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July 6, 2023

[AG.Minister@gov.sk.ca](mailto:AG.Minister@gov.sk.ca)

Dear Minister Marit:

I write to you today on behalf of Saskatchewan cattle producers requesting urgent assistance in response to persistent and worsening drought conditions in western Saskatchewan.

As you are likely aware, pasture, hay and crop conditions have deteriorated, creating limited feed resources for cattle producers this summer and have already resulted in increased costs to obtain feed for the fall and winter. Access to quality water is another substantial concern that, if not addressed, could have health and welfare impacts for beef cattle in this region.

Without timely and targeted assistance from federal and provincial governments, producers will be forced to make difficult management decisions including another mass culling of their herds, as was the case after the widespread drought in 2021 which resulted in a nearly 8% decline in the Saskatchewan beef cattle population.

We appreciated the response you and your government provided in 2021, and we believe that it would be worthwhile to consider similar measures to assist producers facing these rapidly deteriorating conditions. While the areas affected are more limited than two years ago, the additional challenge of a grasshopper infestation has made it imperative to respond quickly to make feed available to livestock producers. We are proposing a number of recommendations for your consideration to alleviate the strain currently being felt by producers:

**Recommendations:**

- **Allow Insured Crops to be designated for alternative use in a timely manner**

We recommend that federal and provincial governments expedite approvals that will allow insured crops to be designated for alternative use to enable these crops to be used for livestock feed or grazing purposes. As was the case in 2021, adjusting the Low Yield Threshold for crop write-offs can provide quick access to a greenfeed source that would otherwise be unavailable. We would recommend that only those producers who make their crops available specifically for livestock feed be eligible to not have their individual coverages affected negatively.

We also suggest that the requirements for test strips be waived in light of the grasshopper situation, as those strips would be better directed to feed before they are lost.

- **Provide Support for Quality Water Access and Infrastructure:**

The lack of access to quality water is increasingly becoming an animal health and welfare concern for beef producers. There are many operations where dugouts have dried out or existing water supply may contain concentrated salts and toxic substances that could put cattle health at risk. While we recognize that some regional programming is currently available to support producers with water management, we recommend that federal and provincial governments dedicate additional resources to support beef producers upgrading or replenishing their water infrastructure in a timely manner. Importantly, this programming should also ideally allow producers to adopt options that best make use of their operation’s unique resources and employ what infrastructure they already have. Emergency provisions to draw water may need to be enacted to allow producers to address their water shortage situation. We request that any project approvals be expedited to allow producers to remedy their water needs in a timely manner.

- **Call on the Federal Government to immediately announce the list of designated regions for 2023 Livestock Tax Deferral**

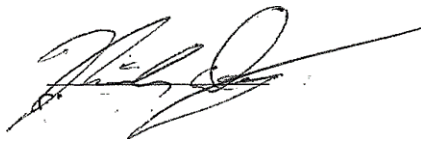
One of the financial tools that can provide some help in this decision making is the Livestock Tax Deferral Provision. We ask that you call on the Government of Canada to immediately implement this provision for the entirety of these regions impacted by significant drought. SCA would like to see this implemented and announced as soon as possible so producers know what the tax implications will be as they temporarily adjust their herd sizes to deal with lost winter and summer feed due to drought.

We know that the Government of Saskatchewan has been extremely responsive to the needs of cattle producers in the past, and we are once again calling for the implementation of pragmatic measures to address the poor conditions. The agriculture sector is fundamental to the success of the Saskatchewan economy, and the livestock industry has a large role to play in ensuring that success is sustainable.

We know that the challenges facing livestock producers are many, and it's important that it be given the opportunity to not just survive but grow. Without urgent support in these circumstances, we know the trajectory of decline in the industry will continue to move in the wrong direction.

Thank you for your timely attention to these recommendations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keith Day', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Keith Day

Board Chair

Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association

cc: Jeff Morrow, Acting President, Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation

Rick Burton, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Agriculture