



News Release

For immediate release

Harper Government Invests to Help Producers Manage the Risk of Drought and Flooding

March 17, 2015 – Lacombe, Alberta – Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

New simulation models designed to predict the effects of overland flooding and drought could pave the way to new and better insurance coverage for agricultural producers. Member of Parliament for Wetaskiwin Blaine Calkins, on behalf of Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz, today announced \$1.3 million in federal support to the Alberta Federation of Agriculture to develop the new model.

This initiative aims to develop robust simulation hydrologic models and maps that can assess overland flooding, drought and soil saturation issues to be used to predict the likelihood and impact of future water patterns. Data collected could contribute to better flood risk analysis and could eventually lead to the development of overland flooding insurance products.

Quick facts

- Overland flooding could result from a river or lake overflowing its normal boundaries, from a torrential downpour or continuous rain over a period of days in a dry-land prairie landscape, or some other combination where excess moisture occurs on a landscape that is unable to absorb or safely divert the water away from vulnerable areas.
- The project has been funded under the AgriRisk Initiative (ARI) which supports the research and development, as well as the implementation and administration of new risk management tools for use in the agriculture sector. ARI is a Growing Forward 2 Business Risk Management initiative.
- Alberta Federation of Agriculture is Alberta's largest producer-funded farm organization with a mandate to work for the benefit of all agricultural producers in Alberta regardless of their farm enterprise.

Quotes

“Overland flooding and soil moisture issues have touched a large number of Prairie farmers in recent years, adding a level of unpredictability and risk that makes planning difficult. Gaining a better understanding of flood risk, soil saturation levels, and drought events through modelling could aid in creating new insurance products for agricultural producers.”
- *Member of Parliament for Wetaskiwin Blaine Calkins*



“This investment by the Government of Canada represents an innovative approach to assess all water-related risk facing agricultural producers. The project will showcase a model that can underpin practical insurance solutions for agriculture that have application to any rural area in Canada. The benefits will also be readily transferrable to urban settings where water-related events can have devastating consequences.”

- Mr. Lynn Jacobson, *President, Alberta Federation of Agriculture*

Additional links

- [Growing Forward 2](#)
- [AgriRisk Initiatives](#) program
- [Alberta Federation of Agriculture](#)

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Backgrounder AgriRisk Initiative - Alberta Federation of Agriculture

Severe flooding events across Canada have had a significant impact on individuals, farms, businesses, and governments in recent years, but were most acute on the Prairies. Since 2007, governments have responded sixteen times through the AgriRecovery Framework to disaster events related to water issues on the Prairies (excessive moisture, flooding or drought) at a cost of \$885 million (federal and provincial shares).

As AgriRecovery is not intended to address recurring events, better solutions for producers to manage those risks need to be developed. However, the insurance industry has been reluctant to provide flood insurance due, in part, to the poor availability of up-to-date flood risk exposure data and mapping.