

Ministry of Agriculture



Plan for 2012-13



PLAN FOR 2012-13

Statement from the Minister



I am pleased to present the Ministry of Agriculture's Plan for 2012-13.

The Government's Direction and Budget for 2012-13 are built around *Keeping the Saskatchewan Advantage*.

Saskatchewan Agriculture has increased its budget by \$13 million to \$430.8 million in 2012-13, the second largest Agriculture budget ever announced. Almost three quarters of this budget will go towards fully funding business risk management programs including AgriStability, AgriInvest and Crop Insurance. The Crop Insurance Program includes a record budget of \$177 million.

We are demonstrating our continued commitment to agriculture research through a record-high research budget of \$20.4 million, an increase of 50 per cent since 2007. The Agriculture Budget also includes \$250,000 for the Global Institute for Food Security, as was promised in last fall's election campaign.

The Ministry of Agriculture will also provide an additional \$1 million for international market development and trade advocacy and an additional \$1.9 million irrigation funding to rehabilitate the M1 Canal.

In addition, we have increased funding to the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities to deliver pest management programs. This includes \$500,000 to continue the beaver control program, and an additional \$250,000, for a total of \$1 million, for rat control.

The Ministry will report on progress made toward this plan, within the financial parameters provided, in the 2012-13 Annual Report.

The Honourable Bob Bjornrud
Minister of Agriculture

Response to Government Direction

Government has renewed its plan for 2012-13 to encourage and support the *Saskatchewan Advantage*. This plan reflects the Government's continued focus on economic growth, supporting the creation of new opportunities through strategic investments, ensuring that the prosperity is shared and our quality of life is enhanced. Government's key priorities and commitments have been supported in the context of a disciplined four-year fiscal plan and are presented in the *Government Direction for 2012-13*.

Government's Vision

"... a strong and growing Saskatchewan, the best place in Canada – to live, to work, to start a business, to get an education, to raise a family and to build a life."

**Sustaining growth
and opportunities for
Saskatchewan people**

**Improving our
quality of life**

**Making life
more affordable**

**Delivering responsive
and responsible
government**

Government's vision and four goals provide a directional framework for ministries, agencies and third parties to align with these priorities and to develop their plans to achieve greater success in the efficient delivery of government services.

All ministries and agencies will report on results achieved, or not yet achieved, in their 2012-13 annual reports. This honours Government's commitment to keep its promises and ensures greater transparency and accountability to the people of Saskatchewan.

MISSION, STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Mission Statement

The purpose of the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture is to enable a prosperous, market-driven agricultural industry through a supportive legislative framework, policies, programs and services.

Strategy

Enhanced long-term competitiveness and sustainability of the industry

Key Actions

Targeted investment in infrastructure, science and innovation.

- ⇒ Negotiate new multilateral and bilateral agreements with the federal government within the Growing Forward II Policy Framework.
- ⇒ Invest in wheat genomic research and the Global Institute for Food Security.
- ⇒ Engage agricultural sector partners to ensure effective investment in research and development.
- ⇒ Develop strategies to promote and facilitate innovation within the sector, including the assessment of both existing and new research funding models.
- ⇒ Invest in water infrastructure, including the rehabilitation of the M1 Canal and the Farm and Ranch Water Infrastructure Program.
- ⇒ Implement sector strategies that increase investment attraction in Saskatchewan, and contribute to the benefits of growing demand for food, feed, fuel and fibre.
- ⇒ Harmonize regulations with domestic and international trading partners.

Strategy

Enhanced trade advocacy

Key Actions

Support industry to enhance trade in priority markets.

- ⇒ In collaboration with partners, implement strategies and policies in international market development, investment attraction and trade policy.
- ⇒ Pursue Saskatchewan's trade policy objectives through international and internal dispute settlement proceedings and day-to-day trade policy advocacy.



Photo Credit: Enterprise Saskatchewan, Greg Huszar Photography, Mosaic Belle Plaine site

Strategy

Enhanced client service

Key Actions

Efficiently develop and deliver effective programs and services.

- ⇒ Ensure farmers, ranchers and industry have access to research, production and business information, risk management tools and Ministry services.
- ⇒ Develop and implement new ways of offering branch and Ministry services online through interactive forms and “smart” technologies.
- ⇒ Review and reform legislation, regulation and policy to provide streamlined client service.

Strategy

Improved public perception of agriculture

Key Actions

Partner to promote the benefits of agriculture.

- ⇒ Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to enhance awareness of areas such as environmental stewardship, economic impact, adoption of technology and food safety.
- ⇒ Partner with 4-H, Agriculture in the Classroom and the Ministry of Education to provide education programming to youth.
- ⇒ Task the Minister’s Youth Advisory Committee to identify opportunities for youth in agriculture.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Measure

Percentage of clients satisfied with programs and services.

2008 Client Services Survey: A total of 753 producers were surveyed in March 2008 by Fast Consulting. According to the survey, 39 per cent of producers who have accessed Saskatchewan Agriculture programs and services answered either satisfied or completely satisfied to the following question:

How would you rate your overall satisfaction with Saskatchewan Agriculture service delivery, using a five point scale where one means not satisfied at all and five means completely satisfied?

Source: Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture

Measure Description

This performance measure replaces the one that measured the number of contacts with farmers. This measure is intended to assess the percentage of clients satisfied with the programs and services delivered by the Ministry.

The Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture offers many programs and services designed to assist farmers and ranchers, including a wide variety of publications (both print and electronic), customer service telephone lines, specialist services and program development.

Technological advancements in areas such as social media, mobile phones, e-tablets and online transacting are happening at a rapid pace. As technology changes, the Ministry needs to update its service and information delivery systems to ensure clients' needs are being met, and programs and services are supportive of their overall agricultural operations.

A formal survey of client experiences with Ministry programs and services is taking place in 2012. The survey will provide a performance indicator that will help Ministry officials gauge customer service and satisfaction, and will provide a benchmark for future years. The Ministry has engaged a professional research firm in order to ensure accurate and reliable data is obtained, with the understanding that all scientific surveys contain an inherent margin of error.

Survey Objectives

The objectives of the client services survey are to provide information to the Ministry in order to:

- ⇒ understand which programs and services are being utilized by the farming community, and then determine if these services are meeting client needs;
- ⇒ understand how technologically advanced farm households are in Saskatchewan and understand which methods of communication they prefer;
- ⇒ gain insight concerning producers' overall opinion of the Ministry service delivery and then evaluate current Ministry performance with information from the 2008 survey;
- ⇒ provide information that will help the Ministry and the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation (SCIC) make decisions to achieve the goal of enhanced client service and experience; and
- ⇒ gain information concerning recent changes in farming practices as a result of funding or information received from the Ministry.



Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatoon, City of Bridges

Measure

Amount of industry investment leveraged by Ministry research and development funding.

\$7.7 million of investment leveraged by ADF project funding in 2010-11.

Source: Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture

Measure Description

The agriculture sector continues to receive significant benefits from the provincial government's unwavering commitment to invest in research infrastructure, intellectual capacity and research projects. Ministry-supported research activities since 1971 have led to the development of over 300 new crop varieties for Saskatchewan producers.

Research is a high-risk proposition and, with the escalating cost of the research, producer led funding organizations or the private sector may not have the capabilities in the future to support the development of new knowledge and technologies. The Ministry's Agriculture Development Fund (ADF) is focused on supporting the industry's research priorities to ensure Saskatchewan producers have access to new and innovative knowledge and technologies.

The Ministry has established this measure to monitor its progress in supporting the research priorities of the agricultural industry. This measure also demonstrates the collaboration and coordination of research activities across various funding organizations present in the province.

There is no minimum or maximum leverage for an individual project. For some there may be zero leverage due to the nature of the research and the ability of the industry to support the research. Conversely, for other multi-partnered projects there may be multi-fold leverage. Due to the nature of the research, the leverage could vary from one year to another. The Ministry is optimistic that over the next four years, on average, ADF investment (research projects) will be able to leverage 75 per cent funding (cash and in-kind) from other sources.



Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatchewan, Greg Huszar Photography, Over the Hill Orchards

Measure

Public understanding of agriculture as measured by the percentage of Saskatchewan residents with a positive perception of agriculture.

Initial survey of residents planned for 2012-13 to establish baseline.

Measure Description

Agriculture has played a critical role in Saskatchewan's growth and identity. Today, agriculture is a progressive and economically crucial part of Saskatchewan, yet the industry faces a lack of public knowledge, widespread misinformation and a lack of public interest in the field.

The average citizen is removed from direct food production. The mainstream media tend to pay the most attention to sensational stories, and it is these stories that influence the public's opinion of the agriculture industry and our food supply. As a result, the public is liable to be exposed to information that may be erroneous, inaccurate, fabricated or biased.

An environmental scan conducted by the Ministry in 2011 revealed that agricultural knowledge is low among the general Canadian population and careers in the field are seen as undesirable. The majority of Saskatchewan residents are disconnected from food production and have lost sight of the agricultural production-consumption chain that has a major impact on Saskatchewan's economy.

The Ministry of Agriculture has a need to reach the people of Saskatchewan with researched information about the importance, relevance and sustainability of the province's agricultural industry in order to improve the public understanding of agriculture-related issues.

A survey of Saskatchewan residents will take place in 2012-13 in order to substantiate the Ministry's understanding of public perceptions of agriculture, and inform the next steps required in an agricultural awareness strategy.



Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatchewan, Greg Huszar Photography, Jones Peak, near Eastend

Measure

Percentage of Government trade missions that promote agriculture in Saskatchewan.

25 per cent of the 2011 Government trade missions promoted agriculture.

Measure Description

Saskatchewan agriculture is highly dependent on export markets. 2011 was the first year that Saskatchewan agriculture exports exceeded \$10 billion, which included exports of more than \$100 million to 20 different countries.

Competition for critical and developing international markets is intense. Government trade missions, including missions focused on market development, market access and trade policy or a combination of all three, are important for maintaining and building on, the province's exports.

Trade missions incorporating market development activities support industry by promoting Saskatchewan agriculture's strengths in addition to building and strengthening the industry's reputation for consistent, high quality, safe products. Trade missions incorporating market access and trade policy activities aid in maintaining and securing better market access. Trade missions can also further Saskatchewan agriculture interests on regulatory matters and influence federal trade policy and the policies of key trade partners.

The Ministry of Agriculture supports trade missions through the development of professional, high quality promotional material and the collaborative work with other ministries, industry, provinces and the federal government in advance of, as part of, and in follow-up to trade missions. Other support activities include providing trade statistics, background information, technical support and collaborating on messaging.

The percentage of government trade missions that incorporate agriculture provides a proxy measure of the Ministry's market development, market access and trade policy activities. Ministry officials will engage with other ministries to ensure government trade missions include a focus on agriculture.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

2012-13 Estimates	(in thousands of dollars)
Central Management and Services	10,885
Industry Assistance	5,409
Land Management	6,554
Policy and Planning	3,745
Research and Technology	20,440
Regional Services	41,892
Irrigation and Water Infrastructure	9,568
Financial Programs	8,813
Business Risk Management	321,365
Ministry Operations Appropriation	428,671
Capital Asset Acquisitions	-
Capital Asset Amortization	2,106
Total Expense	430,777

FTE Staff Complement	448.0
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For more information, see the Budget Estimates at: <http://www.finance.gov.sk.ca/budget2012-13>

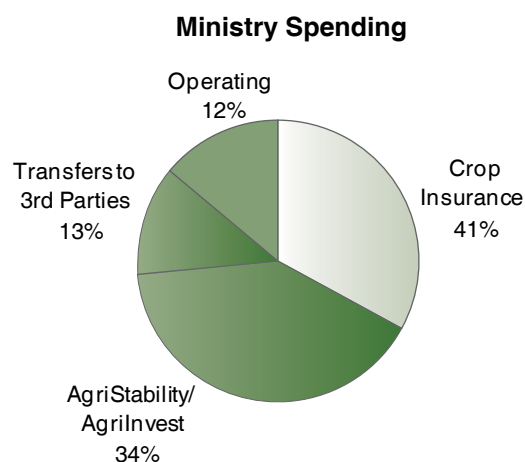




Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatchewan, David Buckley, Canoeing, MacFarlane River

Highlights

The following are key announcements being made in the 2012-13 Budget:

- ⇒ \$321.4 million to fully fund the Province's 40 per cent share of business risk management programs, including Crop Insurance, AgriStability and AgriInvest.
- ⇒ Record \$177 million to fund an improved Crop Insurance Program, which includes record coverage and an Unseeded Acreage Benefit of up to \$100 per eligible acre.
- ⇒ \$20.4 million to support agricultural research, a 50 per cent increase since 2007, including an additional \$2.0 million in new funding for wheat genomic research and \$250,000 for the Global Institute for Food Security.
- ⇒ \$32 million for Growing Forward programs, an increase of nearly \$12 million, including environmental farm planning, the Farm and Ranch Water Infrastructure Program, innovation and research, and farm business development initiatives for young farmers.
- ⇒ \$5 million in irrigation funding for rehabilitation of the M1 Canal.
- ⇒ \$530,000 for the Saskatchewan Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, an increase of \$150,000 from last year and an increase of 194 per cent since 2007-08.
- ⇒ \$3.5 million for third-party grants to various agricultural organizations to develop and promote the industry.
- ⇒ \$1 million for international marketing and trade advocacy.

For More Information

Please visit the Ministry's website at www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca or, for more information on the Ministry's programs and services, call 1-866-457-2377.

Front Page Photo Credits



Canola and flax fields
Photographer, Charles Melnick



Biking, Narrow Hills Provincial
Park
Greg Huszar Photography



Motherwell Homestead National
Historic Site of Canada
Greg Huszar Photography



Saskatchewan Legislative
Building
Greg Huszar Photography