

WILD ROSE NEWS

April 2009

WILD ROSE
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS

President's Report



Humphrey Banack

Agriculture in western Canada has seen many changes in the short period of time since farmers started to arrive in this part of our world.

As operators of a fourth generation mixed farm in central Alberta I often wonder what the earlier generations of my family would think of the way that we operate today. Our farms are much larger and we have the ability to individually produce more food per farm but we still struggle to support one family. In our high tech world of electronics and communications we sometimes learn to interact with and trust our equipment more than the people that surround us.

Our lives today contain a wide array of devices and tools that make life easier but we still face many of the same issues that our first pioneers did. Providing a profit and income to support our families without working off-farm is still as big a challenge to us as it was to my grandfather who worked in the local coalmine or my father who worked in a local manufacturing plant. Myself I worked for over 20 years off-farm before we could build a solid enough operation to support our family.

Each generation of our forefathers built certain aspects of our existence that are still here today that we take for granted. When the first pioneers arrived there were no roads, schools, hospitals or other services. These ideas came to life and were built with great undertakings that required strong leadership and the solid support of all community members.

Through our short history we have seen our forefathers work together to build cooperatives and other structures that provided them with supplies they needed and a reliable trustworthy market for their production. These ventures took strong leadership to develop but they would not have flourished without the strong support of a majority of farmers of the day.

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Welcome

to the new Wild Rose News. We have changed our look to better serve you the information you need and want.

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wrap@planet.eon.net

Our business climate today has changed dramatically but it is still eerily the same. The solutions that worked in the past may not be the answers for today. We are still in a constant struggle to make all sectors of our industry economically viable and profitable to the people who have chosen to invest in farming.

We cannot look to the past for the all the answers to our future problems but we can take one thing from the past that will work far into the future. Our forefathers in farming realized that alone one person couldn't be effective. They developed a network of producer organizations to represent all producers that today include general farm organizations and individual commodity groups. Individually each of these commodity groups can have an effect on the direction of agriculture policy for the future. But a strong general farm organization is necessary to ensure on common issues we provide the strong advocacy to build towards providing the working environment that is necessary to ensure a profitable future for our entire industry.

We must have strong leadership and support for all organizations so that they can provide the direction necessary to ensure that our next generation of farmers will be able to profitably produce food to feed the world.

Land Assembly Project Area Act, Bill 19

Bill 19, the Land Assembly Project Area Act, has entered its second reading in the Alberta Legislature. This controversial bill has received attention from groups ranging from Wild Rose Agricultural Producers to GreenPeace and all groups in between. There are concerns about this bill ranging from the future placement of nuclear facilities, to landowners receiving fair compensation for their land, to the restrictions placed on land. The bill has the authority to place easements on land titles which restrict the construction or removal of buildings, facilities and animals. These restrictions are placed on land that has been selected by the government for future infrastructure projects. These projects can include pipeline or energy corridors, waterway conservation, transportation of goods or people, or any other project deemed to be a public project by the lieutenant governor in council. Once

land owner consultation happens, public announcement of the project, and the project itself is approved, then the Minister sends details of the order to the chief administrative officer of a municipality who then places an easement on the land, then that information is sent to the affected land owner.

The Minister of Infrastructure Jack Hayden, the MLA who introduced the bill, stated in media reports that the bill is misunderstood. There are provisions in the bill that state land consultation must be undertaken with the landowners and that all details of the project must be publicly announced well in advance of any construction taking place, which Minister Hayden states is for the process and planning of infrastructure projects to be more transparent. The future public good and infrastructure is of no doubt important to Alberta's future, but the way in which this bill was created did not involve full and open consultation from those who will be most affected by the bill.

Minister Jack Hayden has recently shown draft amendments to bill 19. These draft amendments change sections on the bill relating to consultation with landowners to emphasize the consultation with landowners and steps that the government needs to take. Another change in the draft is placing a time limit of two years on the government to complete consultations and make a decision on the property (the previous version of this bill did not place a limit). The new draft also removes any mention of the expropriation act, making it clearer that where the expropriation act could apply that it is fully applicable. The final change in the draft amendments also state clearly that negotiations can be entered into and compensation will be based on fair market value of the land, with the option of third party intervention for those who cannot come to an agreement. Matters relating to the restrictions that can be put on land and receiving some form of compensation for having those restrictions put on the land are not addressed in the draft amendments. In a statement at a meeting with the Alberta Municipalities Association, Minister Hayden stated that there would be no more amendments to Bill 19.

WRAP Proposal for a Farm Safety Organization

There is currently a debate on changing the Occupational Health and Safety Act so farmers, or possibly just paid farm workers, will be covered under the OH&S Act. This controversy was re-ignited because of the death of a farm worker in June 2006 and the fatality inquiry into his death. Judge Peter Barley, in his inquiry findings this past January, made two recommendations regarding the OH&S Act as it applies to farms. The first recommendation was for paid employees on farms to be covered by the OH&S act with the same exception for family members and other non-paid workers that apply to non farm employers. The second recommendation was for training programs to be set up by the Department of Agriculture to address ways to minimize the risk of hazardous activities, with a system to record training by both employers and employees.

Currently, farm operations are exempt from the regulations of the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Further, Alberta is the last province in Canada that makes farmers exempt from the OH&S Act. In mid-march, there was a motion in the Alberta legislature for changes to be made to the OH&S Act to include farmers, but it is not a bill and is only a motion. Premier Ed Stelmach, during a question period in the legislature, responded to questions on changing the OH&S Act. The Premier's reply to this was that his people are consulting with outside groups and is looking into this topic.

With the increased probability that the OH&S Act will be altered in some way to include farms and/or farm employees, it is the second recommendation that WRAP would like to focus on to strengthen farm safety in Alberta. The strain that would be caused from operations needing to upgrade to comply with the OH&S regulations and also from possible fines from non-compliance would be a struggle for the average farmer. This is not to say changing the law is not the answer, but there are many issues that need to be addressed before such things happen.

Looking west, there is an answer to addressing farm safety in Alberta. That answer is the Farm and Ranch Safety and Health Association (FARSHA). FARSHA is the province-wide farm safety organization in British Columbia that trains farm employees in safety techniques, educates farmers, consults with farmers and ranchers, and promotes farm safety in B.C. FARSHA operates on funding from WorkSafe BC and is not designed for enforcement of regulations, but rather the enhancement of farm safety through talking directly with farmers and giving them on-site consultations about compliance with regulations. Another specific thing FARSHA does is maintain a library of multiple farm safety topics available for loan to farmers. Training programs for specific topics in farm safety are undertaken by FARSHA employees. These training programs can include first-aid and WHIMIS. Specific to farm safety, FARSHA has undertaken training on tractor roll over safety and taught paramedics proper procedures for rescuing people in tractor roll-overs. FARSHA has also done a very successful horse training and handling video and pamphlet as well as numerous other projects.

Currently in Alberta, there are no farm safety organizations similar in scope to this. The organizations that do exist are great and focus on important aspects of farm safety, but the model that FARSHA could be for Alberta would benefit the everyday workers on farms and the employers. FARSHA is organized with a board of directors made up of three Canadian Farmworkers Union representatives, three representatives from the BC agriculture council, and a chairperson. The province is separated into different regions with a representative in charge of training farmers and setting up training courses, providing materials to farmers and their employees, and numerous other tasks in that region.

If changes are made and farm employees or all farmers must comply with the OH&S Act, then a similar FARSHA type organization in Alberta would make a great difference in the ease at which farmers could adapt to the changes and make sure their farms are safe. The need for a province wide farm safety organization is important to protect farmers from fines and stop-work orders which could cause many headaches for producers. By creating such an organization now, it will help farmers ease into the regulations that may or may not come. Some areas on farms that would need to be modified, if the OH&S Act were to change, could include: machinery, noise levels, working in confined spaces (water storage, grain

bins), chemical and biological hazards, working at heights, working with animals, proper body movement for certain tasks (lifting, pulling), extreme weather conditions and terrain, and working alone or while isolated.

To view the report about FARSHA that was sent to the Alberta Minister of Agriculture, go to www.wrap.ab.ca and click on the 'RESOURCES' link.

One Earth Farms, A New Corporate Farm in the Prairie Provinces

One Earth Farms was announced on March 26th as the newest farming operation in western Canada. One Earth Farms is a corporate farm that uses native reserve land for its farming operation and is planned to be the largest farm of its type in Canada, possibly the world. With plans to start at 50,000 acres of farm land, then eventually working up to 1,000,000 acres when it becomes fully operational. One Earth Farms is something to take notice of.

The land that is being used for these farming operations comes from native reserve land in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. The land will be used for oil seed, crops, and livestock operations. The land is leased from these bands at market value. Most of the land, it is reported, is already being used and rented out to farmers in the area, who are not members of the bands or reserves. So far there are 17 bands signed on for this venture. Not all bands and areas were announced, but it is known so far that the Little Black Bear band (near Goodeve, Saskatchewan) is signed on and will add 8,900 hectares to One Earth Farms. The Muskowekan band (100kms west of Melfort, Saskatchewan) is also signed on. The Thunderchild band (113km northwest of North Battleford, Saskatchewan) has signed over 56,000 acres to One Earth Farms. One Earth Farms will add more land in a 'spoke and hub' type system that will eventually increase the land use to the full one million acres they plan on obtaining. There are agreements between the investment company and the bands that persons on the reserves will receive employment on the farms and the bands will receive a stake in the company.

Sprott Resource Corporation is the company funding this operation. With 27.5 million dollars invested so

far, there is plenty of capital for this undertaking. Sprott Resource Corporation is founded by Eric Sprott, the popular 'investment guru' of Canada, who also has many other investment and entrepreneurial companies bearing the Sprott title. Sprott Resource Corp, based in Toronto on Bay street, primarily invests in the natural resource sector and has current investments in Peru for phosphorus exploration and development, coal mining companies in Philadelphia, and oil and gas extraction companies in Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Sprott Resource Company has stated there are several goals of this partnership. The goals of making money and creating profit are obvious, but further goals this company puts forth include the sustainable, environmentally responsible use of agricultural land. A second goal is the opportunity for native reserves to profit from the use of their land and through the stake in the company as well as the employment opportunities available to those who are on the reserves.

If everything goes according to plan, one million acres will prove to make One Earth Farms a strong force in the market. The company has announced that it will create 'strategic industry partnerships' either through preferred supply or preferred long-term agreements in order to secure what they would need for continued operation of their farms. With the current prices of fertilizer, seeds, chemicals and other supplies, it is a major advantage over conventional farms for them to be able to negotiate these types of agreements. With the size and distribution of this type of farm, moving labour and equipment from farm to farm and area to area will make them less susceptible to bad weather and make it easier for them at harvest and seeding time.

The people operating One Earth Farms include the President of One Earth Farms, Larry Ruud; a committee member and board member of Viterra and a partner in, and the head of, the Alberta Agriculture Consulting Team at Meyers Norris Penny. Blaine Flavel is the President and CEO of One Earth Resource Corp, and Chairman of One Earth Farms GP Corp, which manages the partnership between the two groups. Fred Siemens is the COO of One Earth Farms, formerly the President and CEO of the Winnipeg Commodity Exchange, and Supervisor for the Canadian Grain Commission. Eric Sprott is the Chairman of One Earth Farms.

Directors Report

By Dwayne Marshman

Aside from the CFA Annual Convention in Ottawa, February 24, 25 & 26. I was able to participate in a workshop sponsored by AAFC in Calgary on March 11, 12 & 13 on Climate Change Impact and Adaptation in Agriculture from 2010 – 2030. The workshop included many people from all aspects of Agriculture including government, meteorologists, climatologists, agricultural organizations and universities. There is significant potential for climate change impact to affect agriculture in Canada. We had discussions on what are the potential impacts, how soon and how severe, how will agriculture adapt, what policies and technologies would assist adaptation for the system and for individual farms, what would be the long term impacts on land use, what impacts do government policies have on climate change adaptation and what role should the government play. We developed several possible scenarios and possible strategies that could be used in each scenario. This was the first of a four part policy workshop so I look forward to what develops as climate change and agriculture are very connected. The policies on climate change that are being developed world wide affect each and every one of us, not only as producers but also as consumers.

I also sit on the Alberta Farm Animal Care Board of Directors for WRAP. I replaced Andrew Peden who served a number of years previous to me. AFAC hosted a number of workshops on farm animal care and fitness to transport recently. AFAC believes education is one of the most important aspects of the humane treatment of farm livestock. AFAC has worked diligently towards this goal. It is with great sadness that Susan Church, AFAC's manager, who has put endless hours into many of these programs, is retiring this year after serving since AFAC's inception in 1993. She has chosen to spend more time with her family and grandchildren, WRAP would like to wish her many years of enjoyment and thank her for her tireless efforts over the past fifteen years. Susan is very well respected throughout North America's farm animal care organizations and has an unequalled enthusiasm for the work she's done. Thank you, Susan.

AFAC has a 24hr. livestock care help line ALERT to report livestock care concerns call 1-800-506-2273

- ALERT is a CONFIDENTIAL call line for anyone to report livestock care concerns.
- ALERT strives to assist before animals are in distress
- ALERT Resource Team includes farmers and other rural community members. They offer solutions to improve animal care.
- ALERT has an on call veterinarian who provides knowledgeable counsel.
- ALERT is available for self reporting to assist those who may be experiencing problems in caring for their livestock.
- ALERT works closely with Alberta SPCA and RCMP.

WRAP Biography

My name is Corey Schock and I am an intern with your group, Wild Rose Agricultural Producers. This is a co-position with the Alberta Community Co-operative Association and Service Canada. I was born and raised in McBride B.C. In 2003 I came to Camrose, Alberta to attend university. I graduated from Augustana University in 2008 with a Bachelor of Arts in psychology and double minors, one in criminology and another in rural development. I started working with WRAP on January 19th and immediately started working on graphing the historical prices of farm fuels and oil prices. I have been working at many different things, like reviewing legal decisions by the NEB to change oil pipeline jurisdiction, legislation and new bills in the Alberta Legislature, compiling information about news to the agricultural industry (such as the One Earth Farm Corporation). I researched and compiled information about the Farm and Ranch Safety and Health Association in British Columbia as a basis for a farm safety organization here in Alberta. This report was sent to the Alberta Minister of Agriculture. I am glad I have this opportunity to work with your organization and I look forward to completing more work and learning more about this group.

New Health & Dental Program for Alberta Farmers

Olympia Trust Company is pleased to announce a new health and dental option for Alberta farmers. This innovative program will enable you to have your farm pay for your family's medical and dental expenses and then deduct 100% of the cost as a farm expense.



WRAP members will save \$225 by enrolling before May 31st, 2009.

Using the Olympia Trust Health and Dental Plan, you can have your farm pay for your family's medical and dental expenses and receive the same tax benefits as other businesses offering benefits to their employees. If you already have extended health insurance, you can still use this program to cover portions of expenses not covered by your existing plans.

Here's how it works:

- 1) Farmer (or family member) pays dental bill of \$500 and sends Olympia Trust the receipt.
- 2) Your farm sends Olympia Trust \$550 (amount of bill plus 10% administration fee) to fund the claim.
- 3) Olympia immediately sends you a cheque for \$500 as a non-taxable benefit.
- 4) Your farm deducts \$550 (full 110% of the original amount) as a business expense.

Savings Example:

- ▶ Farmer in a 39% tax bracket
- ▶ \$2,000 in annual medical expenses
- ▶ Saves nearly \$1,100 (after administration costs)

Eligible Expenses:

Eligible expenses for the Olympia Trust Health and Dental Plan include:

- All dental services (including cosmetic)
- Vision care (glasses, contact lenses, laser eye surgery)
- Prescription drugs
- Chiropractor, massage therapy, physiotherapy
- Anything else medical or dental related as defined by the Income Tax Act.
- Premiums paid for other health and dental plans

For more information reach us live at:

1-800-727-4493

or visit us on the web at:

www.olympiatrust.com/wrap

WILD ROSE
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS

OLYMPIA
TRUST COMPANY

Yes! I wish to join Wild Rose Agricultural Producers

Name: Spouse:

Address:..... Town:

Postal Code: Telephone:..... Fax:.....

Email:

Membership Fee:

1 - year \$ 147 (140 + 7.00 GST) \$..... 3 - year \$ 388.50 (370 + 18.50 GST) \$.....

Associate \$ 68.25 (65 + 3.25 GST) \$.....

Please make cheques out to **Wild Rose Agricultural Producers**

Visa or Mastercard (Please check off one) Credit Card number..... Expiry Date.....

Signature..... GST #: R122545304 | **A receipt will be mailed out to you**

Wild Rose Agricultural Producers, #102, 115 Portage Close, Sherwood Park, AB T8H 2R5

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Alberta Recycling Proposes Changes to Tire Recycling Program

Under Alberta's tire recycling program, started in 1992, over 53 million tires have been diverted from landfills and successfully recycled. Farmers have played an important role in this achievement and, with all Albertans, have benefitted from it. The tire recycling program continues to grow and evolve in response to the growth in the tire market. Two changes are being proposed for the program at this time, as outlined below:

The \$4.00 surcharge on **Passenger Car Tires, Light Truck Tires, and Medium Truck Tires** (e.g. semi-trailers, buses) has not been changed since 1992, and additional funding is now required to deal with the additional volumes of tires being collected and increased transportation costs. **It is proposed that the surcharge be increased to \$4.50** on these tires.

We are also proposing a new fee for some types of "off-road" tires. In 2008, a multi-year pilot project was completed that had cleaned up the stockpiles of off-road tires at landfills, tire dealers and industrial sites. New revenues are now needed to continue to collect and process these tires as part of the regular program. Because there are a wide variety of off-road tires, we have developed two broad groups, based on size and difficulty to process, to facilitate the development of appropriate funding mechanisms. These two groups are: farm and small off-road tires, and large off-road tires.

It is proposed that a **\$4.50 surcharge** be placed on the **farm and small off-road tires**, which include:

- Small off-road tires, rim diameter 24 inches (61 centimetres) or less include
- Small industrial tires, for example forklift, loader, skid steer (Bobcat) tires
- Recreational (golf cart, all terrain vehicles), garden tractor tires.
- Farm drive tires on tractors, combines and other self-propelled equipment, and farm implement tires.

The second off-road tire group is the large industrial tires used on road building, construction, forestry, and mining equipment. These tires are large and difficult to process, and may require different funding approaches. Alberta Recycling is working directly with manufacturers and industry to determine the best way to fund collection and processing of these tires, so no fees are being proposed at this time.

The proposed changes require a regulatory amendment by the Government of Alberta, which we have requested through the Minister of Alberta Environment. Consultations are also taking place with other affected stakeholders. This information will be provided to the Government as part of their consideration of the recommended changes.

If you wish, you can send any comments, concerns or questions, on these proposed changes to Alberta Recycling by email at info@albertarecycling.ca, or mail at Box 189, Edmonton T5J 2J1.

The support and involvement of Alberta's agricultural community has helped make the tire recycling program a success. We would like to thank you for your participation in this program.