

**ASB Provincial Committee
Meeting with the Minister
August 28, 2013**

In attendance:

Minister Verlyn Olson
Julie Crilly, Special Advisor to the Minister
Jo-Ann Hall, Assistant Deputy Minister
Jamie Curran, Assistant Deputy Minister
Rod Carlyon, Executive Director
Patrick Gordeyko, Chair, NE Region Representative
Lloyd Giebelhaus, Vice-Chair, NW Region Representative
Garry Lentz, South Region Representative
Jim Duncan, Central Region Representative
Don Dumont, Peace Region Representative
Jason Storch, Secretary, AAAF Representative
Maureen Vadnais, ARD Representative

Meeting called to order at 1:15 pm.

The Minister welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made around the table. The Minister asked the ASB Provincial Committee members about the crop conditions for their various areas. Committee members provided a quick update for the Minister.

1. Wild Boar Eradication

Pat thanked the Minister for the work that is currently being undertaken to establish fencing standards to contain wild boar. The Committee appreciated being consulted on the wild boar strategy and are happy that work is being done towards eradication of wild boars in the province.

2. Access to Herbicides for Acreage Owners

Jim and Jason talked about the lack of access to effective herbicides for acreage owners to control prohibited noxious and noxious weeds on their properties. They highlighted the work that is being done by the AAAF Acreage Owners Herbicide Program Committee and the pilot program that is being proposed. Jason and Jim asked the Minister if he could work with his counterpart at ESRD to encourage them to change the Environmental Code of Practice to allow acreage owners increased access to designated low risk herbicides and to develop a training module for certifying acreage owners to access these herbicides.

Jo-Ann replied that ARD could work with ESRD to expand the current Farmer's Pesticide Course to include a module specifically for acreage owners. She also said that someone from ARD could be appointed to work with ESRD and AAAF on the Acreage Owners Herbicide Program Committee to work on developing the module. She also indicated that ARD could have a discussion with ESRD

about changing the Environmental Code of Practice to allow acreage owners increased access to use designated low risk herbicides.

3. ESRD Response to Chemical Spill

Jim talked about an incident that happened in Stettler County where a chemical spill was discovered and reported to ESRD. The person who caused the spill was not known and Stettler County was told that ESRD would not do an investigation because they do not have any budget for doing investigations. ESRD only does investigations when they can charge someone to recover the costs of doing the investigation and clean up. Jim highlighted that this takes away the incentive for spills to be reported and creates a dangerous situation where no one would take responsibility for reporting if they were aware that there was no investigation unless the person who caused it was known.

The Committee asked the Minister to talk to his colleagues at ESRD to ensure that they provided adequate budgets to conduct investigations into all chemical spills. They also asked the Minister to request that ESRD provide clarity about the roles of ESRD and the municipalities when a spill does occur.

4. CFIA – Rabies and Anthrax

Jason told the Minister about an incident with a suspected rabid skunk that occurred within Strathcona County. Strathcona County contacted the Federal vet in Edmonton and was told that because there was no bite and no domestic animal conflict that they do not handle these cases. Strathcona County then worked with Phil Merrill and the M.D. of Taber to arrange for the skunk to be delivered to the rabies lab in Lethbridge for testing. Jason also talked about the recent changes to the federal anthrax program. CFIA will no longer investigate or quarantine infected premises, collect and submit samples for testing, provide vaccine, oversee carcass disposal, cleaning and disinfection or pay an indemnity to help cover the cost of disposing of animal carcasses. CFIA's role is currently limited to licensing anthrax vaccine and to provide information on how to properly dispose of anthrax infected carcasses.

The Committee asked the Minister if the Office of the Chief Provincial Vet (OCPV) could come up with a plan for a place to take suspected rabid skunks and other animals when they are outside of the current rabies surveillance zone. The Committee also asked if the OCPV could come up with a provincial protocol as to how anthrax would be handled if found within the province.

The Minister replied that he has been having some discussion with his counterparts about the changes that have been happening at the federal level. Jamie Curran added that ARD believes that we need to work with the federal government to figure out how to move forward as far as who pays. He will work with the OCPV to develop protocols and that there is still a need for roles for all levels of government to be better defined.

Pat asked if the ASB Provincial Committee needed to write a letter to the federal Minister requesting that protocols be developed. The Minister replied that he has a good working

relationship with the federal minister and that it would be helpful to write a letter in support of developing protocols for how to manage these diseases better.

5. Weed Control Along Rail Lines

Don told the Minister that some of the railway companies are telling weed inspectors that the rail lines are located on federal land. They say that the weed inspectors do not have jurisdiction on the rail line right of ways and that the *Weed Control Act* is not applicable because it is considered federal land. Maureen told the Minister that she was aware that ARD's Pest Regulatory Officer, Gayah Siesahai, had been informed of this by a municipality and that Gayah was currently working with Justice to determine how rail line right of way was designated. She also indicated that this may be a local issue as there seems to be different approaches in how area managers work with ASBs to control weeds along the rail lines. She knows of several instances where agricultural fieldmen and local area managers work well together to ensure that weeds are being controlled according to the *Weed Control Act*. Jason also provided an example of how the Suffield Army Base, which is considered federal land, operates under a "good neighbour policy" and tries to comply with the provincial legislation in regards to weeds and pests.

Jo-Ann replied that ARD may need to work with the head offices of the rail line companies to ensure that there is a consistent approach across the province to manage weeds. Jo-Ann also expressed support for Gayah to continue to work with Justice in order to determine how these lands are classified and if the *Weed Control Act* applies to them.

6. Alignment of Legislation and Weed Control in Waterways

Jason brought up that many municipalities are frustrated with trying to control weeds within and alongside waterways because of restrictions for herbicide application. The example used was leafy spurge alongside a river system. There are effective herbicides for controlling leafy spurge, but because of the Environmental Code of Practice, these herbicides can't be applied within 30 m of the edge of the water. This means that there is always a "ring" of leafy spurge alongside the waterways because of this restriction. The Committee feels that the legislation between ARD and ESRD is conflicting because ARD wants the weeds controlled but they are not able to accomplish that because the tools they need to use are restricted by ESRD's legislation.

A second concern raised was with the lack of funding from ESRD to control weeds on their own lands, especially for bed and shore and streambeds. Some ASBs are willing to do work along the bed and shore and streambeds but are frustrated that ESRD doesn't have funding to help with the cost of the control work.

The Committee requested that the Minister work with his counterpart at ESRD to look at the legislation and see if there were ways that it could be aligned better to allow ASBs to be in full compliance with the Acts.

Jo-Ann suggested that there is a need to think cross-ministerially on water issues. She also suggested that it may be appropriate to do some pilot projects with ASBs and ESRD on some of these issues to figure out a process to best manage weeds along the riparian areas.

Jo-Ann suggested that ARD would start talking to ESRD about this issue. She recommended that some of ARD's water quality people should be involved with any pilot projects that are started. Someone from ARD will contact Jason directly to start work on a pilot project with the ASBs.

7. 1080, Strychnine and Liquatox Registration

Pat thanked the Minister for ensuring that the strychnine registration was extended and expressed concern about continuing the registration for both products into the future.

The Committee was re-assured that Phil Merrill was actively working on these registrations and closely following the review of 1080.

8. Tax Code Amendments

Pat reminded the Minister about this resolution and its intent to try to keep younger farmers involved in agriculture. The last response the Committee received from the federal Finance Minister has ended our current efforts on this initiative.

The Minister suggested that this is something that his panel of young farmers could possibly try to advance. This committee has a report that will be due to the Minister by the end of the year. The Minister suggested that any amendments to the tax code would probably require support from all of the western Canadian provinces and that the provincial agriculture Ministers were aware of how important it is to encourage young farmers.

The Minister concluded the meeting by talking about some of the current issues that he's been working on. These issues include COOL (country of origin labelling), CETA negotiations, other trade issues, market development, value added projects and research and development.

The meeting concluded at 2:00 pm.