



Minister of Agriculture



SASKATCHEWAN

Legislative Building
Regina, Saskatchewan S4S 0B3

March 18, 2009

Nial Kuyek, General Manager
Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan
Suite 100, 2400 College Avenue
REGINA SK S4P 1C8

Dear Mr. Kuyek:

The 2009-10 Provincial Budget was introduced in the Provincial Legislature today by the Honourable Rod Gantfoer, Minister of Finance.

This year's balanced budget builds on our success in 2008 and ensures everyone shares in the benefits of our growth. For rural residents, this includes the largest property tax reduction in Saskatchewan history, a new revenue sharing deal for municipalities and an increase in funding for rural roads and bridges. We are also investing \$1 billion in capital infrastructure funding. This is in addition to Premier Brad Wall's recent \$500 million infrastructure announcement at the SUMA convention on February 2, 2009.

In the Ministry of Agriculture, I am pleased to inform you there is an additional \$177.5 million budget commitment this year. This is a 58 per cent increase over 2008-09. Most of this additional money will benefit farmers and ranchers directly through AgriStability, AgriInvest and Crop Insurance.

The budget provides \$20 million in additional funding to improve the Crop Insurance program, based on the input of over 1,000 producers. This is over and above the additional \$42 million the government contributed to Crop Insurance in 2008.

There is also funding in the budget to bring the administration of AgriStability to Saskatchewan. We are also keeping our election promise to fully fund the provincial share of AgriStability and AgriInvest. This helps to provide certainty and security for our farmers and ranchers.

The budget includes \$5 million in new Provincial funding for the new Federal-Provincial Growing Forward agreement. This new agreement will include a province-wide water infrastructure program. Growing Forward initiatives will also include food safety, biosecurity, farm business management and environmental programming. Details of the Growing Forward agreement will be announced in early April.

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The 2009 Ministry of Agriculture budget will also provide support for research, extension services, the Agricultural Crown Land Sale Program and a comprehensive Pest Control Program, which includes nearly \$3 million for the Gopher Control Rebate Program. The Pest Control Program also includes increased support for the control of coyotes and wild boars, increased funding for municipal pest control officers and funding to control black flies in Northern Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan producers will benefit from our commitment to agriculture extension services. The Ministry of Agriculture is opening three new rural extension offices, in Kindersley, Watrous and Moose Jaw. Our 10 extension offices will now be fully staffed to deliver information and services to farmers and ranchers.

This year's budget puts the focus of the Ministry back on the farm gate, where it should be. I look forward to working with you and the industry in the upcoming year.

Sincerely,



Bob Bjornerud
Minister of Agriculture