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SaskFSA Advocates for Farmer-Focused Approach Under New AG Water Stewardship Policy

The Water Security Agency (WSA) has announced the Saskatchewan AG Water Stewardship Policy, introducing wetland retention goals of 40-60% across the agricultural zones of the province, effective today.

Of the 38+ million acres in our province that produce food, a large majority of those acres rely on water management. Our SK agriculture landowners have a critical role to play in making drainage management decisions for flood control, not only for the field, but for the local communities and the province. The ability to make these decisions is part of the important role of land and water stewardship.

“Saskatchewan farmers are world leaders when it comes to sustainability practices, that includes maximizing efficiency of your field operations with drainage management” said Myles Thorpe, SaskFSA President. “Drainage allows us to manage temporary, seasonal and excess water to protect crop and soil health. Many SK farmers operate in the prairie pothole region and responsible drainage is one of our most important tools for productivity, reducing emissions and just being a good neighbour.”

SaskFSA is concerned about the negative impact of the 60% retention goal. SaskFSA will work with landowners to meet retention goals in respective areas - wetland retention is important, but it is only one of the tools in the stewardship toolbox.

Drainage management is climate resiliency and business risk management. It can contribute to all of the stated policy outcomes. SaskFSA supports WSA’s collaborative efforts but believes more engagement is needed to ensure policies work at the farm level. We will continue to lead advocacy efforts on key priorities to achieve a balanced approach:

- **Landowner Support & Solutions:** Protect farmers’ ability to operate, especially in the 60% retention zones, recognizing farmer-led stewardship contributions to policy outcomes.
- **Flexible Retention Goals:** Advocate for alternatives to wetland retention that align with farm business needs.
- **Research & Innovation:** Advance field efficiency research to quantify environmental and agronomic benefits of drainage management.
- **Pilot Projects & BMP Development:** Understand the policy impact on the ground, and collaborate on effective Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs).

SaskFSA welcomes WSA’s commitment to additional research funding and will work alongside WSA, the SK Drainage Extension Network and other valuable water management partners to build policy that works for Saskatchewan farmers. Policies that recognize the benefits of responsible water management, enhance productivity in the AG zone and balance the health of our soil, water and AG ecosystems.

SaskFSA’s mandate is to advocate for land and water policies that ensure Saskatchewan’s farmers can manage the land they own and depend on. For more information, visit www.saskfsa.ca.

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