

**Agricultural Service Board Provincial Committee meeting with Minister Olson
Cypress Centre – Medicine Hat
5:00 – 6:00 PM, January 27, 2014**

In attendance:

Minister Olson, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development
Nick Harsulla, Chief of Staff, Office of the Minister
Jacquie Fenske, MLA, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville
Patrick Gordeyko, Chair and Northeast Representative
Jason Storch, Secretary and AAAF 1st Vice President
Garry Lentz, South Representative
Cory Beck, Peace Representative
Jim Duncan, Central Representative
Darrell Hollands, Northwest Representative
Soren Odegard, AAMD&C Representative
Murray Greer, Branch Head, Agriculture Grants Program Branch, ARD
Rod Carlyon, Director, Rural Development Division, ARD
Maureen Vadnais, ASB Program Manager, ARD Representative
Pam Retzloff, Recording Secretary, ARD

Minister Olson was welcomed to the meeting and introductions were made around the table.

Minister Olson started the discussion by stating that many of the issues that were being brought forward were under the jurisdiction of ESRD and that there was a need to have the Ministers of ESRD and ARD meet jointly with the Committee to discuss these issues. The Minister indicated that he was meeting with Minister Campbell the next day and he would suggest that they jointly meet with the Committee in the future. The Committee felt there would be value in this and will invite both Ministers to meet with them during the summer.

Previous Topics for discussion

Access to Herbicides for Acreage Owners

Jim reviewed the progress of the Herbicide Acreage Owners Pilot Program. He indicated that there is still a need to have ESRD review the Environmental Code of Practice and make changes to allow acreage owners greater access to more herbicides.

CFIA – Rabies and Anthrax

Jason thanked the Minister for the quick action on this. He said that this needs to stay on the radar and a plan is needed to fill the gap.

Weed Control in Waterways and Review of Agricultural Pests Act

Jim spoke to this and said that we need to stay on top of this and look for solutions. He highlighted the current funding was not adequate and the need to obtain Emergency Use Herbicide Registrations for treating these infestations. The Minister advised that the issue has been raised with him and suggested the Committee speak to Minister Campbell with ESRD.

Jim raised the issue of the Agricultural Pests Act review. He requested that the Minister consider making this Act into an Invasive Species Act and asked if anything could be done before 2016. The Minister advised that it was still on the table for 2016. The Minister suggested that maybe something could be done with Regulations rather than the Act.

The Minister also commented that he would like the Committee to start thinking about other legislation and to help him identify legislation that isn't needed anymore.

Tax Code Amendments

Pat asked the Minister if the ASB Provincial Committees tax code amendment recommendations had been taken to the Next Generation Farmers group. The Minister advised he would be meeting with them the next day to get their report presentation. He indicated that he is interested in tax reform that encourages new entrants into agriculture.

The Minister added that the department has re-aligned its focus on rural economic development and he is very interested in hearing about incentives to encourage economic growth in rural communities. He feels that this needs to be a cross-government approach.

Lack of Leadership on Act Enforcement

Jason spoke to this issue and advised that the department approach is to write letters but it was not effective and more inspectors are needed to assist municipalities with enforcement of the Act. The Minister suggested that this be put on the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association agenda and that his office would write a letter to them asking them to do this.

Saddle Hills Weed Control Act Appeal to the Minister

Jason explained Saddle Hills issue to the Minister and asked if there was any way for a process to be put in place to handle these appeals more quickly. He asked the Minister to indicate what a reasonable time line for a response would be. The Minister advised that as a new Minister he had moved cautiously in the beginning but agreed that responses need to happen more quickly and he needs to rely on the Department to fast track these responses.

New Topics for Discussion

Ergot

Jim explained the issue regarding Ergot in feed and advised he just wanted to make the Minister aware of the issue. Minister Olson said he will have to take this away and have a look at it and talk to the department experts on this.

Clubroot

Darrell explained the issue regarding the data collection and asked the Minister to call the Clubroot Action Committee together to deal with this. The Minister agreed research needed to be done and asked who was on the committee. Maureen will do a briefing note to the Minister.

Fusarium graminearum (Fg)

Garry spoke to this and stated that the Committees position remains as zero tolerance and said there was some concern regarding the Private Members Bill. The Minister stated he has been lobbied on both sides and there is no initiative ongoing at this time. Maureen Kubinec is responsible for the Private Members bill and the Minister has asked the department to advise

him on what other provinces are doing as Maureen wants to follow what they do.

Bacterial Ring Rot and Late Blight

Corey updated the Minister on the need for a better survey process and that they would like Dr. Harding to help with this issue and the Minister said he will look into it.

Wild Boar Fencing Regulations

Soren spoke to this issue saying that we must stay on top of it. Pat said the Committee is happy with the progress so far. The Minister stated that Jamie Curran is working on this issue and step 1 is done and the next step will be to look at eradication.

Carnivore Compensation Program

Garry spoke to this saying that producers are concerned with compensation. The Minister said it would be beneficial to have Minister Campbell from ESRD in on this discussion and he said he will mention it to Minister Campbell.

The Minister made some closing remarks by stating that he must act on action items and should be able to come back to the Committee with answers. He also stated that he doesn't want the Department to appear to have control over the Committee and the Committee should feel free to run their own agenda. Pat stated that this had been discussed and the Committee will be meeting in March to discuss this again.

The Minister thanked the Committee for their input to him.

Meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm