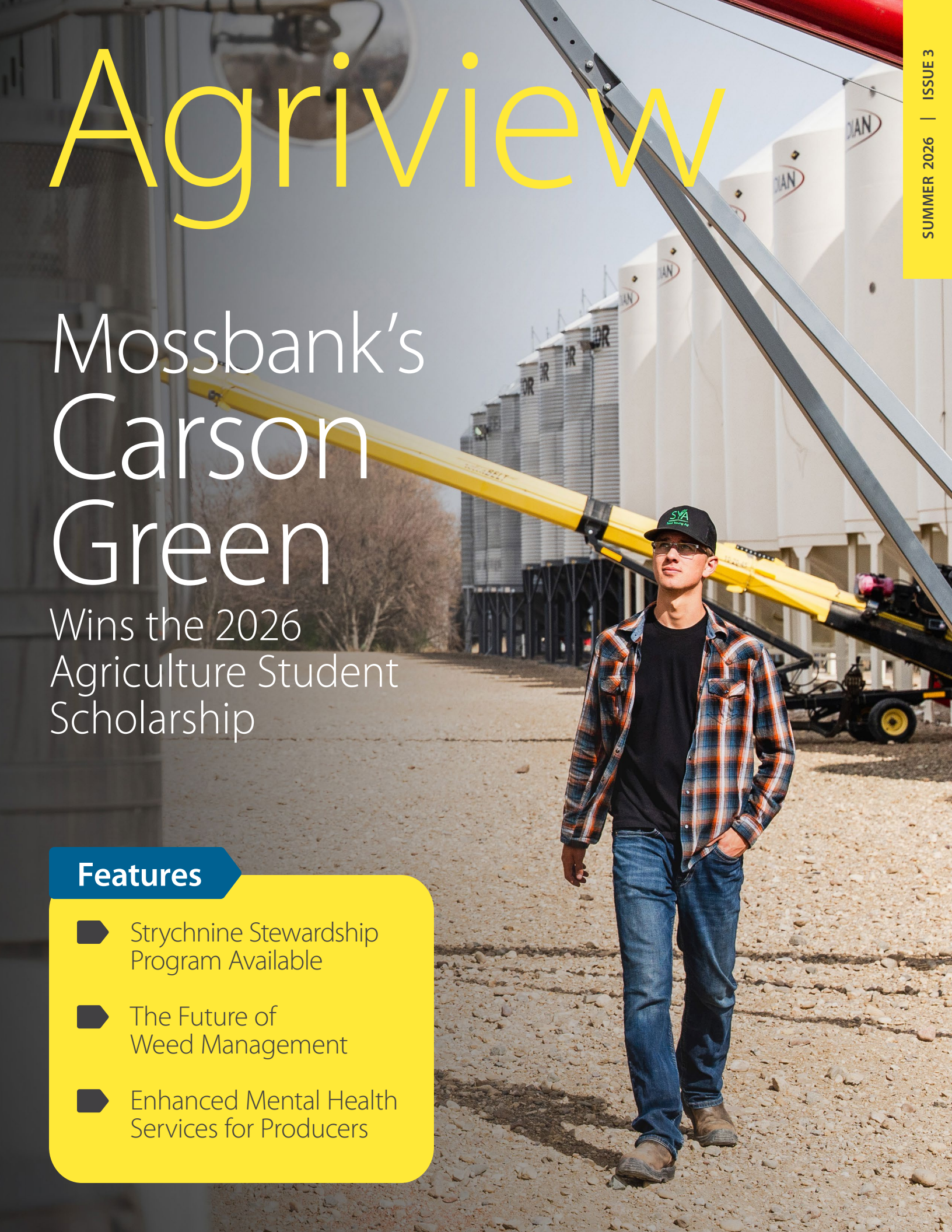
SUMMER 2026 | ISSUE 3

# Agriview



## Mossbank's Carson Green

### Wins the 2026 Agriculture Student Scholarship

**Features**

- Strychnine Stewardship Program Available
- The Future of Weed Management
- Enhanced Mental Health Services for Producers

# Minister's Message

**For Saskatchewan producers, summer is a season of hard work, patience and resilience. It's watching the sky and hoping for rain, but not too much. It's keeping an eye on the forecast because a few days can make all the difference. It's juggling tight timelines, whether you're spraying between the winds or racing to get hay baled ahead of a storm.**

Our government is proud to stand alongside Saskatchewan producers as they put in these long hours to build strong, resilient operations. The 2026-27 Provincial Budget reflects that commitment to agriculture with a $662.7 million investment. This investment continues building sector resilience through a strong suite of business risk management programs including Crop Insurance and AgriStability, ensuring producers can access reliable coverage and responsive service delivery to meet their needs.

This spring, I announced that our government is undertaking a comprehensive review of *The Saskatchewan Farm Security Act* including public and stakeholder consultations. The comprehensive review will explore opportunities to improve ownership verification, strengthen penalty and enforcement tools, modernize definitions, and strengthen reporting obligations and oversight of permanent residents.

Earlier this year, the federal government approved a joint Emergency Use Request for the use of two per cent liquid strychnine to support integrated pest management of Richardson's ground squirrel (RGS) in Saskatchewan and Alberta. Our government coordinated the Strychnine Stewardship Program, working with eligible rural municipalities. Information on strychnine and other control methods in Saskatchewan is available at saskatchewan.ca/RGS-Control.

As we move through this busy season, I want to thank Saskatchewan producers for the dedication and expertise they bring to their work each day. I would also like to remind all producers and the public that farm safety should be top of mind. The Farm Stress Line toll-free number is 1-800-667-4442, which now supports producers with access to follow-up counselling services through a partnership with SaskAgMatters Mental Health Network. ■

**Honourable David Marit**
**Minister of Agriculture**

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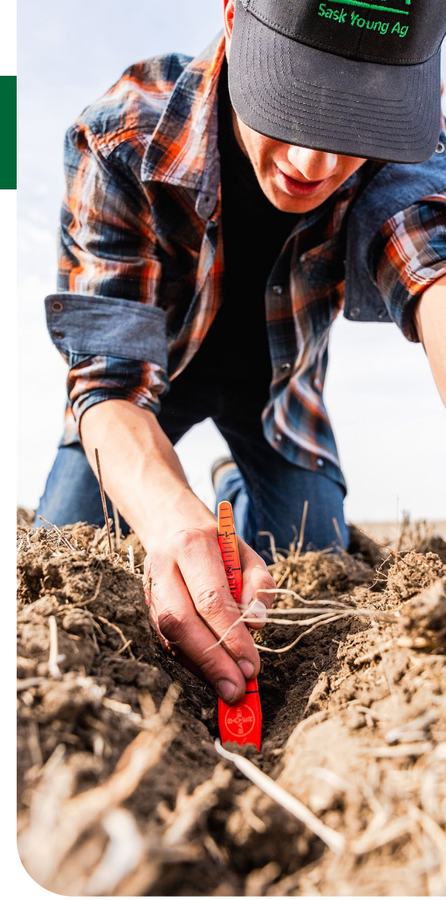

*Soil testing*


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# 2026 Agriculture Student Scholarship Winner Carson Green

**Joey Maciag, Communications Consultant, Regina**

**On a busy spring day in rural Saskatchewan, while seeding is in full swing and every hour counts, Carson Green still finds time to think about the future of agriculture. It's a future he plans to be a part of and help shape.**

Green's roots on the family farm stretch back more than a century. His family farm was established in 1910 by his great-great-grandfather, who emigrated from England to break the land and build a life. Through world wars, economic shifts and constant changes in agricultural practices, the farm has remained in family hands.

Each generation has built upon the last. Today, the family runs a mixed operation, raising cattle and growing lentils, chickpeas, durum, barley and canola. It's a diverse system designed to remain resilient in an ever-changing agricultural landscape.

Now, Green is preparing to take on that responsibility. "I have huge shoes to fill," he said. "But I have the drive to do it, and I can't wait until it's my turn."

For Green, farm life has always been second nature. "Since I was old enough to walk and talk, I've been out in the field," he explained, recalling childhood days spent riding along in semis, sprayers and helping where he could.

Now his role has grown. During seeding, he works as part of a 24-hour operation running equipment, filling trucks on night shifts and happily stepping into whatever job needs to get done.

Despite the long hours, it's his favourite time of year. "Everything depends on getting those seeds in the ground. It's stressful, but there's meaning behind every hour. Nobody's wasting time. It's go, go, go and I love it."

That drive and passion is evident as Green is the grand-prize winner of the 2026 Agriculture Student Scholarship receiving a $6,000 scholarship to pursue post-secondary education at the University of Saskatchewan in the agribusiness program.

For this year's scholarship application, students were given the choice of creating a video or writing an essay on the theme of solutions to challenges in agriculture. Applicants were graded on their alignment with the theme as well as their leadership potential.

Living an extremely busy farm life gave Green firsthand insight for his application into the growing challenges facing producers, especially the labour shortages.

"Our farm was very short-staffed last season," he said. "We got through it, but it was stressful."

The experience highlighted a larger issue which he discussed in his application video for the scholarship. Finding workers, especially skilled and reliable ones can be difficult in rural Saskatchewan. "There's a labour shortage not just for people, but people with the right skills," he explained.

That challenge pushed Green to think beyond his own farm, focusing on how the industry can attract the next generation.

One of Green's strongest ideas centres on connecting young people with agriculture, particularly at the high school level. While younger students often benefit from programs like Agriculture in the Classroom, and he credits the importance of the work that they do, he sees a gap in later years.

"From Grade 7 to 12 that's when students are deciding their future and their careers," he explained. "I believe that's the best time to be talking to young students."

His solution is to bring agriculture directly into those grades through guest speakers, industry engagement and more hands-on learning opportunities. He points to schools that are already making progress in other parts of the country.

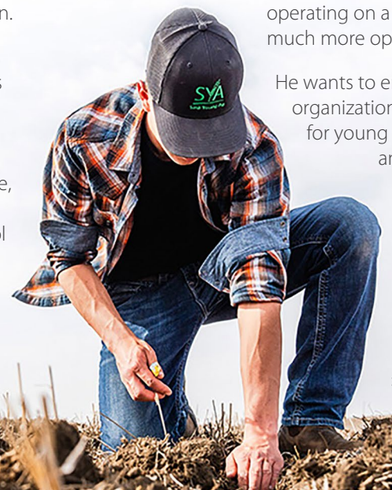
During a visit to an Alberta school, he saw students caring for livestock and tending gardens right on campus. "That hands-on experience is huge; we need more of that happening in Saskatchewan and across Canada," he explained.

Green also suggests creating structured on-farm training programs, connecting students directly with producers to gain real-world skills while helping farms address labour needs.

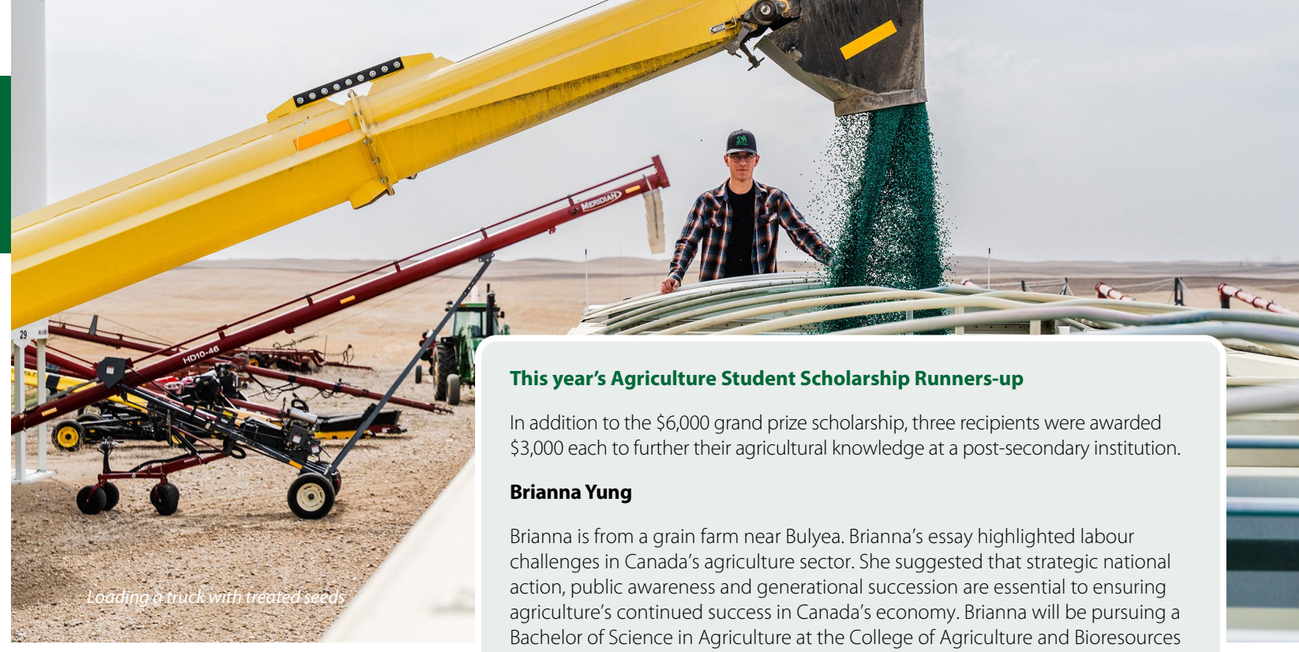
"Getting young people on to farms is something that we need to start doing more. There's still a perception that farming is just manual labour, but it's not anymore," he said. "It's high-tech, it's business-focused, and producers are operating on a global scale. There's so much more opportunity now."

He wants to encourage agricultural organizations to create opportunities for young people to participate and learn.

"If young people get involved early, it benefits the industry as a whole," he explained. "Getting youth more engaged in agriculture will be key to addressing labour shortages in the future."





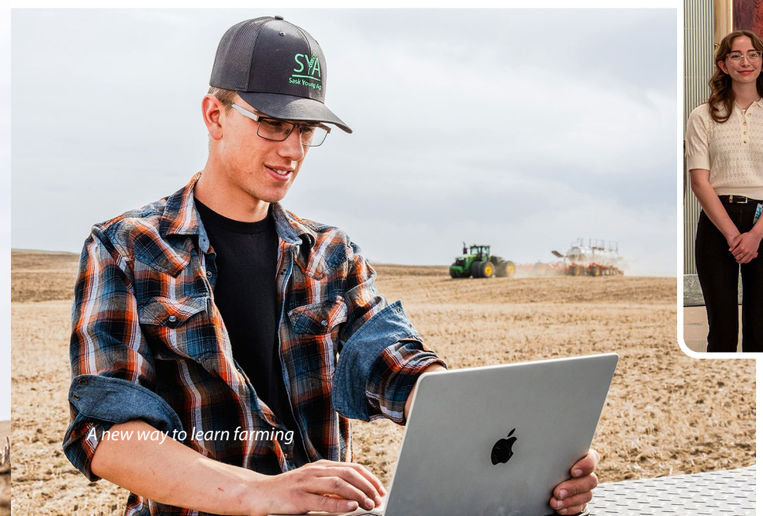


*Loading a truck with treated seeds*

### Would he recommend others to apply for the Agriculture Student Scholarship?

"100 percent, I think it's a great opportunity for students to get their ideas out there and be heard, whether it be by essay or video application," he said.

The Agriculture Student Scholarship is funded through the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a partnership between the Governments of Canada and Saskatchewan. ■



*A new way to learn farming*

### This year's Agriculture Student Scholarship Runners-up

In addition to the $6,000 grand prize scholarship, three recipients were awarded $3,000 each to further their agricultural knowledge at a post-secondary institution.

**Brianna Yung**

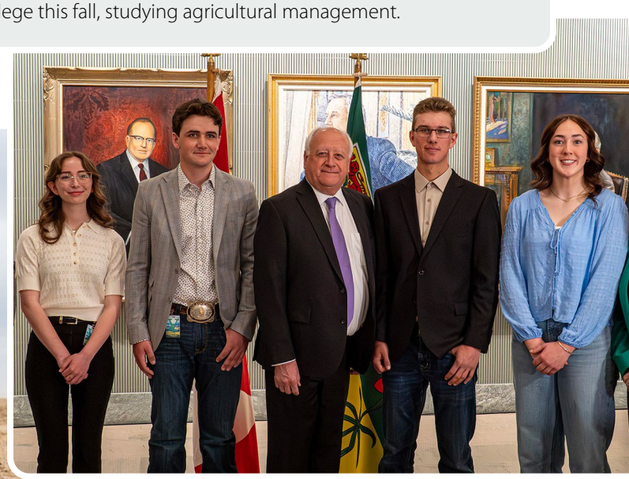
Brianna is from a grain farm near Bulyea. Brianna's essay highlighted labour challenges in Canada's agriculture sector. She suggested that strategic national action, public awareness and generational succession are essential to ensuring agriculture's continued success in Canada's economy. Brianna will be pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture at the College of Agriculture and Bioresources at the University of Saskatchewan in the fall.

**Marshall Mann**

Marshall is from a fourth-generation cattle ranch near Lloydminster. Marshall's essay focused on how to position Canada's beef industry to respond quickly to disease outbreaks and maintain international market access. Marshall will be attending the College of Agriculture and Bioresources at the University of Saskatchewan to pursue a Bachelor of Science degree.

**Eva Schafer**

Eva grew up on a farm near Makwa. Eva's essay talked about the gap between fast-moving on-farm innovation and public understanding, highlighting how innovation, research partnerships and transparent communication can strengthen credibility and demonstrate industry responsibility. Eva will be attending Olds College this fall, studying agricultural management.

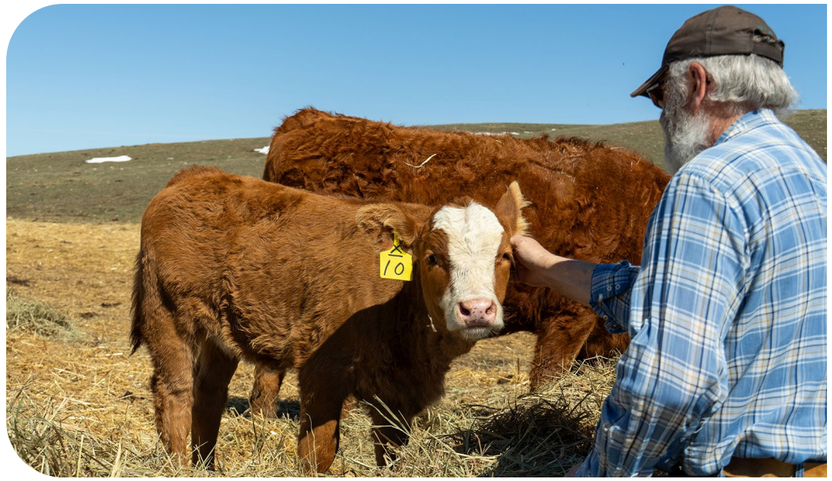


*From left: Brianna Yung, Marshall Mann, Minister Marit, Carson Green, Eva Schafer*

# Be on the Lookout for Lead Poisoning Risks

**By Jessica Colby, Communications Consultant, Regina**

**As producers turn their cattle out to pasture, it's important to be mindful of what the herd can access, from undesirable forages to waste that can harm herd health. Lead poisoning is a seasonal risk in Saskatchewan, with cases reported in cattle between May and July.**



*Check for lead risks before turning cattle out*

Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCVM) veterinary toxicologist Dr. Vanessa Cowan says the degree of poisoning can vary.

"There's a spectrum of clinical signs that can occur with lead poisoning," says Cowan. "Signs can range from tremors, seizures, profuse salivation, blindness to other neurological symptoms."

Other signs may include teeth grinding, wandering, head pressing or abnormal behaviour such as standing alone or in an unusual location, agitation or excessive, loud mooing.

Upon further examination by a veterinarian, cattle may have decreased movement of the rumen.

> "Calves are most commonly affected, specifically calves that are not yet weaned.

Cattle can be poisoned by lead through eating old shingles, paint from old buildings, batteries, or even ash from burn piles containing batteries. Cowan notes calves are most commonly affected, specifically calves that are not yet weaned.

"They are able to fit into places that the bigger cows cannot and absorb more lead into their system from their gastrointestinal tract than adults," she says.

In 2025, 13 herds in Saskatchewan tested positive for lead poisoning, and the first case has already been confirmed this spring.

There is no specific treatment for lead poisoning in cattle, so veterinarians typically treat them with supportive care, or in severe cases, the animal is humanely euthanized.

Cowan emphasizes that poisonings overall are uncommon; however, "in terms of the poisonings we do have, lead is the most common poisoning we see in cattle."

Cowan advises producers to remove any old equipment, buildings, waste piles or batteries on their properties or make sure cattle do not have access to them through fencing.

The WCVM is home to both the Disease Investigation Unit (DIU) and Prairie Diagnostic Services (PDS). PDS is the province's veterinary diagnostic laboratory and houses a toxicology section with a variety of tests available.

Diagnostics for lead poisoning are done by a whole blood test, collected by a veterinarian then sent off for testing at PDS.

The DIU is available to assist veterinarians in solving particularly difficult cases that do not already have a diagnosis. For cases they are involved in, the DIU staff work closely with the lead veterinarian and are involved extensively in the testing process on the farm. Funding is available through the Ministry of Agriculture for cases investigated by the DIU.

Additionally, staff at the Ministry of Agriculture's regional offices are available to provide information to producers and connect them with organizations that can help.

If you suspect lead poisoning in your herd, contact your veterinarian for further evaluation. Producers are also recommended to contact the Office of the Chief Veterinarian for advice.. ■

For more information on the **Disease Investigation Unit**, please visit *vmc.usask.ca/services/disease-investigations.php*.



# Looking to the Future of Weed Management

**By Paula Steckler, Senior Communications Consultant, Regina**

**Effective weed management is essential to agricultural productivity in Saskatchewan, where competition from invasive and herbicide-resistant weeds can significantly reduce yields, harvest efficiency, crop quality and farm profitability.**

Ongoing research plays a critical role in developing innovative, integrated weed management strategies.

The Governments of Saskatchewan and Canada invest in research projects through the Agriculture Development Fund and the Strategic Research Initiative (SRI) under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership. Building on this strong foundation of investment, there is a growing emphasis on targeted research in weed management, with projects aimed at understanding resistance patterns, improving integrated control strategies and developing practical tools that producers can adopt in their operations.

Dr. Shaun Sharpe, a Research Scientist at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Saskatoon Research and Development Centre, is one of the leading weed scientists in the Canadian prairies. His research focuses on new methods of weed management, specifically for herbicide-resistant weeds such as kochia and wild oats. In 2021, Dr. Sharpe received funding through the Agriculture Development Fund for a project focused on integrated pest management strategies for dealing with kochia patches in canola, wheat and pulse production.

"Kochia and wild oat are major problems for our growers. We are aiming to evaluate and provide new tools and approaches to help as many growers as possible in Saskatchewan and the Prairies manage issues caused by these weeds," says Dr. Sharpe.

> "I am excited to develop a decision support system to help growers see both the weeds and the resistance issues through the proverbial lens of a weed scientist.

To find new ways to manage kochia, Dr. Sharpe's team tested several physical control methods, such as mowing and covering the soil with different types of mulch, then examined how these approaches affect the soil over time. They found that if kochia is left unchecked, it can quickly get out of control, reaching extremely high plant numbers in a very small area.

Repeated mowing was very effective, reducing kochia by nearly 98 per cent when done multiple times each growing season. Spreading a thick layer of leftover crop material, like straw and chaff, also worked well, significantly reducing weed growth over several years. Plastic mulch completely stopped kochia from growing, since the plants could not push through it, but this approach is not practical for most large prairie farms.

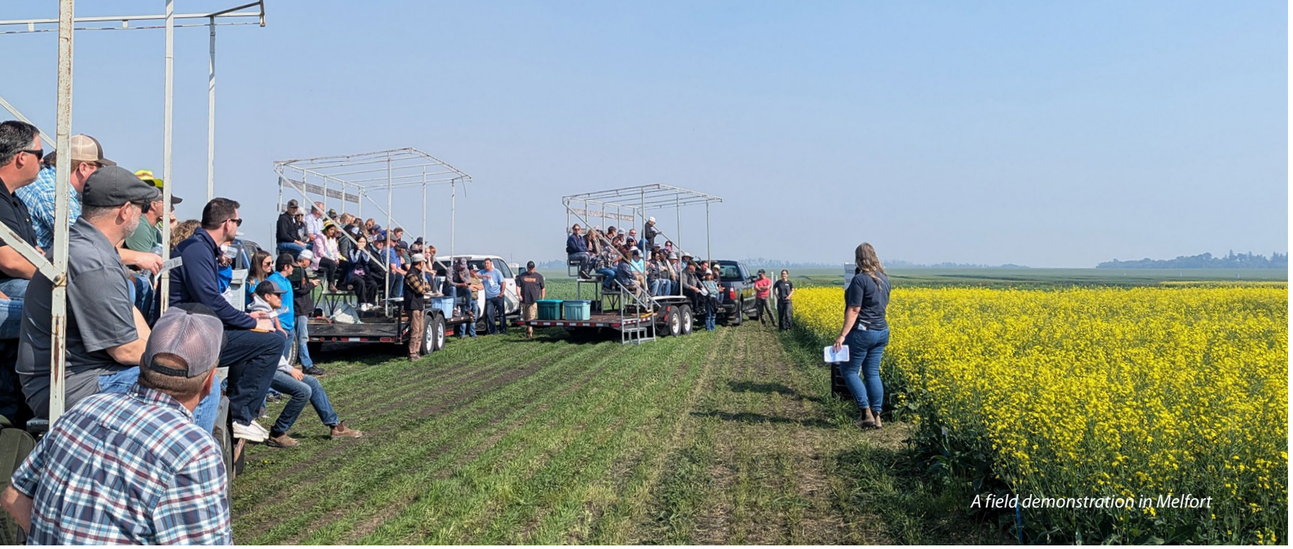
Coconut-based hydro-mulch showed promise at first, reducing kochia in the first year, but its performance dropped in later years and it failed to control other weeds. Greenhouse studies suggest this method works best when there's enough moisture to form a hard layer on the soil surface.

Importantly, the researchers found no harmful chemical buildup by kochia in the soil from these treatments. It means that once kochia is brought under control, the soil can recover and remain productive. Overall, the study highlights that while no single solution is perfect, a combination of physical control methods could help farmers better manage herbicide-resistant kochia.

*Students learning to rate herbicide injury on kochia in a greenhouse setting*

Dr. Sharpe is now leading a consortium of researchers to continue this research, with a new $2.5 million funding commitment through the SRI for the study of long-term management plans for herbicide-resistant kochia and wild oat. The SRI project explores whether planting perennial forages in low-performing areas can naturally suppress kochia, identifies the most cost-effective combinations of management tools for kochia and wild oat, and evaluates the long-term impact of crop rotation on weed management. Overall, the goal is to give farmers more effective, science-based strategies to reduce kochia and wild oat pressure and slow down herbicide resistance.

As Saskatchewan farmers continue to face growing pressure from herbicide-resistant weeds, recent research highlights the importance of staying ahead with adaptable solutions. While no single approach will solve the problem, combining practical field strategies with emerging technologies offers a more sustainable path forward. Continued investment in research ensures that producers have access to the knowledge and tools they need to protect their crops, manage costs, and maintain long-term productivity—helping to secure the future of agriculture in the province. ■



*A field demonstration in Melfort*

# Agri-ARM Opens Gates for Producer Field Days

**Dan Yates, Communications Consultant, Regina**

**Summer field tours offer producers a welcome break during the busy growing season and a chance to talk shop.**

They also provide opportunities to see new crop varieties, emerging practices and innovative research trials up close.

"Field days bring producers, agronomists, plant breeders, professors, researchers and commodity groups together in one place — and a lot of learning takes place," said Ishita Patel, Research Manager with the Northeast Agriculture Research Foundation (NARF) in Melfort, Sask. NARF is one of eight Agriculture Applied Research Management (Agri-ARM) sites in Saskatchewan hosting field days this summer.

Agri-ARM is a province-wide network of producer-directed applied research and demonstration organizations supported by the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership program, which is funded 60 per cent federally and 40 per cent provincially.

Representing diverse soil zones, each site tests, evaluates and demonstrates potential innovations, providing growers with unbiased, third-party information to help with decision-making.

"At field days, producers get access to scientists and experts, and it gives them an opportunity to ask questions and let scientists know what they would like to see in new varieties or the kind of research they would like done," said Patel.

"It's an informal environment and conversations flow easier than they do at formal meetings/events."

## Turning Insights Into Actions

At last year's Agri-ARM field days, organizers highlighted a wide range of research and demonstrations.

In Redvers, Sask., the South East Research Farm (SERF) conducted a winter cereal trial at a site with an established glyphosate-resistant kochia population, testing practices for the effective management of the weed — a significant challenge for southeast Saskatchewan producers.

"Winter triticale, fall rye and winter wheat all had substantially lower biomass of kochia at our site in 2025 compared with spring wheat," said Lana Shaw, Executive Director of SERF.

"This was also in an area with significant salinity, where normally kochia is king. Farmers should consider using winter cereals in rotation to manage glyphosate-resistant kochia, based on our results and observations."

At an Agri-ARM field day, producers can expect demonstrations examining opportunities across both major and minor crops.

Last year, NARF conducted trials of multiple brown- and yellow-seeded flax varieties from the University of Saskatchewan's Crop Development Centre. It was also one of six Agri-ARM locations contributing to a study on the impact of early seeding on flax maturity, yield and other performance metrics. In this study, 'early seeding' was as early in spring as possible for each site, which was around May 8, 2025. 'Delayed seeding' was 10-14 days later.

"We found that seeding early generally did not lead to hastened maturity of flax, and only one of the six sites in the trial (Yorkton) saw hastened maturity for the early-seed date, compared to the later seed date," said Patel.

"On the contrary, delayed seeding resulted in higher test weight of harvested flax at four of six sites, and hastened maturity at three of six sites.

"Seeding date did not seem to significantly affect flax yield at most sites, but yield at Melfort was significantly higher when seeding was delayed."

## What To Expect in 2026

Throughout July, Agri-ARM locations will welcome producers back as they showcase a range of trials and demonstrations. Depending on location, growers may see demonstrations exploring nutrient management, plant growth regulators, intercropping, root rot control and more, as well as performance trials in cereals, pulses, oilseeds and forages.

"The Agri-ARM network creates an opportunity for collaborative work across multiple soil and eco zones," said Shaw.

"(At our field day), attendees can subscribe to these projects for updates when the trials are completed. SERF prioritizes explaining our work in an engaging way, feeding people well and encouraging interaction." ■

For more information on **Agriculture Applied Research Management** (Agri-ARM) research, field days, or general information, please visit *agriarm.ca*.

**2026 Agri-ARM Field Days**

| Organization | Location | Date | Highlights | For More Information |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Western Applied Research Corporation** | Scott | July 8 | Pulse, oilseed, and cereal crop trials and agronomy, fertility management, disease considerations and more | *westernappliedresearch.com* |
| **South East Research Farm** | Redvers | July 9 | Cover crops, kochia control, intercropping, root rot control | *southeastresearchfarm.org* |
| **Irrigation Saskatchewan** | Outlook | July 9 | Sunflower, canary seed and faba bean demonstrations, plant growth regulators, saline-tolerant forages and more | *irrigationsask.com* |
| **Northeast Agriculture Research Foundation** | Melfort | July 15 (major crops)<br>July 16 (minor crops and practices) | Plant growth regulators, enhanced efficiency fertilizer, lodging management and more | *neag.ca* |
| **Wheatland Conservation Area** | Swift Current | July 16 | New mustard varieties, wheat, canola and pulse agronomy and more | *wheatlandconservation.ca* |
| **Indian Head Agricultural Research Foundation** | Indian Head | July 21 | Enhanced efficiency fertilizer, plant growth regulators, cereal and pulse agronomy and more | *iharf.ca* |
| **East Central Research Foundation** | Yorkton | July 28 | Forage intercropping, enhanced efficiency fertilizer, plant growth regulators and more | *ecrf.ca* |
| **Conservation Learning Centre** | Prince Albert | July 29 | Cereals and more | *saskclc.ca* |

# Enhanced Mental Health Services for Producers and Their Families

**Nicole Lamers, Public Trust Director, Regina**

**On the farm, stress can build quietly. A dry season, market uncertainties, long hours and the pressure of overseeing a farm business can weigh heavily over time.**

That is where SaskAgMatters Mental Health Network Inc. comes in. This producer-led non-profit understands the realities of life in agriculture first-hand and is passionate about helping.

As of April 2026, SaskAgMatters entered a partnership with the federal and provincial governments to provide coordinated mental health supports for Saskatchewan producers, their family members and their employees through the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership program.

We caught up with Alecia Weinheimer, Executive Director of SaskAgMatters, to find out about the services they provide and the need for mental health supports for producers in Saskatchewan.

### What services does SaskAgMatters provide?

SaskAgMatters manages the Farm Stress Line, a toll-free crisis support line available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The calls are answered by therapists trained in the realities of farm life. All calls are confidential.

They also offer counselling sessions for producers, their families and employees. Eligible individuals receive up to six free one-hour sessions annually with trained, registered mental health professionals who understand farm culture, some being producers themselves.

### Why is a service like the Farm Stress Line especially important in Saskatchewan?

The Farm Stress Line provides immediate access to support from therapists who understand the realities of agricultural life.

Producers face many unique stressors, including unpredictable weather, market volatility, input costs, financial pressure, long hours, isolation and the responsibility of caring for their families, employees, livestock and land. Producers need to know they are speaking with someone who recognizes the unique challenges they face and can offer support that is practical, relevant and compassionate.

A study of over 1,000 Canadian farmers found that about **35%** were experiencing depression, **58%** felt anxious, and **45%** felt high stress.

### Have you seen attitudes around mental health in agriculture begin to shift in recent years?

The stigma around mental health is still very real, especially in agriculture. For too long, producers felt they had to stay silent or carry their struggles alone. Mental health challenges are not a weakness. We need to keep building a culture where conversations about stress, burnout, anxiety and depression are treated with compassion and without stigma.

One of the most encouraging things is hearing directly from producers who contact us to share their stories or simply to thank us for the work being done. It gives all of us hope that attitudes are changing and that keeps us motivated to continue to grow SaskAgMatters.

### What message do you have for Saskatchewan producers or farm families who may be struggling?

You do not have to wait until you're overwhelmed to ask for help. Support is there, and you are not alone.

Your mental health matters just as much as your physical health or the success of your operation. Farming can be incredibly rewarding, but it can also be isolating and stressful. No one should feel they have to carry their struggles alone. Sometimes, talking with someone outside of your immediate circle provides perspective, comfort and guidance during difficult times.

SaskAgMatters offers counselling and support before things reach a crisis point. If you need someone to talk to, don't hesitate to schedule an appointment with one of our therapists. Managing stress early and having those conversations sooner can make a real difference to your mental health, your family and your overall wellbeing. ■

If you are in a crisis, feeling overwhelmed and need to talk immediately, contact the **Farm Stress Line** at 1-800-667-4442, anytime.

**Reach out**

Scan the QR code for the **SaskAgMatters** website.



# Downy Brome: A Growing Challenge for Pastures and Rangelands

**Brittany Compton, Communications Consultant, Regina**

**Downy brome, often called cheatgrass, is becoming an increasingly familiar problem in southwest Saskatchewan pastures and rangelands in areas with sandy soils.**

This invasive annual grass can quietly establish, spread rapidly and reduce forage productivity if left unmanaged.

"Most producers don't call about downy brome until it's already established on their land," says Trevor Lennox, range management extension specialist in the Ministry of Agriculture's Swift Current Office. "By then, it's built up a seed bank in the soil and is competing with the desirable plants."

Understanding how downy brome behaves, the impact it has on grazing land and the options to manage it are key to protecting pasture health and long-term carrying capacity.

As a winter annual, downy brome germinates in the fall, overwinters, then emerges in the spring, taking advantage of moisture before perennial grasses really get going. It grows fast and sets seed by late spring or early summer.

"On native pastures, it's usually the first plant to green up in spring," explains Lennox. "That's why it's important to know what you are looking for."

Downy brome has fine, drooping seed heads and soft, hairy leaves. Mature plants can be spotted from a distance due to their 'reddish' seed heads. Seeds are easily spread by wind, animals, hay, equipment and road traffic, allowing infestations to expand rapidly across fields, pastures and disturbed areas such as cattle trails and water sources.

The real issue with downy brome isn't just that it's a weed—it's that it steals moisture and nutrients from productive forage.

By using soil moisture early, it weakens perennial grasses before they even have a chance to grow.

Over time, this leads to thinner stands and less total forage. Many producers also see grazing problems as the season progresses. While livestock may nibble young downy brome, they tend to avoid it once seed develops.

Later in the season, mature plants offer minimal feed value and do little to support soil health due to shallow roots. Downy brome also increases fire risk, as its short life cycle makes it highly flammable. The problem is worsened in stressed pastures, where overgrazing, drought, soil disturbance and poor recovery reduce competition and allow it to thrive.

"If a pasture is short on cover or vigour, downy brome is quick to move in," notes Lennox. "Once established, downy brome builds up high levels of seed in the soil, making control more challenging."

Once a seed bank is built, infestations can keep reappearing even if conditions improve. Milder falls and earlier springs may also be helping it along, giving winter annuals a longer window to establish.

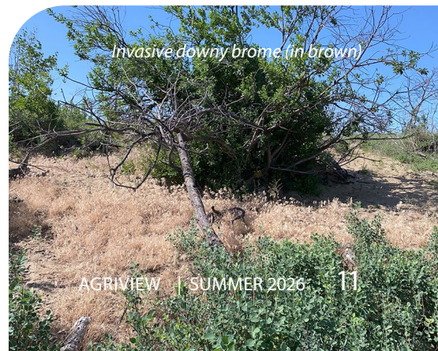
There's no silver bullet for downy brome, but producers can limit its impact by improving pasture management and using targeted control where it makes sense. Lennox offers the following advice:

- Scout pastures early. Check pastures in spring and fall to catch small patches that can be hand-picked, bagged and disposed of to prevent further spread.
- Maintain strong forage. Healthy perennial cover is the best defense; avoid overgrazing.
- Mow small infestations. If timed before seed set, mowing can reduce spread.
- Use herbicides carefully. There is a newly registered herbicide in Canada called 'Rejuvra', which is a soil-residual product that stops new seeds from germinating. It does not control existing plants but stops new plants from being established. Consult a range management extension specialist to ensure correct product choice and application.

The Crown Land Pasture Association Invasive Weed Program, available to Crown land pasture associations, funds herbicide application, coordinated weed control and related labour and equipment costs. To qualify, associations must have a recent rangeland health assessment or weed management plan developed by a professional agrologist (PAg). The weed management plan must be approved by a Ministry of Agriculture land management specialist before starting work. It can cover up to 80 per cent of costs, with a maximum of $50,000 for the 2026-27 and 2027-28 years, helping support effective, ongoing control efforts.

While downy brome is unlikely to immediately disappear, by combining good grazing practices, early detection and targeted control strategies, Saskatchewan producers can reduce the impact of downy brome and protect the productivity of their pastures and rangelands. ■

For more information, call the **Agriculture Knowledge Centre** at 1-866-457-2377.



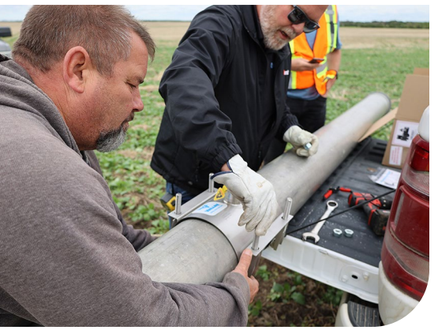
*Invasive downy brome (in brown)*

# Flexible Irrigation Water Use Policy

**Chad Glascock, Senior Communications Consultant, Water Security Agency**

## Using Water More Wisely

Water management is an increasingly important part of running a successful farm in Saskatchewan. As irrigation systems expand and producers look for ways to improve efficiency on every acre, the focus has shifted from how much water is available to how effectively it is used. That shift has drawn attention to new tools that allow farmers to better manage the water they already hold.



*Installation of electromagnetic flow meters*

One of those tools is the Flexible Irrigation Water Use Policy. Introduced by WSA, the policy gives producers more flexibility in how they apply their licensed water without increasing their maximum withdrawals from surface water. Rather than adding more water to the system, the approach emphasizes smarter, more adaptable water management at the farm level.

### Moving Beyond "One Size Fits All"

Traditionally, irrigation licences in Saskatchewan were based on applying a fixed depth of water over a set number of acres. While straightforward, that approach didn't always match what happens in the field. Soil types vary, crop rotations shift and growing season weather can change dramatically from one year to the next.

Under the flexible approach, licences are based on total water volume rather than a fixed amount per acre. That gives producers more control. If one field needs less water in a wet year or because of soil conditions, that unused volume can be applied elsewhere on the farm—if the operation stays within its total licensed allocation.

For many irrigators, this means better decision making in dry years, wet years, and everything in between.

### More Acres, Same Water

One of the most appealing features of the policy is the opportunity to irrigate more land using the same licensed water. By spreading water slightly thinner across fields, and refining on-farm water management, some producers can bring additional acres under irrigation without increasing total water use.

That added flexibility can support additional development of irrigation in areas where new allocation is no longer being issued.

### Accountability Built In

With greater flexibility comes greater responsibility. Producers participating in the policy must use modern water monitoring tools, such as flow meters with telemetry, and allow for remote access of water usage by WSA. These tools provide accurate, real time data that helps ensure water use remains within licensed limits.

The added oversight protects both the producer and the water resource, while also giving regulators a clearer picture of how irrigation water is being used on the ground.

### Carefully Targeted and Producer Driven

The flexible irrigation policy does not open the door to unlimited water use. It only applies in select areas where no new water allocations are available, and every application is reviewed on a case by case basis. Factors such as local water conditions, system capacity and environmental impacts all play a role in the assessment.

The policy also responds directly to producer demand. In many years, irrigators have not used their full allocation, creating opportunities to improve efficiency without increasing total licensed use.

### A Smarter Way Forward

Pilot projects in areas like the Saskatoon Southeast Water Supply System, Avonlea, and the Upper Qu'Appelle River watershed are helping test how technology and enhanced monitoring can support both productivity and sustainability.

At its core, the Flexible Irrigation Water Use Policy supports agricultural growth by enabling more irrigated acres, improved farm productivity, and economic growth while reinforcing good water stewardship through careful monitoring, responsible use and protection of Saskatchewan's limited water supplies. ■

For more information, visit *wsask.ca*.

The **Ministry of Agriculture** can assist producers in navigating the steps to start or expand an irrigation project on their land. Call 306-867-5500 or email *irrigation@gov.sk.ca*.



# Strychnine Stewardship Program Available for Eligible Producers

**Dan Yates, Communications Consultant, Regina**

**Producers in approximately 208 rural municipalities (RMs) across the province are eligible to participate in the Saskatchewan Strychnine Stewardship Program to support Richardson's ground squirrel (RGS) control.**

Through the program, producers can gain access to two per cent liquid strychnine for responsible control of RGS.

The program was launched this spring following the approval of an Emergency Use Registration (EUR) for strychnine by Canada's Pesticides Regulatory Directorate (formerly the Pest Management Regulatory Agency). The EUR is valid until November 1, 2027. To meet the requirements of the EUR, the Strychnine Stewardship Program emphasizes environmental protection, user accountability and integrated pest management (IPM), while permitting targeted strychnine use in areas with the most serious, production-damaging RGS infestations.

**If you farm in an eligible RM, you can take the following steps to purchase strychnine.**

### Step 1: Complete online training

A 90-minute online training course, available at *sarm.ca/strychnine-stewardship-training*, covers stewardship, best management practices and all EUR requirements.

Training is mandatory for all strychnine users and must be completed before the product can be purchased.

### Step 2: Submit the required form

Submit the mandatory Treatment Plan and Declaration Form, which is available at RM offices or *saskatchewan.ca/rgs-control*.

### Step 3: Purchase through your RM

Once the training and Treatment Plan and Declaration form are complete, you can purchase strychnine from the RM you identified when registering for training.

Strychnine is distributed among participating RMs with a per-producer cap to manage supply. While deliveries will be made to participating RMs throughout the summer, supplies will be limited. Check with your RM to determine availability.

### Step 4: Apply during eligible windows

Strychnine use is only recommended within the following application windows: prior to green up (March 1 to June 15) and late summer following dry down of green material (July 15 to September 1).

Once applied, monitoring is a key component of the Strychnine Stewardship Program. All users must monitor the application site for the presence of carcasses, unused bait and the species at risk at least daily for the first week after application and then weekly for another three weeks.

Additional monitoring may be required based on the species-at-risk assessment completed in the Treatment Plan and Declaration Form.

As part of the Strychnine Stewardship Program, unused strychnine must be returned to the RM office where it was purchased.

If all program requirements are not met, the Pesticides Regulatory Directorate may not grant additional EURs or full registration of strychnine in the future.

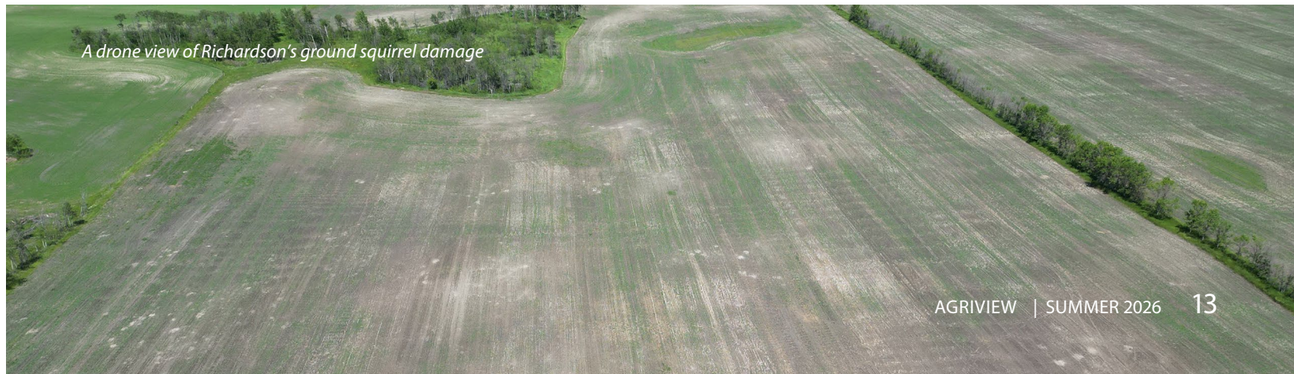
By following these steps, you reduce environmental risks, protect non target species and support integrated pest management. Your stewardship demonstrates responsible and transparent practices that help maintain access to effective, science based pest control.

### Alternative Control Methods

There are other rodenticides available for RGS management. They must be used at the right time and in the right way. They can be combined with other control methods to manage RGS populations in Saskatchewan. Suggested alternative chemical controls and integrated pest management strategies can be reviewed at *saskatchewan.ca/rgs-control*. ■

### Are you eligible for Saskatchewan's Strychnine Stewardship Program?

See eligible regions and participating RMs at *saskatchewan.ca/rgs-control*.



*A drone view of Richardson's ground squirrel damage*

# Evolving Wildlife Damage Claims to Meet Today's Farming Realities

**Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation**

**At SCIC, we continue to evolve alongside your operational needs by modernizing the administration of wildlife damage claims.**

By combining precision technology with personalized service, we are improving accuracy while reducing the amount of time you need to spend away from your operation. Our goal is to ensure wildlife damage assessments remain relevant, efficient and focused on what matters most to producers.

For 2026, we are committed to providing you with information sooner in our claims process, keeping you notified before and after your inspection. We know receiving timely damage maps helps you understand wildlife activity on your land. These maps provide a clear visual representation of where damage is occurring and the calculation of your claim. Based on ongoing producer feedback, we are streamlining timelines to share maps closer to the inspection date. These improvements are guided by practical experience and a clear focus on delivering exceptional service to producers.

SCIC is leveraging technology to enhance how we complete our existing wildlife damage claim process. If you notice wildlife damage in a standing crop, register your claim prior to harvest and identify the impacted Legal Land Descriptions (LLDs). From there, we complete the inspection. Wildlife damage assessed by drones no longer requires your presence on-site or the need to identify exact locations.

During the inspection, SCIC adjusters use drones to fly above your fields and capture hundreds of high-resolution images. The images are combined to create a complete aerial view of your land. This allows us to clearly identify damaged areas and wildlife activity patterns. Using artificial intelligence (AI), we analyze imagery to identify wildlife trails and beds, and calculate the total number of damaged acres. This approach improves consistency across claims and reduces subjectivity in assessments.

At the same time, we recognize the importance of balancing technology with human expertise. Our staff review and verify results to ensure an assessment process with technology, for accuracy and efficiency, along with accountable oversight.

Trails and beds are identified through imagery and AI analysis and are compensated as a 100 per cent loss. SCIC ensures trails and beds are clearly displayed on your final claim maps. This accounts for factors such as wildlife grazing and potential shattering that can occur along affected areas. When calculating damage, SCIC applies an increased trail width to your map. While wildlife trails are typically narrower, we use a standardized trail width of 1.35 feet in our calculations. This captures both trail formation and associated grazing activity.

All Saskatchewan producers who report farm income and expenses are eligible for up to 100 per cent compensation for eligible damage to crops caused by wildlife. There is no enrolment requirement and no premium. Compensation is available on eligible claims valued at $150 and over. The claims are based on the total number of damaged acres and the associated yield loss.

The yield is determined by the insurance coverage of the damage crop. For insured crops, yields are based on your Production Declaration. For uninsured crops, yields are determined using the annual average yield of insured acres in your area. Once harvest is complete and yields are finalized, SCIC calculates your claim and issues an initial payment.

Final wildlife prices are set later in the spring. At that point, the remaining portion is provided as the final payment. Your local SCIC office remains available to review your map, answer questions and support you throughout this process.

Ongoing feedback from you and industry groups supports continued refinement of the wildlife damage claims process. We remain committed to continuous improvement.

By strengthening our processes and investing in innovation, we continue to improve the delivery of our programs. A consistent focus on Saskatchewan farmers' realities helps ensure the Program remains relevant and responsive. ■

**Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation (SCIC)** is here to help protect your farm and ranch operations. For more information, contact your local SCIC office.



# Important Dates

| | |
|---|---|
| **June 30, 2026** | Deadline to submit your **AgriStability** previous year's program forms without penalty. |
| **July 8–August 8, 2026** | The **2026 Highway Hay Salvage and Ditch Mowing Program** is now active. |
| **July 21–23, 2026** | **AG in Motion** in Langham, SK offers an opportunity to engage with the ministry's extension specialists. |
| **July 29–30, 2026** | The **Saskatchewan Crop Diagnostic School** will be at the Wheatland Conservation Area Agri-ARM site in Swift Current. |
| **August 8–9, 2026** | **Saskatchewan Open Farm Days** returns across Saskatchewan. Tour farms near you, meet producers, and taste local food. |

Please visit our **Agriculture Events Calendar** on *saskatchewan.ca/agriculture* for more details on other upcoming events like field days and water testing blitzes in your region.

## 2026 Highway Hay Salvage and Ditch Mowing Program

**Active.** Until July 8 (inclusive), the landowner nearest the highway ditch has first right to cut or bale hay. After July 8, roadside haying is available on a first come, first served basis. Bales must be removed by August 8, or the Ministry of Highways may remove and dispose of them at their discretion.

Visit *saskatchewan.ca* and search up "Hay Salvage and Ditch Mowing" for more information.

## Ag in Motion

Ag in Motion, held each July near Langham, is Western Canada's largest outdoor farm expo, drawing 30,000+ visitors and 550 exhibitors.

See live field demonstration, from machinery and drones, to land levelling and crop plots, and connect with regional specialists.

Visit our booth for expert advice on crops, livestock, forage, and value-added production.


## Saskatchewan Crop Diagnostic School (CDS)

Sharpen your crop-scouting skills with this hands-on agronomy training. Hosted by the ministry with Agri-ARM, researchers, and commodity groups, it offers practical, in-field learning.

Register for the July 29–30, 2026 event at the Wheatland Conservation Area Agri-ARM site in Swift Current.

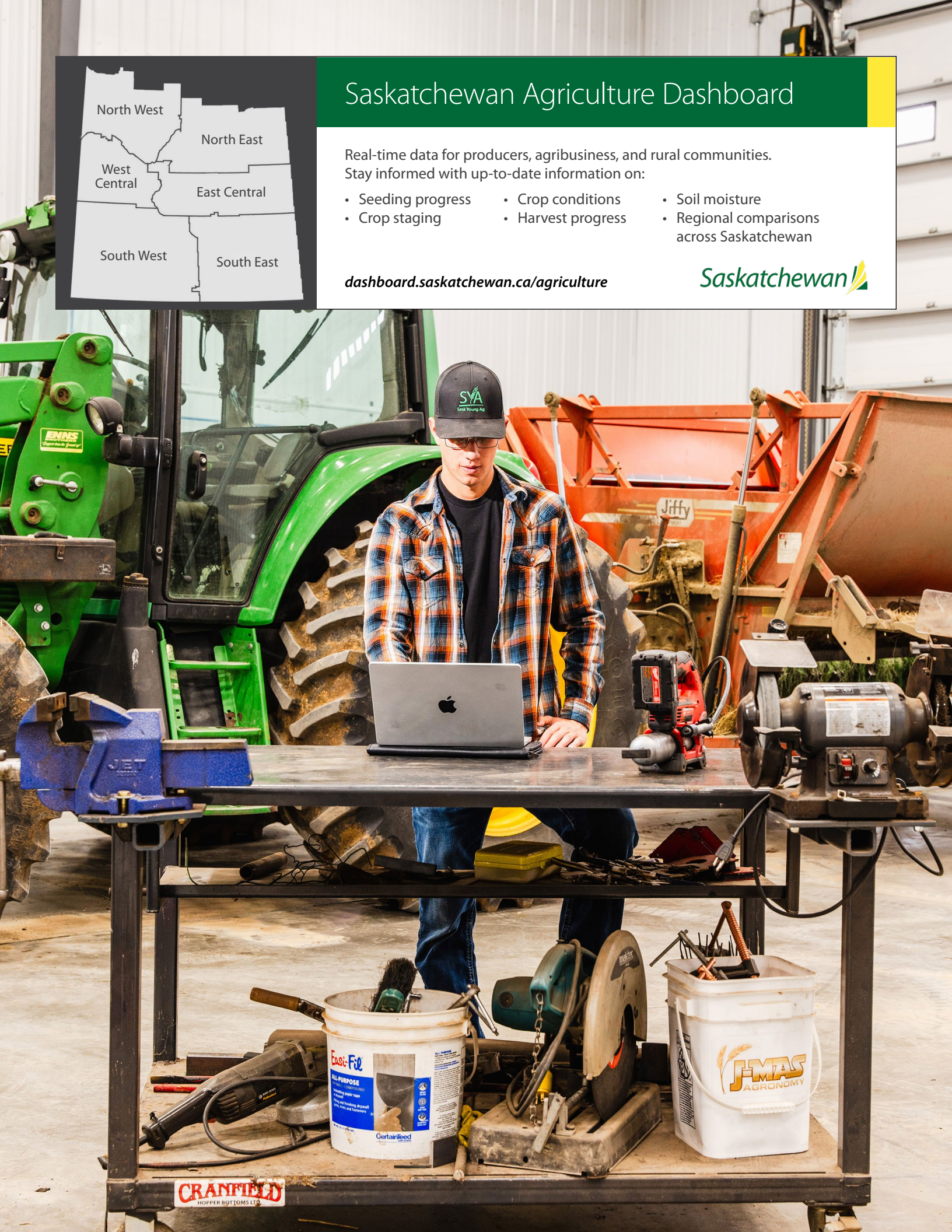
## Agriculture News & Updates

Subscribe to print and digital publications, including **Agriview+, Crop Production News**, **Agriview+** and other industry resources for producers, agribusinesses and rural communities.

Scan the QR code to visit the Publications Sign-Up page and select information that matters most to you.

## Testimonials

Scan the QR code to watch **2025 CDS Testimonials**.




# Saskatchewan Agriculture Dashboard

Real-time data for producers, agribusiness, and rural communities.
Stay informed with up-to-date information on:

- Seeding progress
- Crop staging
- Crop conditions
- Harvest progress
- Soil moisture
- Regional comparisons across Saskatchewan

***dashboard.saskatchewan.ca/agriculture***

Saskatchewan