

Lobbying for the Livestock Industry

SARM undertook efforts to try and alleviate the numerous pressures facing the livestock industry in Saskatchewan. We made formal representations to the Federal Minister of Agriculture and the Federal Minister of Finance regarding the problems facing our province's livestock industry. We are also pursuing non-monetary ways in which these pressures can be reduced. President David Marit was Ottawa and met with senior Ministry of Agriculture officials. At the meeting President Marit requested a lessening of the restrictions concerning Specified Risk Materials. We will continue to pursue this matter in 2010.

Competitiveness in the Red Meat Sector

SARM also appeared before the Standing Committee on Agriculture in early 2009 regarding trade and competitiveness in the Canadian red meat sector. Director Ray Orb spoke on behalf of SARM and the suggestion was made that in order to aid in the resuscitation of the Livestock industry, a "Buy Canadian" program might want to be considered. This idea of a Buy Canadian program was also the substance of one of the speakers at the annual Informa Economics conference in Calgary at which SARM was represented by Directors Ray Orb and Doug Steele.

COOL Legislation

SARM issued a letter of thanks to Minister of International Trade Stockwell Day for launching a trade challenge to Country of Origin Labeling in the United States. SARM continues to watch developments on this file. Critics of the proposed legislation argue that COOL gives an unfair advantage to American cattle producers.

Control of Richardson Ground Squirrels

In 2009 another one-year registration for the use of 2% liquid strychnine by producers was granted by the Pesticide Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) in rural municipalities experiencing severe RGS infestations. The number of rural municipalities included totalled 203, up from 171 in 2008. Late in the year the province received approval from PMRA of their application for another emergency registration for 2010.

The second year of a multi-faceted research project on the control of RGS (started in 2008 with funding from the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture) continued in 2009. SARM, on behalf of the RGS Integrated Pest Management Steering Committee, successfully applied for funding under the Federal Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food Saskatchewan (ACAAFS) program in the amount of \$419,868 and also received funding from the Alberta Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in the amount of \$144,955. This funding paid for research in 2009 and will pay for a portion of 2010 work. Another application was made for funding under the Federal Canadian Agricultural Adaptation Program (CAPP) to pay for further research in 2010.

The Ministry of Agriculture continued the Gopher Control Rebate program in 2009 which reimbursed producers for 50% of the cost of eligible gopher control products.

SARM will continue to lobby for continuation of producer access to 2% liquid strychnine until an effective, economic, and environmentally favourable alternative is found.

The Saskatchewan Farm Security Act

SARM actively opposed proposed changes to *The Saskatchewan Farm Security Act*. The proposal by one organization sought to relax rules governing ownership by allowing pension funds to invest in Saskatchewan farm land. SARM took the position that farm land is for farmers, and should be for those who wish to move into rural Saskatchewan. Land purchased under pension fund investment schemes would be land not available to be purchased by residents of rural Saskatchewan.

Farm Ranch Water Infrastructure Program (FRWIP)

The FRWIP was developed with the help of SARM in 2007 and was initially designed to assist producers in the drought stricken southwest area with water supply. The program was so successful that in 2009, the FRWIP was expanded to cover all of Saskatchewan.

Changes to the Noxious Weeds Act

SARM was invited by the provincial government in 2009 to participate in changes to *The Noxious Weeds Act* which is now called *The Weed Control Act*. The new Act was passed in the fall of 2009. There were three substantial changes: a new noxious weeds category system was introduced; fines for offences under the act were increased; and anyone who feels wronged by the enforcement provisions of the act can appeal to the municipality and, if still unsatisfied, to the Saskatchewan Municipal Board.

Importation of Tordon 22k

SARM made an application to have Tordon 22k included on the Grower Request Own (GROU) program. The application was submitted late last spring. By importing Tordon 22k from the United States, producers and municipalities could potentially save up to 50% on the cost of the chemical. Mr. Mike Sherven, the administrator for the RM of Mankota, played a big role in SARM's submission to GROU. The importation of Tordon 22k would help stretch the weed control budgets of RM's further than they can at present time. The application is still being processed. We should have a final decision from GROU program in early spring of 2010.

Crop Insurance Changes

SARM was invited to participate in the changes to Saskatchewan's crop insurance program and these changes were announced in 2009 by

Saskatchewan Agriculture Minister Bob Bjornerud. SARM provided twelve recommendations to the panel considering changes to crop insurance and we are very pleased with the results. We will continue to work toward achieving our outstanding concerns related to spot loss hail and weather based insurance programs.

Protection for Rural Sidings

SARM is moving forward on the issue of railway sidings in rural Saskatchewan. We drafted a resolution aimed at changing the *Canada Transportation Act* to protect sidings in rural Canada from indiscriminate closure and discontinuance. The resolution was tabled and accepted at the Rural Forum of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. The substance of the resolution was also adopted by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture.

Producer Car Loading Sites

SARM President David Marit and Vice-President Jim Hallick were invited to appear before the House Standing Committee on Agriculture. President Marit and Vice-President Hallick objected to CN's decision to delist 53 producer car loading sites, 24 of which were in Saskatchewan. The delisting of these sites was roundly criticized by both SARM and the Standing Committee. In response to the pressure brought to bear in part by SARM, CN later agreed to re-advertise the delisting of a number of those sites and also agreed to advertise the closures in publications such as the Western Producer.

Level of Service Submission

The long awaited Transport Canada Level of Service review began in earnest in December of 2009, including a number of reports issued by consulting firms. SARM began developing a submission on the issue late in the year. The Province of Saskatchewan is also developing its own submission and is utilizing a rail shipper survey. SARM and the Province will be working together on this issue.