

# SASKATCHEWAN Farmers' Voice

SUMMER 2022 EDITION



**A YOUTUBE  
CELEBRITY:**  
Mike Mitchell and His  
178,000 Subscribers

**IAN BOXALL:**  
Seven Years Later

**SASKATCHEWAN  
FARM ANIMALS:**  
Man's Best Friend

**GRAIN  
CONTRACTS:**  
Are Farmers Being  
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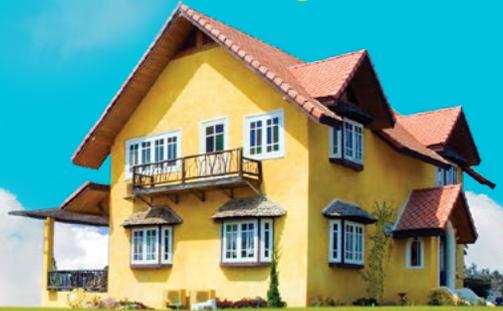
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The next issue of *Saskatchewan Farmers' Voice* will arrive in your farm mailbox in October 2022. Email info@apas.ca if you are not receiving a copy of *Saskatchewan Farmers' Voice* and would like to. Check out our online edition at [apas.ca/farmersvoice](http://apas.ca/farmersvoice).

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# Farm Disaster Program Renewal Must Support Livestock Producers

The Following is an op-ed published in May by weekly newspapers across Saskatchewan on the extreme drought situation in western Saskatchewan and the challenges the livestock sector face moving forward.

**S**askatchewan's agricultural producers have been through a tough couple of years, especially our livestock producers.

Extreme drought across Western Canada in 2021 created widespread shortages of livestock feed and water, and left pastures and hay land in poor condition for the upcoming year.

In 2021, provincial and federal governments stepped up with AgriRecovery support to help producers deal with the increased costs of maintaining their herds, and that aid was very much appreciated. It was also designed as a one-time program that is now winding down.

Producers also appreciate the changes to remove the Reference Margin Limit in AgriStability, which has improved that program.

Significant challenges remain for this year however, and we are unsure about whether there is adequate programming to support the livestock sector.

2022 is shaping up as another difficult year for cattle producers. Many farms in the southeast lost new calves in the blizzards that swept through the area over the past few weeks. Calf mortality rates are reportedly up to 15% for some operations. These losses are not covered under current Business Risk Management (BRM) programming.

Producers appreciate the announcement of the Provincial Disaster Assistance Program (PDAP) in areas affected by spring storms.

At the same time, extreme drought persists in some western parts of Sas-



“ We clearly need improvements to BRM programs to better support producers during and after natural disasters. ”

Ian Boxall, President - Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan

katchewan. There's no feed available and farms are preparing to pasture their animals on land that has little prospect of new growth without significant moisture.

Governments have not given themselves the toolkit they need to deal with emergency situations. We clearly need improvements to BRM programs to better support producers during and after natural disasters.

Federal and provincial governments are currently negotiating the next five-year agreement for agricultural policy. These consultations must recognize the significant challenges facing Saskatchewan livestock producers and develop better programs to support the industry in times of disaster.

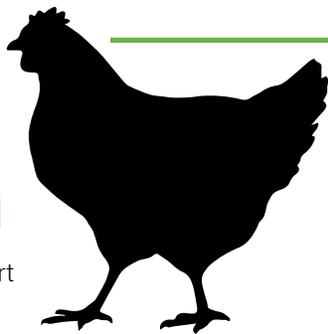
It is also time to ensure that livestock and mixed producers can take advantage of production insurance tools like those that are available for crop producers.

Earlier this month, the APAS Next Policy Framework (NPF) Task Force released their recommendations for the 2023 agricultural programs. The report addresses the need for cost-shared insurance, disaster assistance programs that are on par with other countries, and environmental initiatives that support the development of water supplies on a much larger and more ambitious scale than what is currently available.

Canada produces the highest quality and most sustainably produced livestock in the world. The challenges facing cattle producers today threaten the long-term viability of the industry. Government programs can and should help producers better manage these risks.

We hope the government's current negotiations will recognize the livestock industry's contributions to Canadian agriculture by creating programs for 2023 that will better support the needs of our industry for the future.

# Find the Chicken



Chickens are an essential part of the agricultural industry in Saskatchewan by providing meat and eggs for consumers. Even though they are easy to spot on a farm, there is one chicken in this magazine that's hiding.

We have hidden a chicken among the pages of Saskatchewan Farmers' Voice for you to find.

The chicken on this page is an example of the chicken you are looking for among the magazine's pages.

If you find the chicken, please visit [apas.ca/find-the-chicken-survey](https://apas.ca/find-the-chicken-survey) to fill out a short survey to be entered in to win.

To be eligible, you must fill in the survey before September 30, 2022. Out of all eligible contestants, five winners will be selected at random, and each of the five winners will receive a \$50 Mark's gift card.

You will be only contacted if you are one of the five winners of the contest.

Good luck locating the hidden chicken!

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On Saturday, March 12th, 2022, between the hours of 1:00pm and 4:30pm, someone burnt down an ice fishing shack just South of Rowan's Ravine Provincial Park, between the park and Island View Resort Village. The remains of the shack were then abandoned and left on the ice. Rowan's Ravine Conservation Officers are looking for the public's assistance in identifying the owner of the ice shack and the person(s) who burnt it.

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# APAS at Work

**A**PAS has had a busy start to 2022. While the west part of the province continues to deal with drought-like conditions, the east is dealing with a surplus of moisture. Meanwhile, APAS has made several policy submissions to the federal and provincial governments, including our Task Force recommendations for the 5 year Federal-Provincial Agricultural Next Policy Framework recommendations. The following is a list of highlights from APAS activities in the last few months.

## APAS met with Premier Scott Moe

APAS Directors met with Premier Scott Moe at the Legislature on July 6 to discuss issues impacting Saskatchewan's ag sector, including rail transportation, livestock producer concerns, and Saskatchewan's trade and export activities. APAS looks forward to further consultation with the Premier's office and the Government of Saskatchewan when it comes to issues facing agriculture.



Bill Prybylski, Ryan Scragg and Ian Boxall met with Premier Scott Moe on July 6, 2022

“ Our estimates show much higher costs for essential activities like rail transportation, grain drying, and heating barns, and producers need to be exempted or rebated for these costs. ”

– APAS President Ian Boxall in a news release from April 7 on the federal budget

recommendations on several re-proposed changes. Overall, APAS is in favour of the changes to be made but would like to see the CGC implement the changes in conjunction with additional reforms to improve consistency, transparency, and accountability in how grain quality is assessed at primary elevators. APAS also welcomes the opportunity to discuss these issues with CGC Commissioners and other officials.

## Canadian Federation of Agriculture AGM

APAS sent a 15-person delegation to Ottawa for the Canadian Federation of Agriculture Annual General Meeting in March. The trip included staff, members of the board, and mentees from the Youth Leadership and Mentorship Program sponsored by FCC. APAS held meetings with Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Marie-Claude Bibeau, Conservative Party Agriculture critic John Barlow, and Farm Credit

Corporation CEO Michael Hoffort. APAS proposed three new policy resolutions and two resolutions for renewal at the meeting which were discussed and adopted by the meeting.

## Submission to Canadian Grain Commission

On Feb. 28, APAS made a submission to the Canadian Grain Commission's "updating grain grading dispute resolution." The submission outlines APAS member concerns and provides

## Next Policy Framework Task Force recommendations

After receiving input from producers during the early part of spring, APAS sent out the final recommendations from the NPF Task Force on the next suite of farm business risk management programs. The recommendations focus

on topics such as AgriStability, AgriRecovery, Trade and Market Development, Research and Innovation, and Environment and Climate Change. More on the NPF Task Force recommendations can be found later in the magazine.

## APAS Meeting with Kody Blois

The APAS Board Executive and staff met with Chair of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food Kody Blois in April to discuss the NPF Task Force recommendations, the impact of another carbon tax increase on April 1, and high fertilizer prices producers are paying in 2022.

## Livestock Committee meetings

The APAS Livestock Committee meeting met to discuss courses of action to address the drought which continues to affect the west side of the province and impacts of excessive moisture in the province's southeast. An op-ed by

“ The federal budget left many questions unanswered for APAS, such as a lack of new programming dollars for agriculture programming. ”

APAS President Ian Boxall was published in several newspapers across the province that talked about the issue at hand, as well as the need for improved government support for Saskatchewan livestock producers.

## Livestock Tax Deferral request

On June 6, APAS sent a request to federal Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Marie-Claude Bibeau, requesting the immediate triggering of a Livestock Tax Deferral for 2022, due to the continuing drought on the west side of the province.

## APAS requests Crop Insurance deadline extension

On May 30, APAS sent a letter to Minister Marit and Minister Bibeau, requesting an extension to the Crop Insurance seeding deadline due to seeding delays in many parts of eastern Saskatchewan because of unusual snowfalls, heavy rains, and cool temperatures.

## Provincial and Federal budgets

APAS provided reaction to the provincial and federal budgets when they were released earlier this year. APAS was largely supportive of the provincial budget this year, with \$338.5 million going to fund business risk management programs. The federal budget left many questions unanswered for APAS, such as a lack of new programming dollars for agriculture programming. While the federal government is planning to rebate \$100 million from the carbon tax directly to farmers where the federal system applies, APAS does not feel the funding comes close to reflecting the actual increased cost of carbon pricing.



Kody Blois met with members of the APAS Board Executive on April 11

# SCDA Joins APAS

***The Saskatchewan Conservation and Development Association has recently opted to join APAS as a Group Member. APAS has always been very involved in discussing water management policy and looks forward to working closely with SCDA. The following interview with their Executive Director Crandall Hrynkiw describes some of their activities.***

## **Describe the work that SCDA does.**

We're two-fold in function. Firstly, SCDA is the provincial parent group for 134 conservation and development area authorities in the province, and we also have a dozen or so watershed associations that are part of our membership. We do everything on behalf of our membership essentially, we broker insurance for them, we hold an Annual General Meeting for the membership every year.

And then we have another element to our organization which comes under the Compliance Task Force (CTF) – that name may change in the future. We also do work in helping to establish new conservation and development areas. We have two engineers and essentially the two engineers do a lot of work in terms of creating a new C&D, they'll do flow-mapping for them, they'll look at the projects, and they'll also help them do their petitions according to the Conservation and Development Act, they'll support them in their petition creation as well as getting all of the details right so that when we submit it to the Water Security Agency (WSA) for approval, it goes through minimal review if we get everything right.

## **How did your organization begin?**

In 1966, 23 Conservation Area Authorities (CAAs) met and formed a provincial association, The Saskatchewan Conservation and Development Association Inc. The SCDA is the parent body to 96 CAAs – or C&Ds – and 13 Water Association Boards (WABs), where the members are dedicated to soil and

water management and protection. CAAs and WABs manage some 1900 miles of drainage ditches as part of flood control and back flood irrigation which in turn provides flood control for some 4.5 million acres of farmland.

## **What are some of the major projects SCDA is working on?**

As far as new conservation and development area work, we have a couple (of project), Hawarden (west of Kenaston) and Lintlaw (east of Kelvington), that have passed what we call the gazette stage, where they get put up in the gazette and then people have an opportunity to complain and/or disapprove. Those are ready to go, they've been through their two-week waiting period at the gazette stage, and they're ready to have returning officers assigned, then they can have an election, and then they can get their Conservation and Development Authority in place. We also have a couple that we are just getting into the petition phase with, including Morven (south of Humboldt). I know we've done some drone flights out there for them so they can look at their area and their ditches, and they are just in the process of going out to petition for a new C&D area.

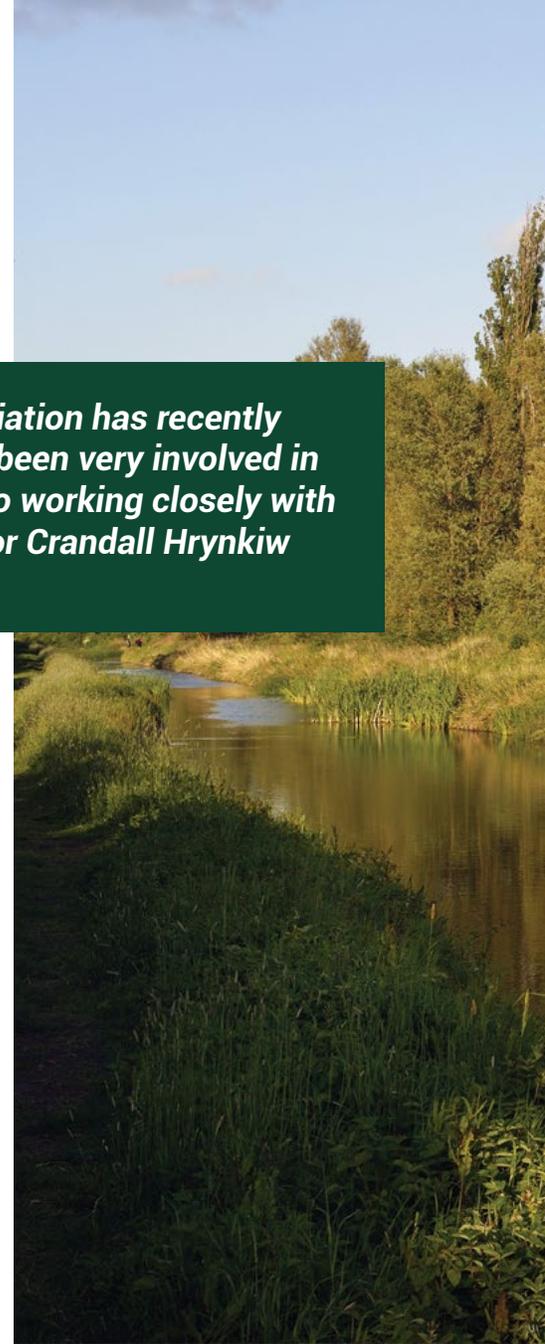
## **Can you provide an update on the overall pilot projects you are working on?**

We partner with Water Security Agency and other organizations in looking at pilot projects. So, we have more going on with respect to tile drainage and looking at it as an alternative to traditional ditch-

ing, so we have some of those going on. We also are working on a wetland mitigation project where we have some researchers looking at all the elements of wetland retention and mitigation and helping with WSA creating policy on what needs to be maintained. We're all about creating more acres for farmers so they can get the economic benefit from the land, but we're also paying attention to the environmental impacts, and we know we're responsible.

## **How will your current projects impact Saskatchewan producers?**

The big reason for our organization's being is to increase capacity of land-owners to seed as many acres as they





can. So of course, moving water off the land to get the benefiting acres so that we do that in a responsible way, that's what we're about.

**You also provide drone services. How would that be beneficial to different C&D areas?**

This is relatively new for us, but we've done about four flights as we speak, and the one nice thing about it – and our engineers could probably speak more about it than I can – when they fly a drone over a particular area to look at either an existing ditch, a body of water or a wetland that may need to be drained and where that can be drained, the drone flies and takes hundreds of

pictures as it flies – upwards of 700-plus photos – and each of those photos can be zoomed in on and can give us elevation data as well as vegetation data. It really is useful information rather than having to go out in a traditional survey manner, you get these elevations readily. One thing about it, all of these pictures when they get into the engineer's Geographical Information System (GIS) can be knit together to give you a 3D diagram of the exact area that you've just taken photos of. It's amazing technology.

We typically drive by drainage ditches, dams, and bridges all the time, and we really don't think much of them, so why is this work important?

It's important for farmers in terms of some of the benefits they see. You can take either draining or not draining; draining is a benefit. Why? Because it's earlier to seed, earlier to harvest if you can get the water sorted out so you can actually seed. There's a whole bunch of other things like reducing soil salinity, the texture of the soil, and if it's drained, you don't get the crusting, you don't get the adverse effects in terms of being able to put seed in the ground. So, there are many benefits that go beyond just saying earlier to seed, earlier to harvest. There are other benefits that come into being as far as making the land as productive as possible.

**Was your organization impacted by last year's drought?**

During the drought, drainage isn't as prevalent just because there isn't water, but that doesn't mean our work stops because there are a few areas that realize that they have more area to seed, but they're cognizant and knowing with climate change that that could change in a minute. Just look at the downpour between Harris and Rosetown, look at the community of Watrous and the downpour they got there in June.

**While we still have some drought area in the west, but a bit more rain in the east. How has this spring been for SCDA?**

We're still as busy as can be with new projects and so on. Just from talking with some of the board members, I know that in the southeast corner of Saskatchewan, it's still pretty wet. Some farmers are using spreaders to seed canola rather than seed drills just because that's the only way it could get

seeded. There are certain areas of the province that are more prone to flooding, that hasn't changed, but like I said, it hasn't slowed us down in terms of project development and moving forward. Different areas of the province experience different things. I know in the northeast part of the province for seeding, they're still pretty wet but they're getting the seed in the ground traditionally.

**What's the future of water management look like?**

We talked about the drone technology, which might make surveying more advantageous in terms of using that technology to plan for it. If we must mitigate because of the research and so on, that might mean we have to try different things, and there's where tile drainage could come to bare, where we can use tile drainage rather than traditional ditching and it acts as a flow control at the same time. We do need to look at all aspects of technology around flow controls too, we really need to pay attention

to F-2 versus F-5 events, and then if there are more extreme events – F-10 and F-20 – we must look at the frequency of those kinds of weather events and how we might mitigate impacts of those kinds of things.

**What's one thing your organization needs right now?**

When I look at a C&D once it's formed, and I look at them being able to levy for costs of administration and/or works creation, I don't think the tax base can sustain it. Engineering is one thing that is pretty expensive, then construction costs are another thing. I don't think our local CAAs can depend totally on the tax base to get the work done, I think there needs to be a capital pot of money they can apply to. You can't do it all overnight, but how do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time, right? If there was an element of capital out there that could cover engineering costs and get to the construction phase of the project, in an ideal world, that might be something we would see as a potential need.

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# Hilariously Entertaining Chaos

How a farmer from southwest Saskatchewan became a YouTube sensation

BY RYAN MCNALLY



Thankfully, his phone is never far away, but whether it has enough room or not is another thing.

"I need a phone with a lot of memory," he says with a smile. "Then I'll go to Swift Current to go and upload the videos. I think Samsung came out with a phone with a terabyte (of storage) and I think you can also put an additional terabyte in it, so two terabytes, that is what I need!"

## No signal

The reason Mitchell needs to travel for two hours to Swift Current to upload videos is due to an issue many farmers and rural communities face; connectivity issues. Some fields Mitchell farms have very minimal cell coverage, and some spots have zero service whatsoever. So, uploading a YouTube video from the middle of a field is sometimes the least of his worries, let alone possible.

“Our average across a very broad area was four bushels an acre for durum and two bushels for lentils, when you’re normally 10 times that, it’s definitely a bit of a kick to the gut, that’s for sure.”

Somewhere in the heart of cattle country in Saskatchewan's southwest corner, there's a grain farmer filming something on his phone for his 171,000 (and growing) YouTube audience.

Mike Mitchell of Faith Hope Farms south of Swift Current – we won't give his exact location to avoid some "unwanted visitors" – started his YouTube channel in 2018 but started taking it more seriously in 2020.

"I like trying new things, but with that, I don't want to get myself into a bad situation, so I'm always looking for reviews," Mitchell said. "I can't remember the equipment that I was looking at, but I was looking for reviews on farm equipment, and I'm like 'how come there are no farm equipment reviews?' You're only spending a ridiculous amount of

money on these things. So, I (decided to) try this piece of equipment and then I did a review on it, and it kind of started snowballing from there."

Like farming, he wears most of the hats when it comes to his YouTube operation, including shooting, narrating, and (very minimal) editing. And while he's changed his focus of his videos to more of a farm vlog, he hasn't changed a thing behind the camera.

"I'm not an editor. I don't have time to sit on a computer to edit or anything," Mitchell said. "Everything that I do is on my phone, so I record on my phone, I edit on my phone, I upload on my phone.

"If I lose my phone, I lose everything."

"It's a safety issue if you can't make a phone call," he said. "Having reliable internet in our area would also allow me to quit hot-spotting to run my laptop to do the seeding plans and to send out jobs to the guys, so it would be pretty awesome if a guy had some good Wi-Fi around here, for sure."

Between operating the farm and his YouTube channel, Mitchell says it's become a balancing act, and is like holding two full-time jobs.

"Maybe we're working six days a week, 18 hours a day down here, and then I need to run into town to do all of these videos, and we traditionally take Sundays off if we can, so normally I get to spend that time with (my wife) Ashtyn



## Dealing with drought

Being in Saskatchewan's southwest, Faith Hope Farms has had to deal with a historic drought. According to Mitchell, some of their fields saw no rain last summer and very minimal snow cover during the winter.

"Last year was record-breaking dry for us," Mitchell said. "I talked to some old-timers that can vaguely remember the dirty 30's and they claim that it was worse than the dirty 30's, the only difference was that our farming practices have changed so the country wasn't blown away."

The crop yield last year was historically poor as well.

"Our average across a very broad area was four bushels an acre for durum and two bushels for lentils," Mitchell said. "When you're normally 10 times that, it's definitely a bit of a kick to the gut, that's for sure."

However, there is one positive for Mitchell's operation heading into the spring.

"Pretty much all of our fertilizer is still in the ground (from last year)," Mitchell said. "You can dig it up and you can still see the little bit of white where it dissolved a little bit from the nitrogen, so we have a full crops' worth of fertilizer compliments of last year still sitting out in the soil, and last year's fertilizer prices are a lot lower and this year's fertilizer is like three times as much, so that's a silver lining."

## He hasn't changed a bit

Mike's wife, Ashtyn, is also heavily involved with the farm and YouTube operations. When their son, Chapel, isn't keeping her busy, she's helping Mike with tasks around the farm, and she manages orders from their website.

She says Mike's personality is the same off-camera as it is on camera.

"Mike is and has been since I met him a very positive guy with a wonderful outlook on situations, good and bad. He

and my little one (Chapel), and I do still try to, but I probably have 16 hours' worth of videos I have to work on so I can prep it for the next week."

Despite all that work to push out content to his loyal and long list of subscribers every week, Mitchell won't be begging anyone to click the subscribe or like buttons, like many other YouTubers do.

"My identity in YouTube or farming isn't anything to do with likes or subscribers, I really don't care about it," Mitchell said. "If (the viewers) like what they see, they'll like it, if they don't then they won't. If I'm somewhat entertaining or if I know the odd thing or two, they'll stick around."

## Family affair

Mitchell farms with his two brothers, parents and their families, and the farm has been in his family for well over 100 years, having received the Century Farm award in 2008. Together as a family, they farm roughly 40,000 acres, growing durum, spring wheat, chickpeas, lentils, and this year, mustard.

"(My brothers) don't care if I'm on YouTube, they just don't want to be in it, and so that's fair, I want to make sure I respect that," Mitchell said. "We're a big family farm and we work together."

Despite the wealth of experience and knowledge on the farm, Mitchell says he has implemented some recommendations and farming practices from some of his YouTube subscribers and fans.

"I say this quite often that when we quit learning, we're dead," Mitchell said. "I've been farming since I was 13, but there's been people who've been farming for 60 years. My Dad. This is 53rd year farming, and he's still learning, we're always still learning. And we can all learn from each other and that's an awesome thing."

**“ I say this quite often that when we quit learning, we're dead. ”**

has a love for farming and it's really cool to see him sharing that and having people who grew up rural or have no farming history enjoy watching and learning from his videos."

That said, she never thought things would get this far with his channel. Ashtyn says her and Mike both have a strong love for the land and agriculture.

"It's also cool to hear all the kids that follow Mike and hopefully growing that love for farming as well," she said. "We hope we can show (our love for agriculture) to Chapel and maybe get him hooked on it as well."

## FarmTV

So, when you combine a farm operation, a YouTube channel, rural connectivity issues and a historic drought in southwest Saskatchewan, you have the Mitchell's and their farm. They're a busy bunch, but Mike made time in his interview to thank those who made his success happen.

"(The fans) are freaking awesome, and they've been super supportive. The majority of everyone who follows me they're super positive, they're always encouraging, they're always throwing out new ideas that I can try."

All of Mike's videos can be found by searching Mike Mitchell on YouTube. He also has a website – [faithhopefarms.com](http://faithhopefarms.com) – where visitors to the site can order clothing, read a little about the farm's history, and even reach out to Mike himself. Fans can also visit his patreon page to access videos before they are released to YouTube, a Discord server where farmers can share their videos and pictures from around the world, as well as a personal greeting from Mike, depending on a monthly subscription cost ranging from \$1.50 to \$146.50 per month.

“ It's a safety issue if you can't make a phone call. ”



# Ian Boxall: Seven Years Later

WRITTEN BY RYAN MCNALLY | PHOTOS BY MICHAEL BELL

**B**ack in 2015, Ian Boxall never would have thought it would get this far.

Boxall farms just north of Tisdale and has done so full-time since 2010, but in 2015, that's when things got started with the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan.

"I didn't know that there was an organization like APAS, and people involved in APAS that did the work that they did on behalf of all producers in the province," Boxall said. "Once I found that out through the rep for the RM of Connaught at the time – Dave Spencer – I was astounded on what they did for all producers and I thought I absolutely, immediately needed to get involved."

Boxall was part of the original Youth Leadership and Mentorship Program in 2015 as a mentee. Since then, he has taken on more responsibility with APAS, becoming an APAS Director for District

Four in December 2015, Vice-President in 2016, and finally, President in January 2022.

On top of his farm and APAS responsibilities, Boxall is also the reeve of the RM of Connaught and is involved with Tisdale minor hockey.

"This is my community, so people live in town and that's their community, the RM of Connaught is my community," Boxall said. "If there's anything I can do to benefit my community, I'll try to do it."

## The difficulty of farming

Ian is the fourth generation of Boxall's to farm their homesteaded land north of Tisdale. When he was first featured in Saskatchewan Farmers' Voice in 2017, he pointed to financial sustainability as the biggest issue facing young producers. He fears that this is the case for all producers.



"With fertilizer prices where we're seeing them this year, chemical prices and fuel, financial sustainability is the biggest issue facing any producer right now," Boxall said. "We are fortunate this year, our commodity prices are record high, my fear is that – as we've seen in lots of markets – when the commodity price comes down our inputs are not going to follow suit."

Sitting at his kitchen table, Boxall said three of his four kids have shown a great interest in farming. All three of his boys – ages 18, 8, and 7 – are interested in a career in farming, but Ian worries how sustainable of a career agriculture is for the future generations.

"What we're seeing this year with our costs rising on inputs, diesel fuel, fertilizer and chemical, I wonder some days if it will continue," Boxall said. "If we continue to see these rises in cost, my fear is that the family farm will be gone."

Boxall adds if that interest continues, he'd be really excited to work with them and teach them everything he knows,

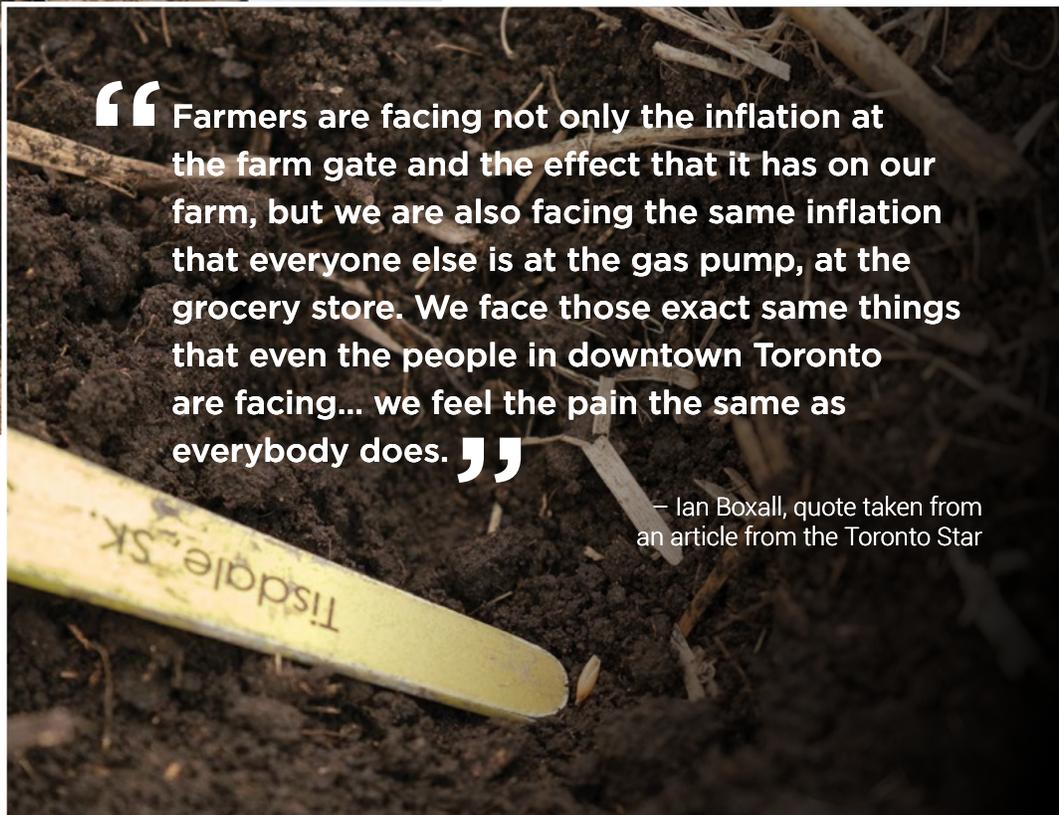




ever going to have," Boxall said. "I think that's the goal when we go out seeding, we have a little bit of a late start this year with some excess moisture, but I think this year will be as good or better than we've seen in the past."

Boxall's farm was not immune to the drought in 2021.

"Last year yield-wise was half of what we normally would get, but we are fortunate with the commodity prices where they are, financial-wise, it might end up being an average crop."



**“ Farmers are facing not only the inflation at the farm gate and the effect that it has on our farm, but we are also facing the same inflation that everyone else is at the gas pump, at the grocery store. We face those exact same things that even the people in downtown Toronto are facing... we feel the pain the same as everybody does. ”**

— Ian Boxall, quote taken from an article from the Toronto Star

while also instilling that good agricultural policy is important and if they want to see change, they need to get involved.

An example of that for Boxall came in early in 2022, APAS passed a resolution at the General Meeting to look at the farmers share of costs at the grocery store.

Boxall is also worried about those looking at farming as a future career who don't necessarily have the generations of farming background that he and many other farmers in Saskatchewan have.

"The price of land has gone up to the point where without that generational support of a farm, it's hard for young producers to get started, and I would love for it to be an industry where if you grew up in the city and you decided you want to be a farmer, you could do it," Boxall said. "Currently, under the landscape, there are ways, but it would be very difficult to start as a first-generation grain farmer with just the cost and capital involved to do it."

That said, Boxall believes farmers will find a way, as they always have.

"Producers in Saskatchewan have faced so many issues in this province's history, including disease, drought, and flooding. We have always found a way to continue this great way of life, and it's my belief we will continue doing so for many years to come."

Boxall is hopeful that a great crop is on the horizon this fall.

"I think in the spring, every farmer hopes that this year is the best one that they're

## APAS and the farm

Ian Boxall was elected APAS President in January 2022 at the APAS General Meeting in Regina. Six months later, he feels honoured to be the APAS President.

"It's a great organization with awesome people involved," Boxall said. "The grassroots part of our organization and the fact that our resolution and our direction comes from the grassroots, I pride myself on that. I don't think it was my goal (to become APAS President), but on the same token I wanted to be

involved and I'm humbled that they (the APAS Board) thought I could be the President of the organization."

He says one of the biggest surprises he has seen as President is the number of issues that arise in a growing season that APAS addresses.

"Right from rail, to inputs, there's so many issues and there's always something on our plate that we need to deal with to make it easier for farmers," Boxall said. "There's always a policy that needs a little tweak here and there to benefit producers."

Since he has become President, Boxall has had to make the three-plus hour drive to Regina from his farm for APAS business several times, whether it be for

board meetings, meeting up with politicians, or attending the provincial budget proceedings in March.

"Lots of times I will come in the night before, do the board meeting, then come home after the board meeting," Boxall said. "We structure our board meetings, they're not during seeding or harvest, they're not during spraying, they're not during calving, we put them in times of the year that works.

"And I guess one good thing that came out of the pandemic is the ability now that everyone is comfortable with technology, we can do (meetings) by Zoom, or if I can't get there or if other board members can't get there, they can Zoom in and we're doing these hybrid meetings where it's in-person and online."

Boxall's time as President has so far earned some praise from past President Todd Lewis.

Lewis says he's given Boxall some advice in the early going of his presidency.

"Ian has listened and learned about farm policy and how influencing it can help producers in Saskatchewan," Lewis said. "He is a good chair and leader at the board table."

For those Councilors and Reeves who are not yet part of APAS RM's, Boxall says it's important to see what APAS is doing for producers.

"Come out to one of our meetings," Boxall said. "Bring your council to one of our district meetings in your area. They're advertised on social media, the dates go around to councils, come out to the meeting, hear what we have to say and hear what we have to do because what we're doing benefits all producers in Saskatchewan, and in Saskatchewan – a province that relies so heavily on agriculture – we're doing the right thing for the province and the sector."

“ Throughout his progression in leadership roles supporting Saskatchewan’s farm community, Ian’s focus has been on the producers. At the board table Ian’s focus has always been farmers first. ”

– Todd Lewis, past President of APAS



## The Ian Boxall Q&A

**Q When you're seeding, harvesting, spraying, etc. those are long days on the tractor, what's on in the cab?**

A I usually have the radio on listening to music.

**Q When you're not farming, what's your favourite activity to do?**

A We go to the lake in the summer, we go up to northern Saskatchewan up to the lake on Hanson Lake Road, Little Bear Lake. In the winter, it's hockey six days a week.

**Q Do you have a superstition when it comes to farming?**

A You never start seeding or harvest on Friday, so if Friday's the day you're going to start, you at least need to go out Thursday night and put the drill in the ground and seed some, but you can never start on Friday.

**Q Why is that?**

A That was my grandpa's deal. You could never start that big of a function on a Friday, so you could start it on Thursday night, you could start it on Saturday, but you couldn't start on Friday. And over the last number of years, the other superstition I have is keeping a Saskatchewan Roughrider seed depth tool on me. My Dad gave it to me, he has since passed and I don't use it to dig anymore because I don't want to wreck it, but I do carry it in my pocket every day.

**Q If you weren't a farmer, what would you be doing or what would you want to do?**

A Sales, probably. Some people would say I have the gift of gab and I could maybe do some sales. I do have an interest in politics, but if I wasn't doing this, I wouldn't have had an interest in politics.

**Q What's the best thing about farming?**

A I think the best thing about farming is the feeling you get when I dig up the wheat nine days earlier, and it's starting to come up and it's germinated, that feeling that that crop – at least today – is going to make it is a good feeling.



## Prairie On-Farm Climate Action Fund

*Saskatchewan Association of Watersheds taking applications for environmental stewardship funding*

– APAS Staff

The Saskatchewan Association of Watersheds (SAW) is partnering with colleagues in Manitoba to offer producers Beneficial Management Practices (BMP) programming funded by Agriculture Agri-Food Canada's On-Farm Climate Action Fund.

The BMPs eligible under the PWCP focus on three categories: Rotational Grazing, Nitrogen Management and Cover Cropping. The Prairie Watersheds Climate program will run until March 31, 2024.

More information is available on the Saskatchewan Association of Watersheds website at [www.saskwatersheds.ca](http://www.saskwatersheds.ca)

*The Saskatchewan Association of Watersheds is an Associate Member of APAS.*

**SAW**  
Saskatchewan Association of  
Watersheds

# Applications Being Accepted for Youth Leadership and Mentorship Program

BY RYAN MCNALLY



"What an amazing opportunity to get a chance to travel there and not just look in from the outside, but be part of the conversation with industry partners, fellow farmers and different levels of government," Leguee said. "There is no better way to learn how policy is made than to not only see it firsthand, but also participate in it. All the networking done throughout the year has been very enjoyable and beneficial as well."

**T**he Youth Leadership and Mentorship Program (YLMP) presented by Farm Credit Canada is accepting applications for the 2022-23 program in May 2022.

The program is open to young producers between the ages of 18 and 40 who are looking to get involved in the policy side of agriculture, develop leadership skills, and connect with other young producers from around the province.

The 2021-22 YLMP program saw Glenn Munholland (RM of McKillop #220), Brett Spray (RM of Hazel Dell #335), Madison Englot (RM of Montmarte #126) and Sarah Leguee (RM of Wellington #97) as participants.

"During this past year with the YLMP I have taken so much away from the whole experience," Englot said. "It is an experience that allowed me to gain an understanding on an aspect of the agriculture industry I was extremely unfamiliar with. I never really understood where those conversations with my dad and his friends at our kitchen table could go, but APAS provides a channel to take those issues and present them

**“ The power of the next generation of farmers is tremendous and we want them to have the tools to succeed. The voices of young farmers need to be heard as the industry moves forward and the Youth Leadership and Mentorship Program will help them make the most of the opportunities ahead by learning, connecting, and advocating for agriculture. At FCC we are thrilled to see their participation in this valuable program. ”**

– Shannon Weatherall,  
FCC's Senior Vice-President  
of Prairie Operations

to a different audience that we have access to. This experience allowed me to understand what role APAS plays in Saskatchewan and Canadian ag policy as well as provided me with relationships to extend my involvement in ag policy if I choose to in the future."

Some of the events the mentees were able to take part in included the APAS General Meeting in January and the Canadian Federation of Agriculture AGM in Ottawa in February.

APAS is also glad to have FCC back as a presenting sponsor of the program.

The deadline to apply for the Youth Leadership and Mentorship Program is July 31, 2022. Events and opportunities for the mentees include participation in a day at the Saskatchewan Legislature, the APAS General Meeting, participation in APAS Policy discussions Meeting, and the CFA's AGM in Ottawa.

**Please visit [apas.ca](https://apas.ca) to apply.**

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**Wealth, health, and life:** In addition to the exclusive coverages and savings offered to members under the Member Benefits Program, we also offer wealth, health, and life products. Your Financial Advisor can help you determine what products fit into your life.



\*Auto policy holders do not qualify for the legal assistance helpline service unless insured under a policy type listed above. \*Travel insurance does not cover everything. Travel insurance is underwritten by CUMIS General Insurance Company, a member company of The Co-operators Group Limited, and is administered by Allianz Global Assistance, which is a registered business name of AZGA Service Canada Inc. and AZGA Insurance Agency Canada Ltd. Please refer to the certificate for full terms and conditions including limitations and exclusions. Co-operators is a registered trademark of The Co-operators Group Limited. Farm, Home and Auto Insurance is underwritten by Co-operators General Insurance Company. Co-operators General Insurance Company and CUMIS General Insurance Company are committed to protecting the privacy, confidentiality, accuracy and security of the personal information that we collect, use, retain and disclose in the course of conducting our business. Please visit [cooperators.ca/privacy](https://cooperators.ca/privacy) for more information. © 2022 Co-operators General Insurance Company and CUMIS General Insurance Company. DMC1132 (05/22)



# University of Saskatchewan Focus on Research

BY DELANEY SEIFERLING

**D**r. Richard Gray has been working as an agricultural economist and farmer in Saskatchewan for four decades.

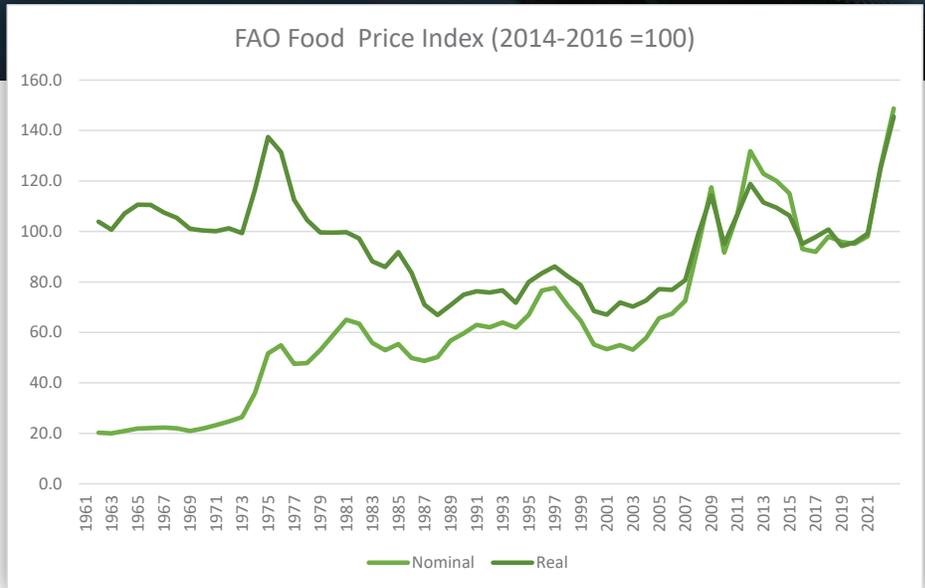
But he has never seen conditions like the current ones.

"What's going on in the world markets today is unprecedented in lifetime," he says.

For example, a year ago, most grain prices were pretty good, he says. Now they are about double those high levels.

These record prices and record levels of volatility are driven by many factors, including demand growth, COVID-19 supply chain issues, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and government policies to address the climate crisis.

All this has resulted in a global food crisis, but also significant economic opportunities for grain producers in the upcoming year. And these opportuni-



ties could persist for decades to come, he says, given clean fuel standards and the increased demand for renewable fuels higher. However, to full leveraging these opportunities, there will need to be changes both on and off the farm, Gray says. And farmers should be aware of the global conditions affecting our industry.

## Food prices and the food crisis

According to Gray, the most obvious sign of unprecedented market conditions is the record price grains and the general cost of food.

"According to the FAO, world food prices are now at a level that they've never been during my lifetime."

Last year, the Canada's Food Price Report estimated Canadian families would pay approximately \$1,000 more on household food purchases in 2022.

In Canada, this will mean a strain on many middle- and lower-income families. But in many developing countries in the world, the consequences will be a lot more dire, potentially resulting in food shortages around the world, as reported in the Global Report on the Food Crisis, 2022.

This crisis has created some excellent opportunities for farmers, Gray says. Markets will provide strong incentives for farmers to grow as much grain as they can. And depending on global weather, Canadian grain could make a life and death difference for millions of consumers.

But Gray says this is also why it's more important than ever that we are able to get our grain to global markets, even if we grow an unusually large crop.

"Policy makers in Canada have a global responsibility to ensure we have capacity in place to produce and move increased amounts of ag exports in coming years," he says.

"We can do well, by doing good – by making sure we have that capacity."

## Shortage of inputs

Input shortages will be a concern this season, but Gray believes it won't be as big an issue as some people are projecting for Western Canada. Some pesticides will be harder to find and may require some flexibility in planning. Input prices will certainly be higher across the board.

"Markets should generally work to provide the inputs. Our supply chains are better than most parts of the world."

The bigger concern, in his mind, will be shortages on the equipment side.

"The situation is really fragile," he says.

Between continuing lockdowns in China and container movements in crisis, timely shipments of parts could be disrupted.

He believes part of the issue is North American distribution networks have turned to stocking less and less inventory over time.

"The idea is, 'well, I don't have to stock the part because someone else will have it or we can order it online and have it here in a day or two,'" he says. "But in a lot of cases, that North American market is empty. It just doesn't exist."

This situation will likely cause headaches for farmers this season, but not to level where production will be impacted a lot – as generally farmers have neighbours and friends willing to help out.

But he does believe the shortage will be an issue for a couple years at least. Even as supply chains start working better it will take a while to fill the increases in demand for inventory.

## Grain movement

Another major issue in Gray's mind – and one that has been relevant for many years – is that the Canadian rail and crop handling system is not set up to accommodate or anticipate increased grain production.

These shortcomings were demonstrated in 2014/15, when the railways were not prepared to move the record 76 million tonnes Western Canadian grain farmers had produced in 2013/14. Much of that crop was left on farms throughout subsequent seasons, and the situation was further exasperated when farmers produced another record crop the following year.

"It took three and a half years to get out from underneath that," Gray says, adding that the issues that caused that backlog have still not been resolved.

"The rail mentality is: save and save nickels and dimes everywhere, do not spend anything, wait until there's demand," he says.

This situation is of even more concern to him as Western Canadian grain farmers are increasingly under pressure to produce more and more crops to feed a growing world population.

He anticipates another crisis situation for farmers at some point. The railways are already seeing increased demand for potash, lumber, and oil, and rail cars, locomotives, and skilled labour are in tight supply.

"Nobody knows how big the crop is going to be this year. But if we grow a good crop, there's a good chance that rail-





ways will not be prepared to move it," he says, adding that could also results in billions of dollars of losses for farmers.

"So that's a worry for me. And it's something that's preventable with a little proactive policy."

## Ag research

While high prices and markets can eventually solve many of the short-run supply issues, there is a tremendous, long-run opportunity expand production to meet future biofuel and food demand.

The importance of a strong ag research program cannot be understated at the best of times, Gray says. But it is especially crucial now, as we face a potential global food shortage, and climate change is a serious threat to the future of humanity (and we are not on track to meet climate change targets).

"We've got a lot we can contribute to the world, both in terms of food security and climate change – and we can make money doing it," Gray says. "The best way to do this is through a larger sustained investment in agricultural research."

Gray strongly believes that ag research is rarely given the amount of attention it needs when it comes to policy discussions. In recent years, he has been frustrated by the amount of federal money being directed into business risk management programs, while long-term federal commitments to breeding programs, and ag research in general, is currently in question.

"As an economist, I can argue – at the very best – that the AgriStability program may produce almost a dollars' worth of benefit for every dollar we in-

vest, but more likely it's going to produce about 70 or 80 cents' worth."

Contrast that with the fact that, in the past year, Gray has published research reports showing returns on farmer check-off investments in wheat and barley breeding programs over the last 25 years have been 33:1 and 25:1, respectively.

Despite lots of evidence to the contrary Gray believes the federal government – and many farmers – still under appreciate the value of investing more in ag research.

Furthermore, Canada invests a fraction of what our competing ag producing countries do in research, he says. The average research spend for all industries in the 38 Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development countries right now is 2.7% of their gross sales. Gray estimates for the grain sector Canada's spend is closer to 1%.

Australia seems to have figured it out, he says, spending a lot more on ag research than Canada through an investment model that combines government funding, levy-based funding matched by government, and end-point royalties meant to incentivise breeders.

"In the long run, their ag industry will run faster than us because of their ag research investments – there's no question about that," he says.

He believes that we should celebrate the gains we've made so far in our breeding programs, but use those successes as leverage to ramp up future investment.

"We keep being very proud of the gains we've made. But now we need to turn that into policy, and say 'do more!'"

## What can farmers do

Farmers are busy running their own businesses, and oftentimes are powerless over the conditions that control their output.

But there are channels – and situations – where Gray believes they need to pay attention and leverage their outlets to ensure the farmer perspective is being heard and considered.

For example, it is possible to prevent another grain movement crisis if the federal government works early and proactively with to put additional capacity in place for the coming year.

"Farmer engagement is needed to make this happen," he says.

He also feels that it will be critical for the federal government and farmers to recognize the importance of ag research, and then commit to funding it at increasing levels going forward.

But the problem is that these issues don't pose immediate threats to the industry, and therefore can be put off, he says.

"It should be easier to think about these things during good times but the urgency isn't there; there's a natural tendency to procrastinate. But at the same time, these long-term investments are the reason we are profitable and competitive right now."

This is why it's critical for farmers to get involved and push the powers that be, he says.

"Is it going to make a difference in the next two years? Maybe not. But is it going to make a difference to your farm, your family, the next generations, in the long run? Absolutely."

"If we are lucky, we are going have some very profitable years. Farmers need to start thinking now about how we can to invest to ensure an even more profitable future."

# Farm Animals of Saskatchewan



**F**arm animals are special members of farm families across the province. In every issue, we spotlight some of the most beloved farm dogs in Saskatchewan. But for the first time, we are also sharing the stories of some other beloved farm animals in this issue. If you have a good boy or girl on your farm that you would like to see featured in the *Saskatchewan Farmers' Voice*, send one or more high-quality photos and a bit of information about your pet to [info@apas.ca](mailto:info@apas.ca).

**Name:** Belle

**Home Quarter:** RM of Turtle River #469

**Age:** 18 years old

**Breed:** Black Lab

**Family:** The Kobes'

**About Belle:** Belle became a farm dog at the age of 3 after giving up on city living in Lloydminster. Belle joined other farm dogs Rex, and Bruiser and quickly learned that farm life was right for her. She loves rides in the truck, dips in the dugout, and getting into trouble with whatever wildlife decides to come into the yard. Even now in her old age she enjoys going swathing by the river and will never say no to a belly rub.

**Name:** Luna

**Home Quarter:** RM of Wolseley #155

**Age:** 4 years old

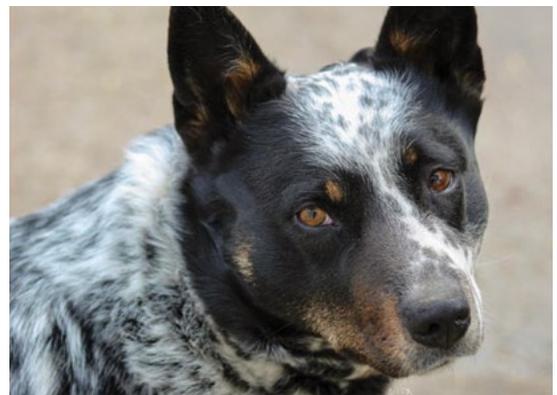
**Breed:** Blue Heeler

**Family:** Alan and Shannon Dureault

**About Luna:** Luna joined the crew in September 2018. After two years without a farm dog, the Dureault's were excited to have a new addition. She was an extremely energetic puppy and loved getting into mischief.

Luna is Dad's girl, and she is always by his side, following him around while he does chores or works with the cattle. Luna helps round up the cattle and keeps them away from the open gates. She is diligent and patient with her duties but loves to have fun. She likes to play fetch, play fight – especially when you are wearing work gloves – and get as many belly rubs as possible.

As mentioned, Luna can be a bit mischievous. She loves to dig holes, and was once trapped under the bin after digging her way in. As a young puppy, she suffered a beaver attack resulting in a trip to the vet, where she received multiple stitches and shots in her abdomen. You can often find her napping in little crevices under the bushes or in the corners of the flower beds (where she's not supposed to be). At night, she's often barking at critters around the farm such as coyotes and foxes, making sure they stay away from her farm.



**Names:** Buddy

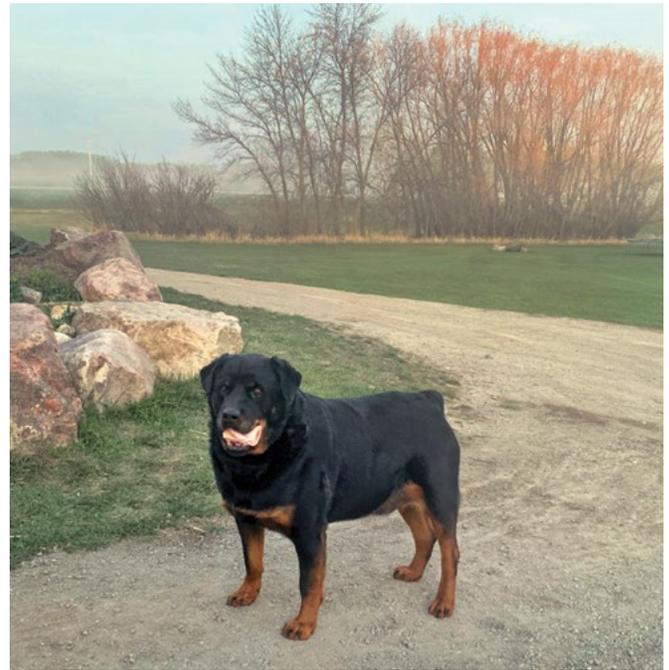
**Home Quarter:** RM of Edenwold #158

**Age:** 7 years and 7 months old

**Breed:** Rottweiler

**Family:** The Mackenzie's

**About Buddy:** Buddy joined the Mackenzie family on June 27, 2014, as one of 2 puppies in his litter. He was the perfect addition to the family – he seemed to just know we were his people and barely made a peep of discontent from the first night. He grew up to be a very intimidating size and was very protective of us but was also such a gentle giant who was afraid of the dark. Buddy's favourite things were eating, sleeping, obsessively keeping his mom in sight when we were outside the house, barking randomly in the night, conning service men and the milk truck drivers at the farm into giving him snacks, attacking tires and the skid steer buckets, and hoping he might just get into the goat pen one day to get those darn goats. He had eyes that could stare into your soul like he could understand you.



He was exceptionally skilled in discerning the difference between a package of cheese being open versus any other food no matter how quietly you opened it and no matter where he was in the house. After a tough battle with health problems, the Mackenzie family was devastated to have to say goodbye to Buddy in early January. He will be missed and has left a 130lb hole in the family. Buddy Mackenzie - May 7, 2014, to January 4, 2022.



**Name:** Maple and Otis

**Home Quarter:** RM of Calder #241

**Age:** 4 and 2 years old

**Breed:** Maple – Chocolate lab X German short haired pointer

Otis – Lab X German Shepherd X Rottweiler

**Family:** Cyrus Enns and Natasha Hykawy

**About Maple and Otis:** Maple came into Cyrus and Natasha's life as an eight-week-old puppy. Since then, she has never quit being busy. She enjoys tug of war and chasing any animal that is around the property. Her favorite are squirrels that always seem to be just out of her reach. Otis was adopted two years ago as a cute little rescue puppy with the markings of a rottweiler. He's the best pal to have alongside you whatever you might be doing. Otis' favorite hobby is watching any birds around the yard and studying their movements in the trees above. Maple took an instant liking to Otis and have been playing and wrestling with each other ever since.

Maple and Otis love truck rides and walks around the home quarter anytime of the year. When Cyrus and Natasha are away at work, Maple and Otis protect the yard and monitor every vehicle that drives by from their igloos on the deck. Maple and Otis always keep life interesting and are true country dogs at heart.

**Name:** George

**Home Quarter:** RM of Pense #160

**Age:** 9 years old

**Breed:** St. Bernard/Boxer cross

**Family:** Ken and Sheila Bell

**About George:** George was a rescue dog from the Regina Humane Society. He came home to live with the Bell's when he was about a year and a half old. George was never much for playing fetch, he would much rather go for a run in the pasture chasing gophers while Ken and checks on the cows. He tends to ignore the farm cats, unless they dare to try and eat out of his food dish.

George loves having company over and being the centre of attention, making sure he gets pets from everyone who enters the yard.

For most of his life, George has been an outside dog. That was until this past winter when he decided he'd be much more comfortable in the house at night. George still has his shelter underneath the deck on the farm for afternoon naps that are cool in the summer and warm in the winter.

George has a big heart and cheers up anyone who meets him. He's certainly a great farm dog!



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DREAM. GROW. THRIVE.

# Majority of Prairie Grain Farmers Don't Feel Grain Contracts Treat Them Fairly

**S**tudies have found that only 46% of Prairie grain farmers feel that they are being treated fairly within today's standard grain contracts. Recent reports have also found that grain contracts are heavily tilted in favour of the grain buyers.

For many Canadian grain farmers, these findings are not a surprise.

SaskCrops (an alliance of Saskatchewan producer commissions comprising SaskBarley, SaskCanola, SaskFlax, SaskOats, SaskPulse and Sask Wheat) and the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS) have heard rising farmer concerns in recent years around lack of transparency of grain purchase contract terms and conditions in grain purchase contracts between farmers and grain buyers. These concerns were heightened by the events of the 2021 growing season and

were also raised through resolutions at the groups' annual general meetings in 2021/22.

This has been a very active file for all our organizations since last year, as we attempt to bring more balance into grain contracts and improve clarity of terms and conditions. Our groups had a number of meetings last year bringing farmer voices to stakeholders but also realized we needed to quantify and substantiate the concerns we were hearing.

To achieve this, we commissioned a report from Mercantile Consulting Venture Inc. which identified the common issues voiced by farmers, clarified concepts of fairness, clarity and spheres of control within grain contracts, and suggested potential solutions. The full report was released publicly this week (and is available through all of our websites).

The report confirmed that there is indeed a problem, according to Prairie farmers, when it comes to their comfort with grain contract terms and conditions. Specifically, farmer concerns are related to a lack of transparency in calculating buyout and administrative fees. There are also major discrepancies in settlement costs amongst different companies, and difficulties with timing of a buyout.

According to the report, one of the key complaints of farmers was inconsistency in handling contract shortfalls amongst companies. "In addition, while many producers showed an interest in standard grain contracts and standard contract resolution procedures, many stated they will not use any forward contracts in the future because of the lack of protection in contract arrangements," the report goes on to say.



ing grain companies to more easily sign and fill future grain contracts.

This report also suggests, quite strongly, that improving grain contracts for Saskatchewan grain farmers will benefit not only farmers, but also grain companies and the entire industry.

Therefore, we believe that this issue should continue to be a top priority for our industry.

Our groups believe that contract terms should not transfer an unfair amount of risk – in terms of grain handling and transportation and market risk – to farmers. The report outlines several examples of these risks being reallocated through contracts, including how railcar availability can impact farmers through expanded or delayed delivery windows, even though farmers are not involved in those commercial negotiations and the risks are out of their control.

buyers have set timelines and requirements to provide options if farmers are unable to fulfill a contract.

The Mercantile report outlines several potential solutions for improving clarity between farmers and grain buyers, by enhancing elements of fairness and balance within the contracts. Chief amongst these solutions is a commitment between farmers and buyers to collaborate on: simplifying contract terms, achieving more clarity and transparency, and more clearly include both parties' responsibilities to achieve better balance.

Further suggested solutions involve adopting a standardized contract that is fair and balanced to both the buyer and the producer and relying on the Canadian Grain Commission for education for farmers on grain contracts, as well as facilitating contract arbitrations.

Recently, our coalition has met with staff of the Western Grain Elevator Association (WGEA) and will be further looking to hold meetings with individual members to discuss collaboration. Going forward, we plan to initiate discussions with stakeholders and government bodies to move this issue, and our recommendations, forward.

The smooth workings of the grain supply chain depend on trust and cooperation between partners along the value chain. Improvements to grain contracts remains a top priority for our organizations and we are committed to working on this issue on behalf of Saskatchewan farmers.

**The report confirmed that there is indeed a problem, according to Prairie farmers, when it comes to their comfort with grain contract terms and conditions. Specifically, farmer concerns are related to a lack of transparency in calculating buyout and administrative fees.**

SaskCrops and APAS believe that grain contracts are important tools to manage market and price risk, allowing farmers to reduce price risks and develop strategic marketing plans and allow-

We aren't looking to reallocate production risk from farmers to grain companies. Instead, we want to clearly define contract terms and conditions, so farmers understand their responsibilities and



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# What's Next? The NPF Task Force

APAS created their Next Policy Framework Task Force in 2021 to focus on creating recommendations for the next suite of Business Risk Management Programs

WRITTEN BY DELANEY SEIFERLING | PHOTOS BY MICHAEL BELL

Last year, the federal and provincial governments launched consultations to gauge what the most critical issues are right now for Canadian farmers.

The results of this consultation process, which is still ongoing, are meant to inform the Next Policy Framework (NPF), a federal program that will launch in 2023 to replace the current Canadian Agricultural Partnership.

Recognizing this important opportunity to influence future policy affecting Saskatchewan farmers, the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS) responded quickly.

The organization set up a task force last fall to respond to the federal government's call, says APAS Vice-President Bill Prybylski.

"With the help of APAS policy staff, we began to talk to academics and industry stakeholders about what they see as the most significant problems with current ag policies and where improvements are needed," says Prybylski, who also served as chair of the Task Force.

A lot of work was put into ensuring they covered all their bases, he says.

"We put in a lot of a lot of hours, first listening to industry stakeholders then discussing possible solutions to problems. We were basically meeting bi-weekly for several months."

After completing this background work, the Task Force published a list of 19 recommendations this spring, available on the APAS website, to be considered within funding agreements for the NPF program.



Many of the recommendations outline existing flaws with the current suite of Business Risk Management programs (BRMs), many of which are well known within the industry, Prybylski says.

"Some of the programs just aren't working the way they were designed to. From a policy perspective, there is definitely room for improvement."

APAS's recommendations for improvements to these programs are concise, but still stand to have a significant impact on Saskatchewan farmers, Prybylski says.



“ The Task Force also included recommendations for strengthening trade programs and market access for Canadian agriculture, specifically for smaller acre crops and niche commodities, and creating custom programs to quickly solve trade disruptions. ”



## What is the Next Agricultural Policy Framework?

Overall, the Next Agricultural Policy Framework (NAPF) aims to support and strengthen insurance programs for farmers, grow markets for Canadian agriculture, encourage innovation in the sector, and position the industry for a strong and sustainable future.

The NAPF will replace the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP), which is set to expire March 31, 2023, by continuing to facilitate government-led initiatives to strengthen and grow Canada's agriculture and agri-food sector via investments from federal, provincial, and territorial governments.

The current CAP program began in 2018 and was valued at \$3 billion. The CAP funding is shared between provincial and federal government at a 60/40 cost share ratio.

One example of this is with the AgriStability program, which Prybylski says has become "unattractive" to farmers. The Task Force's recommendation is to restore coverage through performance and participation incentives and include a portion of Crop Insurance premiums as an allowable expense.

"Any enhancements to the program would be of good value to producers and have a significant impact, so we're hoping that these will get serious consideration."

Other recommendations regarding BRMs include: enhancing the AgriInvest program to make it more flexible for farmers; revising the AgriRecovery program into more of a comprehensive disaster response program; and creating a national cost-shared livestock price insurance program within Agri-Insurance.

The Task Force also included recommendations for strengthening trade programs and market access for Canadian agriculture, specifically for smaller acre crops and niche commodities, and creating custom programs to quickly solve trade disruptions.

Furthermore, the report included a strong focus on recognizing the im-

portance of research and innovation to the Canadian agriculture industry. In this capacity, APAS calls on the federal government to commit to funding its fair share of all stages of agricultural research, including breeding through to commercialization, for all crops and sectors. It also recommends flexible funding arrangements for smaller, niche crops that are not able to fully fund their own projects, and support for provincially and regionally directed research, knowledge transfer and extension services.

Another important focus of the recommendations comes in the area of climate change and environment. Given the significant federal focus – of time and funds – in this area right now, the Task Force feels there are major opportunities for our industry that are not currently being exploited. In light of this, governments need to recognize how strong an ally the agriculture industry can be in helping meet Canada's climate change and environmental goals by ensuring the right funding and programs are in place to drive progress in these areas, Prybylski says.

For example, there is enormous potential for on-farm environmental programs in Saskatchewan.

"The programs themselves are very, very effective, specifically for individual producers who are able to access the funds for projects on their farm," he says.

But these programs are not currently widely accepted, he adds, saying the administrative aspect of them is a significant barrier.

"Most producers would have to hire an accountant to fill out the forms because they feel that they're too complex to do themselves," he says.

"There should be a way of streamlining the processes – any programs like this has to be practical for individual farms."

Finally, the report included recommendations related to improving public trust around agriculture and increasing opportunities for value-added processing for Saskatchewan crops and livestock.

What happens next? The federal consultation period ended in the spring and the provincial and federal governments will meet in July to discuss next steps.

Prybylski is hopeful that the APAS recommendations will have a strong impact in shaping the direction of the NPF.

"By July we'll know what's coming down the pipeline and whether our recommendations have had any effect on those decisions," he says. "But I am hopeful we will impact some positive changes."

**DISTRICT ONE**

- #1 - Argyle: Brenda Ryckman
- #2 - Mount Pleasant: Terrance Macfarlane
- #3 - Enniskillen: Barry Fitzpatrick
- #33 - Moose Creek: Reed Gibson
- #37 - Lomond: Ryan McKenzie
- #63 - Moose Mountain: Jack Wilson
- #65 - Tecumseh: Thomas Breault
- #91 - Maryfield: Marty Botterill
- #93 - Wawken: Blaine Ehr
- #94 - Hazelwood: Kyle Kish
- #95 - Golden West: Wanda Reid
- #96 - Fillmore: Christopher Procyk
- #97 - Wellington: Sarah Leguee
- #121 - Moosomin: Trevor Green
- #122 - Martin: Steven Donald
- #123 - Silverwood: Chris MacPherson
- #124 - Kingsley: Greg Pusch
- #125 - Chester: Lee Sluser
- #126 - Montmartre: Cory Stringer
- #127 - Francis: James Vogt
- #151 - Rocanville: Herb Park
- #152 - Spy Hill: Nick Denbrok
- #153 - Willowdale: Kenneth Aldous
- #155 - Wolseley: Stan Jeeves
- #181 - Langenburg: Mike Mitschke
- #183 - Fertile Belt: Arlynn Kurtz
- #184 - Grayson: Vacant
- #187 - North Qu'Appelle: George MacPherson
- #211 - Churchbridge: Cameron Wiebe
- #214 - Cana: Janette Reinson

**DISTRICT TWO**

- #11 - Hart Butte: Louis Paradis
- #38 - Laurier: Bev Pirio
- #71 - Excel: Ron Daviduk
- #72 - Lake of the Rivers: Chris Bates
- #73 - Stonehenge: Vince Topola
- #74 - Wood River: Lee Tallon
- #100 - Elmsthorpe: James Beingessner
- #101 - Terrell: Chris Hawkins
- #103 - Sutton: Jonathan Kolish
- #104 - Gravelbourg: James Bateman
- #128 - Lajord: Todd Lewis
- #129 - Bratt's Lake: Gregor Beck
- #131 - Baildon: Christine Whelan
- #162 - Caron: Ray McBride
- #163 - Wheatlands: Kurtis Hicks
- #191 - Marquis: Glen Steinhauer
- #193 - Eyebrow: Dean Thiessen
- #219 - Longlaketon: Scott Hegglin

- #220 - McKillop: Glen Munholland
- #221 - Sarnia: Aaron Bachman
- #222 - Craik: Trewett Chaplin

**DISTRICT THREE**

- #76 - Auvergne: Dale Davidson
- #79 - Arlington: Kevin Gilbert
- #109 - Carmichael: Don Connick
- #135 - Lawtonia: Sterling Dayne
- #136 - Coulee: Greg Targerson
- #138 - Webb: Bruce Gibson
- #141 - Big Stick: Chris Sanderson
- #167 - Saskatchewan Landing: Dan Barber
- #257 - Monet: James Myers
- #261 - Chesterfield: Leah Cooper

**DISTRICT FOUR**

- #241 - Calder: Roy Derworiz
- #244 - Orkney: Randy Trost
- #245 - Garry: Bill Prybylski
- #274 - Good Lake: Brian Berrns
- #275 - Insinger: Willy Zuchkan
- #277 - Emerald: Norman Hall
- #304 - Buchanan: Myron Kopec
- #307 - Elfros: Vacant
- #308 - Big Quill: Ernest Hall
- #333 - Clayton: Lorne Ball
- #334 - Preeceville: Dale Parkin
- #335 - Hazel Dell: Brett Spray
- #336 - Sasman: Dale Redman
- #337 - Lakeview: Angela Jones
- #338 - Lakeside: Jason Friesen
- #367 - Ponass Lake: Rick Sunderland
- #426 - Bjorkdale: Glen Clarke
- #427 - Tisdale: Darren Ukrainetz
- #428 - Star City: Shawn Mooney
- #456 - Arborfield: Ryan Edwards
- #457 - Connaught: Ian Boxall
- #458 - Willow Creek: Brent Freedman
- #486 - Moose Range: Ashley Van Meter
- #487 - Nipawin: Arnold Schellenberg
- #488 - Torch River: Jerry Kindrat

**DISTRICT FIVE**

- #250 - Last Mountain Valley: Donald Dabrowski
- #254 - Loreburn: David Vollmer
- #279 - Mount Hope: Ian McNichol
- #280 - Wreford: Julie Marie Mortenson
- #281 - Wood Creek: Glen Busse
- #284 - Rudy: Jean Harrington
- #309 - Prairie Rose: Garth Burns
- #312 - Morris: Jason Johns

- #313 - Lost River: Ivan Carpenter
- #314 - Dundurn: David Aldred
- #339 - Leroy: Donavon Block
- #341 - Viscount: Mickey Palfy
- #342 - Colonsay: Marvin Lang
- #343 - Blucher: Blair Cummins
- #344 - Corman Park: Ken Rosaasen
- #346 - Perdue: Curtis Lammers
- #369 - St. Peter: Paul Ulrich
- #399 - Lake Lenore: Mark Schemenauer
- #403 - Rosthern: Chad Krikau
- #429 - Flett's Springs: Scott Hermus
- #430 - Invergordon: Wayne Bacon
- #459 - Kinistino: Lindsay Dupin
- #460 - Birch Hills: Ron Miller
- #461 - Prince Albert: Richard Wilson
- #490 - Garden River: Ryan Scragg
- #491 - Buckland: Jason Zalewski

**DISTRICT SIX**

- #287 - St. Andrews: Kevin Sinclair
- #321 - Prairiedale: Tim Richelhoff
- #347 - Biggar: Robert Danychuk
- #349 - Grandview: Allen Turk
- #350 - Mariposa: Jeremy Welter
- #351 - Progress: Kim Herbst
- #381 - Grass Lake: Bentley Sperle
- #382 - Eye Hill: Greg Rissling
- #410 - Round Valley: Taylor Wallace
- #436 - Douglas: Nick Partyka
- #438 - Battle River: Jaden Jamieson
- #440 - Hillsdale: Lawrence Olson
- #442 - Manitou Lake: Karl Koch
- #466 - Meeting Lake: Morris Prescesky
- #467 - Round Hill: Gordon Moore
- #468 - Meota: Glenn Tait
- #470 - Paynton: Adam Bugg
- #471 - Eldon: Scott Owens
- #472 - Wilton: Devon Walker
- #499 - Mervin: Chris Neilson
- #501 - Frenchman Butte: Leonard Larre

***If your RM isn't currently part of APAS, ask your Council to buy a 12-month trial membership for only \$2022.***

# Is your RM part of APAS?

Voting in elections every 4 years isn't enough – join APAS and help fix agricultural problems 365 days a year.

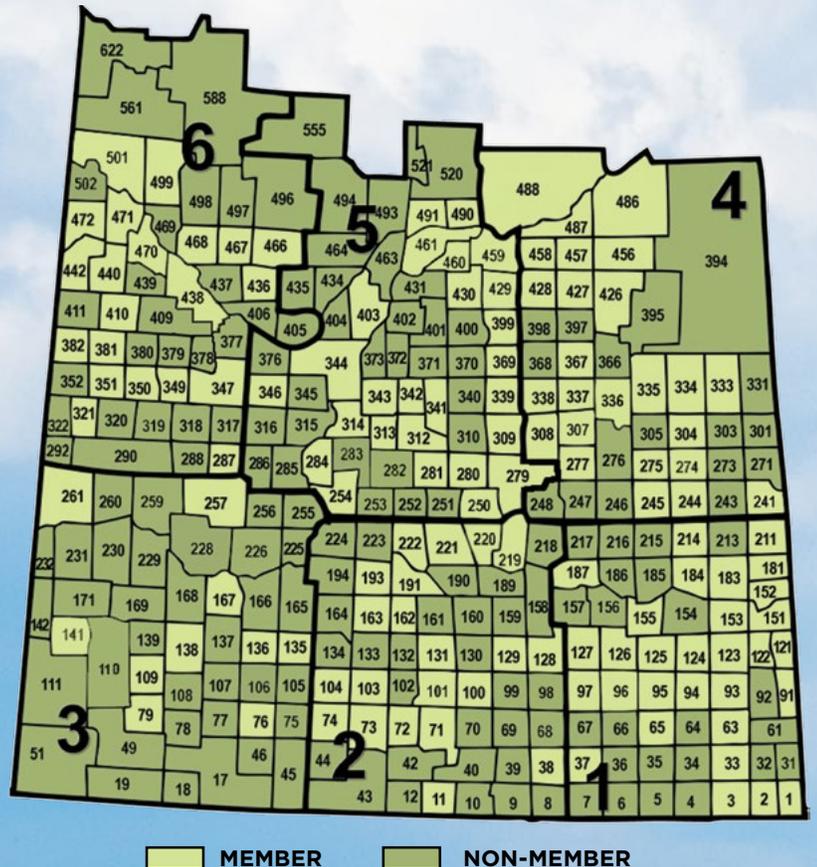
If your RM isn't currently part of APAS, ask your Council to buy a 12-month trial membership for only \$2022.

136 RMs already support APAS – add your voice by joining today.

**STEP 1:** The RM administrator contacts Curtis Hemming at 306-789-7774 and schedules an APAS presentation for the Council.

**STEP 2:** The Council votes to join APAS and pays \$2022 for a 12-month trial membership.

**STEP 3:** The Council chooses an APAS Representative to participate in all APAS activities.



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