



SK Drainage Extension Network (SK DEN)

- Promoting Sustainable Ag Water Management

REGINA, SK (September 10, 2024) - The Saskatchewan Farm Stewardship Association (SaskFSA) and partners today announced the formation of a provincial drainage research and extension network. The Saskatchewan Drainage Extension Network (SK DEN) will connect landowners, agricultural organizations, industry, researchers and government to share and build knowledge on innovative and responsible water management practices in Saskatchewan in support of soil health, resilient crop production and healthy working landscapes.

“Saskatchewan has an important role to play in food production and food security.” says Myles Thorpe, landowner and SaskFSA President. *“We host 43% of Canadian farmland. Sustainable crop production and soil health depend on proper drainage, whether you have it naturally in your fields or you need a drainage management plan. Without drainage, our 4th generation farm would not exist today.”*

Soil zone, topography and climatic zones fluctuate across the province and dictate where the productive "agriculture zones" are. It is known that responsible drainage of excess temporary and seasonal water within the AG zone will improve field efficiency, yield and economics. Drainage management will also improve agronomics and environmental stewardship:

- Improvement in soil health (reduce compaction and salinity, healthy microbes)
- Protection of crop health (less stress and disease, better nutrient use efficiency)
- Reduction in crop loss and insurance payouts
- Enhancement of variable rate application (reduce overlap and nutrient loading)
- Reduction of the carbon footprint (reduce equipment operation time, fuel and emissions)
- Prevention of denitrification (less temporary water in field depressions)
- Reduction in overland flooding and nutrient washouts (minimize fill and spill scenarios)

“Forming this extension network comes at a critical time for the agricultural industry as farmers and ranchers cope with more variable weather in Saskatchewan,” Water Security Agency President and CEO Shawn Jaques said. *“We are pleased to begin working with this impressive group of agricultural, industry and research leaders in the coming months. “They will be an important resource to help us identify water management solutions and share information with the farming community about sustainable and resilient water management practices that will strengthen their operations and, ultimately, our provincial economy.”*

Agriculture water management is a critical business risk management tool and an important climate resiliency strategy for Saskatchewan producers.

SK DEN Objectives:

- Expand partnerships and collaboration among key stakeholders interested in agriculture water research, technology and water management beneficial management practices (BMPs).
- Identify and support SK drainage research projects focused on improving drainage innovation, soil health, field-scale science and field efficiency.
- Develop an agriculture water information hub and extension program.



- Identify opportunities to make agriculture water management practices and policy more relatable to agriculture producers, the next generation of SK landowners and the general public.

“APAS sees a lot of value in being a member of the SK DEN” states Ryan Scragg, landowner and APAS Board Director. “Water management is key for the success of agricultural producers across the province, and this network is poised to help in the understanding, application, and innovation of water management in Saskatchewan. SK DEN brings together a range of partners that showcases the broad commitment from across industry and the extensive impact water has.”

The SK DEN is a private sector leadership initiative. A collaboration of industry leaders and strategic advisors.

SK DEN Foundational Team:

Agriculture Producers of Saskatchewan (APAS) - Devon Walker, Ryan Scragg, Erin Cote
Crop Intelligence - Andrea DeRoo, Kyle Henderson
Croptimistic Technology - Phillip Harder
Hebert Grain Ventures - Louis Hebert
Precision Drainage Solutions - Olaf Boettcher
Saskatchewan Conservation and Development Association (SCDA) - Will Vanderbyl
Saskatchewan Farm Stewardship Association (SaskFSA) - Candace Mitschke, Myles Thorpe
Stone Farms - Rob Stone
University of Saskatchewan - Jillian Brown

SK DEN Strategic Advisors:

Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture - Sarah Hein
Water Security Agency – Ag Water Management - Naomi Paley, Krystal Tendler
Water Security Agency – Irrigation and Economic Development - Tyson McBain, Leah Clark
Land Improvement Contractors of Ontario (LICO) - Melisa Luymes

SaskFSA is a progressive group of agricultural landowners who value Saskatchewan’s land and water resources, advocating for responsible drainage and leading discussions around driving practical policy change. SaskFSA is the project lead for the SK DEN.

In this growing knowledge economy, the SK DEN priorities and partners will continue to develop and evolve. Collaboration within the province and across our borders will benefit everyone, now, and for generations to come.

- For more information, please contact:
Candace Mitschke PAg, SaskFSA Executive Director
execdirector@saskfsa.ca
[SK Drainage Extension Network](#)