

ASB Provincial Committee meeting with Minister Berger
January 31st, 2012 at 1:00 pm

In attendance:

Honorable Evan Berger
John Knapp, Deputy Minister, ARD
Patrick Gordeyko, Chair and Northeast Representative
Lloyd Giebelhaus, Vice-Chair and Northwest Representative
Jim Duncan, Central Representative
Garry Lentz, South Representative
Don Dumont, Peace Representative
Geoff Thompson, Secretary and AAAF 1st Vice President
Soren Odegard, AAMD&C Representative
Maureen Vadnais, Acting Supervisor, ASB Program, ARD
Pam Retzloff, Recorder, ASB Program, ARD

Minister Berger entered the meeting at 1:10 pm and Pat Gordeyko welcomed the Minister to the meeting on behalf of the ASB Provincial Committee. Minister Berger said that we need to arrange a summer meeting with him and could try and do it in conjunction with the Provincial ASB Summer Tour.

1. Pat Gordeyko raised the issue of Funding for ASBs and said they are looking forward to the program evaluation in 2012 and will hopefully see adjustments to the budgets.

Minister Berger said he understands and will try to address more dollars.

2. Jim Duncan talked about Eradicable Weeds Funding and reviewed the hawkweed proposal for central Alberta. He provided a brief overview of the Clearwater County program and its effectiveness.

John Knapp said that work needed to be done with PSB and IASWG to determine if some of the AgriFlex funding for the Pest Surveillance Network (under PSB) could be used to go towards this type of project

3. Garry Lentz talked about the rat concerns and talked briefly about the rat outbreak in Cypress County and that the fieldman had to get assistance from other municipalities in the rat control zone and that ARD wasn't very helpful.

John Knapp told the Committee that ARD had recently approved the hiring of a new rat specialist for the Province. John asked if AAAF or the ASB Provincial Committee would like to sit in on the recruiting panel for the new rat specialist. The provincial Committee said it would discuss with AAAF and determine who the representative should be.

4. Maureen addressed the rodenticide issue and spoke about the implications of not having continued registration on these products

John Knapp said he would be more than willing to give PMRA a call.

5. Pat Gordeyko addressed the 1080 review and 2% Liquid Strychnine and advised we are still waiting for confirmation of the permanent registration for strychnine and need to have that information soon.

Minister Berger suggested that municipalities need to continue to pressure their local MPs. He expected that the announcement would be soon - probably the first week of February. He was concerned that we may lose an effective product like 1080 with the current review that is going on

Minister Berger asked if anyone had been noticing an increase in moles around the province. The Minister noted that it seemed like there was an increasing amount of moles moving into flatter lands from the Eastern Slopes. May be something we need to survey fieldmen about.

6. Garry Lentz and Lloyd Giebelhaus addressed Disease concerns. Garry started by talking about fusarium concerns and that one of the major concerns is that farmers want to purposely plant seed that contains a low level of fusarium infection. He advised that the South region had a meeting and discussed this issue and 12 out of 19 municipalities stated that they wanted to continue with a zero tolerance policy. 2 were considering allowing some tolerance as they were already heavily infested with fusarium. Garry said they looking for better leadership from ARD and want more education for producers. He stated that the Fusarium Action Committee recommended zero tolerance but will ARD do the enforcement?

Minister Berger and John Knapp both agreed that we need to find out need to find out what came out from the Seed Cleaning Co-op Association meetings. They agreed that we need a strong education component and that it needs to be a ground up initiative. The Minister also stated that we need complete agreement from the ASBs that they want ARD to do the enforcement.

Lloyd addressed the clubroot concerns stating that there are many of the same issues with clubroot as with fusarium. They want more support and leadership from ARD regarding enforcement. He said that he is excited to be meeting with Alberta Canola Producers Commission (ACPC).

7. Don Dumont addressed the weed concerns regarding weeds along provincial highways and inconsistency of control. He asked the Minister to work with his counterparts at Transportation.

John Knapp advised that he was meeting with Deputy Minister Tim Grant at Transportation later that day and would raise the issue with him. The comment was made that there seems to be adequate budget in place to do the work but timing is more of an issue.

8. Lloyd Giebelhaus addressed the disposal of agriculture plastics and that they were pleased with the pilot project that happened within the province. Pat asked about the availability of Growing Forward II money.

The Minister encouraged the group to come up with ideas and said that ARD will be supportive of those ideas. John replied that there may be money available to assist with the assessment of this and what is needed but we don't want to interfere with private business. Minister Berger suggested that this might be something that we could get the involved in such as 4-H.

9. Don Dumont asked about the SRD Wildlife Compensation report and John said he would talk to the Deputy Minister at Sustainable Resource Development.
10. Pat Gordeyko advised the Minister about the letter going to the Federal Finance Minister regarding the tax code amendments proposals and that he would be cc:d on that letter. The Minister said he will support this wherever he can and would be happy to hear any suggestions.

The Minister said that there needs to be on the ground solutions developed and was concerned with the review of 1080. Comments were made that the coyote population seems pretty high around the province this year. Additional comments were made regarding increasing wolf problems and the increasing elk populations around the province.

The Minister asked if we were aware of any issues with land blowing this year with the dry conditions and lack of snow pack. Maureen was aware of issues at Taber and the Minister commented that he had heard about some problems in the Pincher Creek area.

Final comments were about wild boar and solutions for trying to control some of the problems in the province. The Committee tried to impress upon the Minister the need for a strong fencing regulation.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 pm