

## SASKATCHEWAN FARM STEWARDSHIP ASSOCIATION

How does summer always go by so fast?? This year again provided some unique challenges across the provinces. Some areas received moisture, some too much and some not enough. This is a reality almost every year and it really emphasizes that land and water resources are always **#bestwhenmanaged**. Take a read to see what SaskFSA has been working on.

### ● SASKFSA HOSTED FOCUS GROUPS ON THE CURRENT AG DRAINAGE APPLICATION PROCESS

Another reality on the agriculture landscape - the AG Drainage Application Process requires significant improvements to enable project approvals. SaskFSA hosted and facilitated 4 separate focus group sessions. The objective was to **collect unbiased, in-depth, ground level information** on how the current AG Drainage Application Process is working so we can help improve the process!

The participants included both Qualified Persons (QPs) and Landowners involved in drainage application projects throughout key priority basins of the province. The focus groups are limited to 8-10 participants to enable a focused discussion on the topic at hand. The QP session included 7 QPs representing 6 different priority basins and watershed areas across the province. The Landowner sessions included 18 landowners representing Atwater / Kaposvar Creek, Saline Lake, 600 Creek and Blackbird Creek. WSA technicians were invited to attend but WSA management declined the opportunity to allow their field staff to contribute to the conversation.

As a result of these efforts, SaskFSA compiled a lengthy and comprehensive report on the SIGNIFICANT challenges within the existing policy and process. The report was presented to the provincial Water Advisory Committee (WAC) at the recent June 18<sup>th</sup> meeting. The WAC commended SaskFSA for our efforts. The WAC agreed to take on Phase II of the focus group series which will focus on further refining and/or developing new solutions to the enable efficient registration of projects.

Phase I results will also be presented to the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture.

### ● PROVINCIAL WATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE (WAC)

As a refresher, or for those members that have recently joined, the WAC committee includes SaskFSA, SaskCanola, SARM, APAS, SaskCDA, Western Canadian Wheat Growers and Ducks Unlimited. This committee was formed out of Bill 44 to ultimately replace the Water Appeal Board and to bring together key stakeholders to provide direction on AG water management policy.

**SaskFSA President Myles Thorpe was named chair of the WAC.** This is a critical position within this committee.

Information and strategies discussed at the WAC meetings are classified as confidential. However, we can say that the WAC members are becoming more aligned as the other associations now understand the overall situation and challenges within the program. Mitigation and restoration measures are back on the discussion table. SaskFSA has proposed an alternative to this in the form of Agriculture Water Management BMPs.

The WAC also has a new name and will now be referred to as the Agricultural Water Management Policy Advisory Committee (AWMPAC).

### ● SASKFSA IN THE MEDIA

#### FCC FORUM - CANADIAN FARM PROGRESS SHOW

Myles presented on the Dollars and Sense of Responsible Water Management at the FCC Forum. This was an excellent opportunity to speak to a wider audience on a topic that makes perfect sense! Check out the Western Producer coverage of the presentation - [Sask Farmers Lobby for Better Drainage Rules](#).

## REAL AGRICULTURE

Who is SaskFSA? Dale Leftwich of Real Agriculture went for a field walk with us to chat about who SaskFSA is and what we do. Getting our message out about responsible land and water management is not always easy. Seems that we often have to defend our role as farmers when it comes to the environment.... when in reality, farmers are some of the best environmentalists around! Check out the article – [SaskFSA Seeks to Bring Understanding to Water Management](#).

## AG IN MOTION (AIM)

SaskFSA had a presence at the AIM show this year! SaskFSA board director Franck Groeneweg is our resident expert on tile drainage. Franck lit up the Aberhart AG Stage by speaking on the importance of tiling...and by importance we mean that it is essential in times of excess water or lack of moisture! - [AIM Twitter Chat](#).

## IT ISN'T ALL THAT EASY

[Eastern Sask Farmer Wrestles with Drainage Approval](#) – after 2 years of working through policy and pilot projects it is still not that easy to get a drainage approval. The process remains complicated.

SaskFSA will be making another effort to engage WSA to consider some alternative solutions from our Focus Group research earlier this spring. We have requested a meeting with WSA management to discuss the report. We need to enable the drainage application process. We want this to work, to benefit agriculture while respecting the environment, and we will continue to offer assistance to WSA.

## ● SASKFSA AGM & CONFERENCE . SAVE THE DATE . NOVEMBER 27TH

The planning has begun! Do you have any suggestions for this year's conference?? Let us know at [saskfsa.info@gmail.com](mailto:saskfsa.info@gmail.com).

## ● CALL TO ACTION!

### THERE ARE A FEW AREAS WE NEED YOUR HELP WITH!

1. If you have started an AG water management project application – **TALK TO US!** We are very interested to hear how it is going, what is working well and if there is anything we can assist with!
2. SaskFSA needs to continue to expand our geography and our membership! If there is an opportunity to have a shop meeting or to be a guest speaker at an event in your area – **LET US KNOW!**
3. **TALK TO YOUR FARMER FRIENDS.** This is easy. There are producers you know that should be involved. Have the conversation, we need to continue to build membership to influence government policy to be represent agriculture, your interests and the future generation of your farm. **Each new member you gain earns you a SASKFSA hat!**

● **#BESTWHENMANAGED** – Land and water are always best when managed. Remember to use this hashtag and tag @SaskFSA when sharing your story.

## ● MEMBERSHIP FEES DUE

If your SaskFSA membership is up to date, **THANK-YOU!** Your support is valued and fundamental to continue working on influencing progressive and policy development for responsible land and water stewardship.

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!