

Community Preparedness



Thriving Through Dry Times: Saskatchewan's Agricultural Drought Preparedness Plan



Saskatchewan's drought preparedness approach is informed by the province's long experience with periodic dry conditions and moisture variability, particularly in agricultural regions. These conditions can affect crops and livestock production, water availability and the stability of rural economies. In response, the [Saskatchewan Agricultural Drought Preparedness Plan](#) provides a clear, co-ordinated approach for understanding current and future drought risks and guiding actions that help reduce both financial and environmental pressures over the long term.

The Saskatchewan Agricultural Drought Preparedness Plan is a cross-government effort supported by provincial ministries, federal partners, researchers and emergency management agencies. The framework defines the stages of drought based on moisture conditions and organizes staged responses with four core components: preparedness, monitoring, response and recovery. Each stage is linked to specific management actions to ensure a consistent and transparent response.

The plan incorporates annual preparedness actions, even during times when drought is not a concern. These actions focus on strengthening financial resilience through business risk management programs, promoting beneficial management practices, supporting water and soil conservation, expanding irrigation where appropriate and investing in applied research and extension services to provide producers with knowledge, practical tools and improved crop varieties that enhance resilience.

Monitoring is a critical component of Saskatchewan's drought preparedness approach. During the growing season, the Ministry of Agriculture publishes a weekly Crop Report providing updates on crop conditions and precipitation. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) also maintain the national Drought Watch platform to provide timely information on weather and climate trends relevant to the agricultural sector in Canada. Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation (SCIC) also monitors precipitation and temperature to support program management.

To support co-ordinated interpretation of these data, the Ministry of Agriculture convenes a moisture monitoring committee with partners from SCIC, the Water Security Agency and AAFC. This committee, along with a Drought Response Team, interprets current conditions and provides co-ordinated recommendations for programs, policy actions and extension services.

As conditions become drier, response and recovery efforts shift toward strengthening the financial resilience of producers and improving access to feed and grazing options. These measures are designed as last resort supports that complement broader preparedness work. When moisture conditions worsen, the ministry and SCIC may augment core Business Risk Management programs, expedite grazing permissions, or work with the federal government to assess conditions and consider designations under the federal Livestock Tax Deferral provision. In severe situations, the ministry may also request an [AgriRecovery](#) assessment to help offset extraordinary costs.

During these periods, agencies work together to process claims efficiently, provide fire risk information and escalate emergencies when needed. Extension services also increase drought-focused support through workshops, water testing, feed-ration guidance and targeted communication about available tools and resources. This includes information from the [Agriculture Knowledge Centre](#) and mental health support through the [Farm Stress Line](#), ensuring producers receive practical and personal support throughout periods of prolonged dryness.

Why It Matters

Drought is one of Saskatchewan's most economically significant natural hazards. Effective preparedness helps protect food production, safeguard water supplies and support the long-term stability of rural communities. Strong planning also reduces the risk of sudden losses for producers and helps ensure that support programs can respond quickly when needed.

The Saskatchewan Agricultural Drought Preparedness Plan helps ensure that drought response actions are timely, consistent and guided by the best available information. By strengthening co-ordination across agencies involved in water management, crop insurance, agricultural programming and rural support, the plan helps the province respond effectively to moisture stress and maintain essential agricultural services during challenging conditions. It also reinforces capacity for farms, communities and institutions to function under variable moisture levels by supporting food production, water security, responsible land stewardship and long-term economic stability. Through early planning, shared information and co-ordinated action, the Saskatchewan Agricultural Drought Preparedness Plan contributes to a resilient agricultural sector that can adapt to future environmental variability.

Links to Related Information

[Ministry of Agriculture's Crop Report](#)

[AAFC Weather and Drought Related to Agriculture](#)

[Canadian Drought Monitor](#)

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