but every year there are also people who blatantly ignore them, he says.

"There are always the people that don't care. With them, it doesn't matter what you do, they're going to do what they want anyways."

Aldred says a major part of the problem is that the current provincial legislation governing access to farmland don't have a lot of effect in preventing this type of behavior. He also feels that farmland access isn't an issue that the government and law enforcement officials take very seriously.

"Our trespass laws don't have a lot of

teeth," he says. "If we complain that someone's been hunting on our land without permission, in our opinion, 90 per cent of the time the conservation officers don't seem to pursue it in court, even if we get a license plate number and picture. That's frustrating for us."

Aldred says that other provinces have stricter and more proactive laws in place to prevent these types of issues. For example, under Ontario's laws, people planning to enter private farmland for recreational activity need to obtain written permission from the landowner in advance, and the fines for trespassing are significantly higher.

"It's restrictive — having to find the landowner to get permission — so people don't like doing it," he says.

Alberta also has better regulations in place, and clearer and simpler rules, that give farmland owners more control in governing their own land, Burns says.

"If you look at the laws that exist in Alberta, they have a one page legislation to deal with this issue and it is very straightforward in all areas, and very plain and easy to understand. You don't have to search pages and pages to find it."

Because of this, APAS's Grains and Oilseed committee introduced a resolution at the APAS AGM this past December to strengthen Saskatchewan's legislation around farmland access laws.

The proposed changes would include



PHOTO: GETTY

ensuring all farmland is considered posted for all purposes, and increasing the fines associated with illegal entry in order to better reflect the significant risk that biosecurity issues pose to the agriculture industry.

It's important to note that these proposed changes aren't aiming to eliminate recreational activity on farmland, says APAS president Todd Lewis, but instead aim to give land owners better controls to ensure their land is protected.

"This proposal would not eliminate hunting or ATV access, but would put the onus on the public to obtain permission from landowners in advance," he says.

Aldred agrees that requiring people to gain permission in advance would help his cause. Currently he gets requests every year from people who want to hunt on his land and he is happy to oblige as long as he knows the people will be responsible, clean up after themselves and leave the land how they found it.

Another change that APAS is proposing to provincial regulations is to move to a single act governing access to farmland (currently Saskatchewan's laws around farmland access are complex, administered through several acts with varying levels of protection.)

"The implementation of a single act governing access would also improve public understanding and provide consistent enforcement," Lewis says.

The public education component is important, Aldred says, as he believes that if the public understood the potential damage they were causing they might be more responsible in their behaviour.

"Part of it is that we have to educate people that this is somebody's land," he says. "We make our living here, and what you're doing is having fun and a good time and not thinking about that, and we need people to think about that." *FV*

Once a field has become infested with clubroot, there are no economical control measures that can remove the pathogen from the soil. Clubroot spores have been found to persist in soils for up to 20 years

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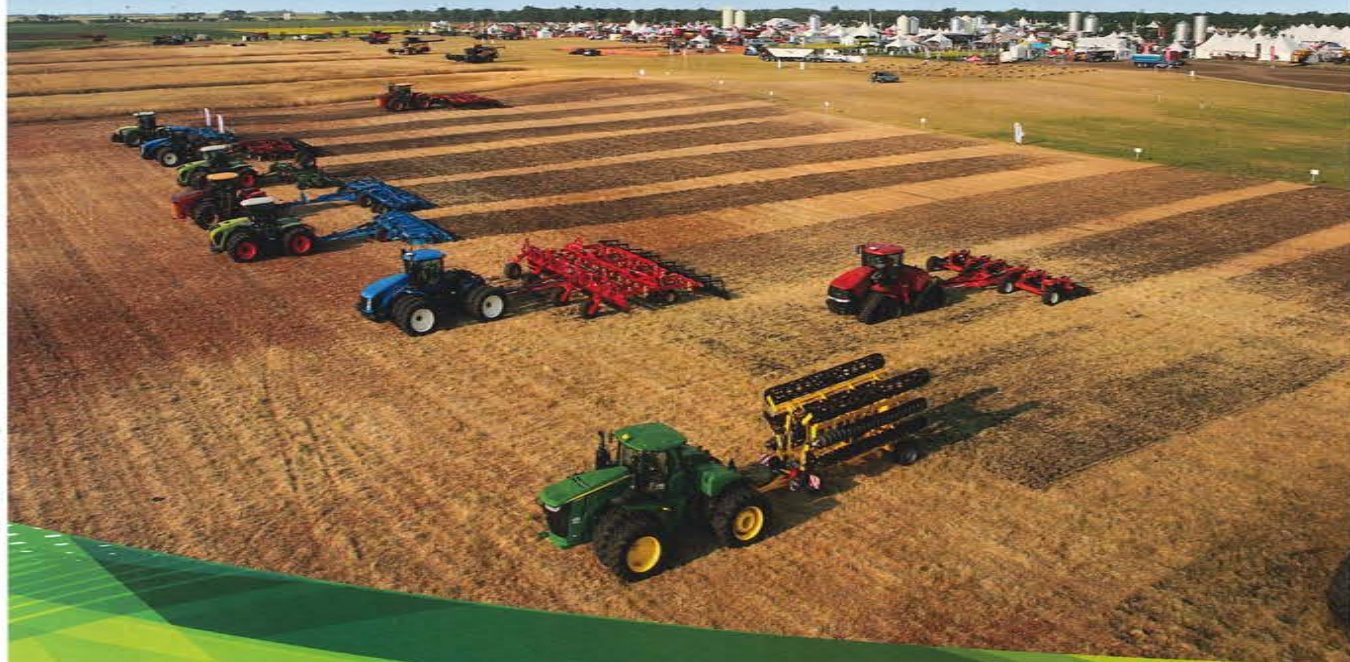
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ALUS Canada supports farmers in Saskatchewan

Working with Saskatchewan farmers to transform environmentally sensitive farmland

ALUS Canada is the national charity that oversees the ALUS program, a community-developed, farmer-delivered program that produces cleaner air, cleaner water, more biodiversity and other ecosystem services in Canadian communities.

APAS and ALUS go way back. Not only is APAS the organization that first brought ALUS to Saskatchewan, but APAS' current president, Todd Lewis, was an original member of the province's first ALUS Partnership Advisory Committee (PAC).

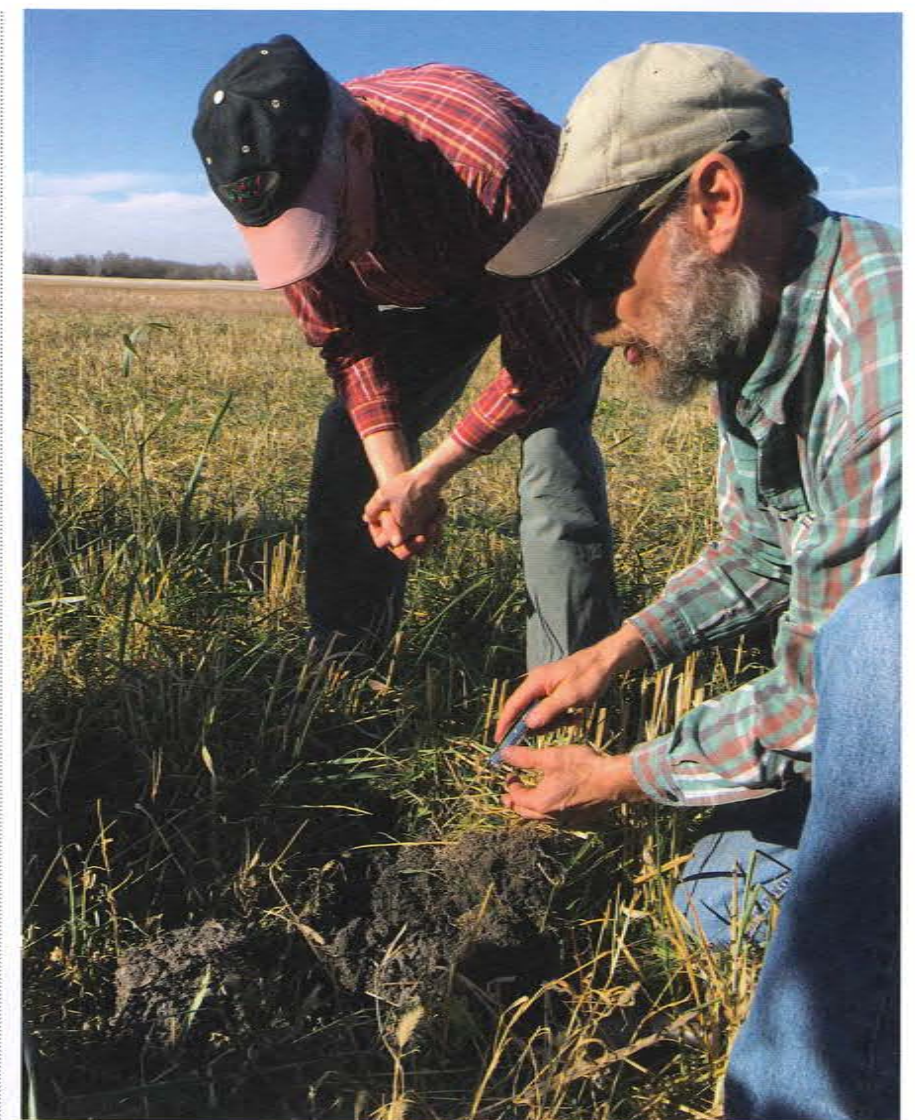
"For all these reasons and more, ALUS Canada is proud to be an Associate Member of the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan," said Bryan Gilvesy, CEO of ALUS Canada, A Weston Family Initiative.

ALUS IN SASKATCHEWAN

In Saskatchewan, ALUS Canada has invested more than \$550,000 to develop the ALUS program, specifically by supporting two community-based programs. Together, these Saskatchewan communities have already enrolled nearly 3,000 acres into the ALUS program.

That means 3,000 acres that were once environmentally sensitive, marginal parcels of farmland have been transformed — by the farmer, with some help from the ALUS program — into ALUS projects, such as wetlands, native prairie, pollinator habitats, riparian buffers and more.

These projects are now managed and maintained by Saskatchewan's ALUS participants, who continue to do so for as long as they choose to remain part of the ALUS program — participation is strictly voluntary. >>



ALUS Saskatchewan Assiniboine Project (ASAP) participant Gary Richards (on right) has enrolled more than 110 acres of his 4,200-acre farm into the ALUS program. Here, he shows ALUS Little Saskatchewan River (Manitoba) PAC member Gord Hammell (on left) how the local ALUS program helped him convert some marginal cropland to a blend of forage species. These forage plants are perennials with deep and extensive root systems, which means they help improve soil health, provide habitat for many native species, sequester carbon and prevent the soil from washing into nearby streams. It's a perfect example of how ALUS works with farmers to produce cleaner air, cleaner water, more biodiversity and other valuable ecosystem services for the benefit of the wider community.

It is the participants who are putting their skills toward the production of ecosystem services on their own land. And this is the key to ALUS' success.

"ALUS recognizes that farmers and ranchers can not only feed a hungry world," said Gilvesy, "but they can also be significant environmental solution-providers for all Canadians."

In Saskatchewan, ALUS projects often involve restoring and continually improving wetlands. This is valuable for communities large and small, because healthy, functioning wetlands are critical to help prevent devastating floods.

Another popular type of ALUS project in Saskatchewan is the conversion of creek-side croplands into riparian forages, such as brome grass or alfalfa. This helps filter run off, to improve water quality for communities downstream.

"All these ALUS projects have a compounding effect, one that does a great

deal to protect our watersheds," said Gilvesy, "and that's why I say that in Saskatchewan, as across this nation, ALUS farmers are part of the solution for improving water quality."

HOW ALUS WORKS

In total, there are currently 22 ALUS communities across six provinces (including PEI), where more than 830 participants have enrolled a total of 23,000 acres into the ALUS program.

Each ALUS community receives ALUS Canada funding, which helps them run their local ALUS program and distribute annual payments to its participants.

ALUS Canada always partners with a local organization to start up an ALUS community. In Saskatchewan, ALUS Canada partnered with two organizations, the Saskatchewan Farm Stewardship Association (SaskFSA) and the Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship

3,000 acres that were once environmentally sensitive, marginal parcels of farmland have been transformed — by the farmer, with some help from the ALUS program — into ALUS projects, such as wetlands, native prairie, pollinator habitats, riparian buffers and more



Having just demonstrated the installation of a henhouse on an ALUS wetland project, Paige Englot (ALUS Canada's Prairie Hub Manager), Bob Wilson (ALUS WUQWATR participant and PAC member) and Folly Baugh (ALUS WUQWATR staffer) inspect their work.

Association (AWSA), based in Yorkton, to found the ALUS Saskatchewan Assiniboine Project, or ASAP.

For the community of ALUS WUQWATR, ALUS Canada partnered with the Regina-based organization, Wascana and Upper Qu'Appelle Watersheds Association Taking Responsibility (WUQWATR), which is the organization that took over from APAS as ALUS Canada's official community partners in 2015.

"ALUS Canada is thrilled to be working with such strong community partners in Saskatchewan," said Gilvesy, "and we intend to continue to work closely with APAS to help grow the program in this province."

ALUS Canada provides national funding, guidelines and extensive support to the ALUS community, which is governed by a local Partnership Advisory

Committee (PAC) made up of farmers and advisors. It is the mission of each community to put acres of ALUS projects on the ground in their area, by signing up farmers and ranchers as ALUS participants.

WHO FUNDS ALUS?

For more than a decade now, ALUS Canada has been building excellent relationships in agricultural communities and perfecting a unique mechanism for delivering conservation outcomes from rural acres. Its ALUS' work has primarily been funded through government grants, philanthropic foundations and generous individuals who wished to support this unique kind of environmental stewardship.

These funding streams are still going strong. But now, ALUS Canada is also building new markets for the ecological

services being produced though the program. The organization recently launched a corporate sponsorship program, called New Acre Project, as a portal through which Canadian corporations can invest in the production of ecosystem services.

Bolstered by this new funding stream, ALUS Canada aims to start up more ALUS communities, enlist more farmers and ranchers, do more conservation on more acres, and make even more of a difference on the ground, in the air, and in the water for all Canadians.

The bottom line is: farmers and ranchers who participate in the ALUS program are producing something very valuable. They are on the front lines of sustaining agriculture, wildlife and natural spaces in Saskatchewan and across Canada. **FV**

“Conservation will ultimately boil down to rewarding the private landowner who conserves the public interest.”
-Aldo Leopold, 1934

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ALUS seeks new participants for 2018!
Are you a farmer or rancher with some marginal or ecologically sensitive acres?
ALUS can help you establish wetlands, native prairie, pollinator habitat and other projects on your land.
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Your ALUS projects will produce cleaner air, cleaner water and more biodiversity, benefiting both your farm and your community.
Across Canada, more than 830 agricultural producers have already enrolled over 23,000 acres in the ALUS program.
Join us!

For more information on ALUS, and to see examples of ALUS projects in Saskatchewan, visit **ALUS.ca** and click on 'Communities.'

"It was hell on earth"

Lessons learned from the October 17 wildfires

BY COLLEEN HENNAN

Don Connick has seen a few prairie fires in his day. But he says, make no mistake — what southwestern Saskatchewan experienced on October 17, 2017, was wildfire.

"There were flames over 20 feet high, burning on a 20-100 foot front and driven by winds faster than you could drive a pick up truck down a grid road," the APAS Director from District 3 told a stone-silent audience at the 2017 APAS AGM.

Connick went on to paint a harrowing picture of what happened that day, when 'a pacific low-pressure system swept down the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains and across Alberta and Saskatchewan,' bringing hurricane-force winds to the tinder dry area around Burstall, Tompkins and Leader, Saskatchewan.

Zero visibility due to smoke, dust and ash. 1,100 calls to 911 that day. At least 50 fire departments involved in fighting the blaze.

"This fire burned so ferociously that some of the machines working to control it were starved for oxygen and shut down," Connick said, adding that one man was nearly trapped in a burning tractor.

"He (was trying) to start it (again) until the wheels caught fire. He spent a day in the hospital with burns inflicted from getting out of the tractor and through the fire. A road grader almost suffered the same fate. It was down to two miles an hour from oxygen deprivation to the machine."

When the dust and ash settled, nearly 800 head of cattle and a number of bison had been killed. 85,000 acres of land, along with feed stacks, and miles of fence, were burnt black. A 35 year old man from Alberta, James Hargrave, had died and three others were injured while fighting the fires.

Two of the injured, 43 year old Ron Wedrick and his 25 year old son, Evan, are Connick's neighbours in the RM of Carmichael. He told of how Evan and his grandfather had been fencing when they first saw the smoke, and quickly rigged up a sprayer and a pump and headed out to join the fire fighting efforts 16 miles away. Ron came straight from work in the oil patch, dressed in the fire-retardant coveralls that are mandatory at his job and ended up saving his life.

The wind was fierce and unpredictable that night. When it changed, the Wedrick's truck caught on fire, forcing them off the road and into a ditch.

"They decided their best chance was to abandon the vehicle and run through the wall of flames onto the already burning ground," Connick said. "What they didn't see in the blackness was the 8-foot-high chain link bison fence that was blocking the direction they were going to run."

The men hit the fence, were knocked down and the wall of fire ran right over them.

"Its a story that I can't even imagine coming to real life, but they managed to escape the

Above: The October 17 wildfire southeast of Tompkins, Saskatchewan just before 8:30 p.m.
— Photos by Ruth McGee

fire and get to safety," Ron's sister, Teri Wedrick, told the audience at the APAS AGM.

Ron had used an emergency location device on his cell phone to call for help.

"My brother was a hero that night, as were many others," she said.

Due to the high winds and blowing dust, STARS was unable to fly the night of the fire. The men were first taken to hospital in Maple Creek, then Medicine Hat, and, finally, Calgary, where they have been receiving excellent care, according to Teri.

Ron has been discharged and is receiving outpatient therapy. As of November, Teri said Evan was still undergoing almost-weekly surgeries to graft skin from his chest onto his burns, which cover 65 per cent of his body. But, she said that her nephew is improving and is "going to walk out of there, one day."

Provincial Fire Commissioner Duane MacKay also spoke about the October 17 wildfires at the APAS AGM. He marvelled at the stories of selflessness and heroism that are being shared from that night.

"I think to myself, 'what kind of people live in Saskatchewan?' We have a massive wall of fire coming in and they don't leave. Instead, they hook on to a trailer and drive out to face this



October 17 wildfires at 8:15 pm: Burstall behind left, SW of Tompkins faint red glow on right.

fiery beast. It really speaks to me of the strength, the core, the self-reliance, the independence of the people here," MacKay said, before adding, "but they need help to co-ordinate those efforts. This is a very serious thing. We had several people injured, one firefighter killed."

MacKay and Connick both agreed on the need to work together in order to be better prepared.

"We need not ever experience this again," MacKay said, "without the best efforts of the municipalities, the indi-

viduals involved and the province to make sure that we get a good plan in place."

"Hopefully its a long time before the next time, but there will be a next time," Connick warned. "Have a personal plan for your family and your farm. Think 72 hours on your own, be aware of Murphy's Law, 'if anything can go wrong it will.' Encourage your RM to have a viable, up-to-date emergency plan, and encourage your town or RM to share the plan and educate rate payers about the proper responses. >>



Connick also stressed the importance of being ready for any emergency, not just fire.

“Prepare for flood, wind, winter storm and power outages. Remember, when the power goes out, everything else goes out too. Nothing works. You can’t pump water, or fuel. That night, the police cruisers ran out of fuel. One lady... saw the fire approaching and decided to get out of dodge, but her automatic garage door opener wouldn’t work,” he said.

“We’re just not ready for some of these things,” Connick continued. “We see disasters from all over the world on the news, we watch with a passive indifference because we assume this will never happen to us,” Connick said. “Remember, there’s an old saying about an ounce of prevention.”

In the meantime, the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association is collecting funds and other donations for those affected by the wildfires. The province has vowed to match \$100,000 of what the SSGA raises. Donations can be made at www.skstockgrowers.com.

Teri Wedrick says the wildfires of October 17 have touched her whole community.

“Many, many men have been traumatized. Families have been hurt. No one had seen anything quite like it,” she said.

“It was hell on earth and there was people doing what they could to save each other, and to save land and cattle, and we thank everyone who did something to make that night better.” *fv*

Emergency preparedness tips

Don Connick shared a list of emergency preparedness tips at the APAS AGM after talking to the fire chief of the Gull Lake Volunteer Department, Bentley Gibson. More information about how to prepare for an emergency can be found at www.getprepared.gc.ca.

- The cardinal rule: Never jeopardize a human life to try to save property
- Stay calm
- Train
- Ensure your RM or town has a well-prepared, up-to-date emergency plan and review it frequently with everyone involved.
- Ensure there is a well-defined chain of command and clear communication
- Identify staging areas for water and fuel supplies. Establish muster points for equipment, water trucks and personnel
- Rely on the RCMP for traffic control and for evacuation but not for expertise in fire fighting, as by and large they are not trained in this. Onlookers were a problem on October 17
- Digital onlookers also hampered emergency efforts. “Hundreds of people were using cell phones to

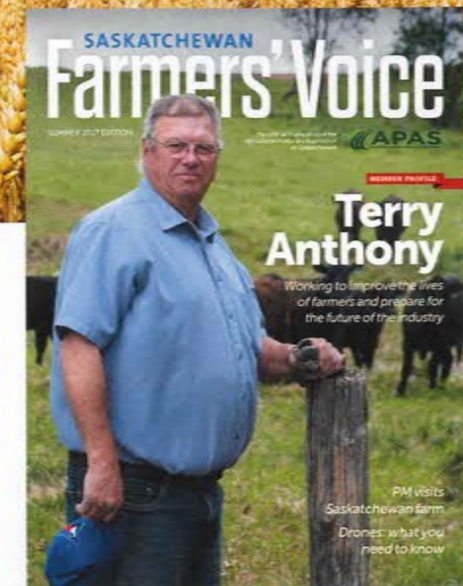


call, text, tweet and send pictures. Social media lit up like a Christmas tree and the electronic overload on the cell towers started jamming the system. The APAS Economic and Trade committee has talked about the importance of maintaining a landline system in rural Saskatchewan and on October 17 it was critical to have that landline system in place,” Connick said.

- Have a personal plan for your family and farm, for fire and other emergencies
- Make sure you have more than one escape route
- Be prepared to be on your own for 72 hours. Have enough food, water, shelter and heat for three days.
- Remember that when the power goes out, nothing works. You can’t pump water or fuel.
- Check your insurance coverage.



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