

Economic Sustainability



Irrigation Expansion: Strengthening Food Systems and Economic Resilience



Saskatchewan is expanding irrigation to support a stronger and more adaptable agricultural sector. More than 105,000 new irrigation acres were developed between 2020 and 2025, improving the province's ability to handle weather variability and support diverse, high-value crop production. In 2024, the Government of Saskatchewan committed over \$19 million to help irrigation districts maintain and upgrade key infrastructure, ensuring systems remain dependable for the long term.

Improved irrigation allows producers to access consistent water supplies, grow a wider range of crops and maintain stable harvests during dry periods. These investments in irrigation networks create a foundation for long-term food security and more resilient rural communities.

Several initiatives support sustainable irrigation growth in Saskatchewan:

- The [Irrigation Rehabilitation Program](#) provides funding to eligible irrigation districts to repair and upgrade existing infrastructure. These improvements help maintain reliable water delivery systems, support long-term water management and strengthen sustainable agriculture across the province.
- The [Irrigation Development Program](#), offered through the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership, helped expand irrigation capacity by supporting the development of new water supply infrastructure for irrigable land. Due to high uptake from producers, the program closed to new applications in May 2025.
- The [Lake Diefenbaker Irrigation Projects](#) consist of three projects: the Westside Rehabilitation, the Westside Expansion and the Qu'Appelle South Water Conveyance. When completed, these expansion projects have the potential to add 500,000 acres of irrigation in Saskatchewan.
- **Research, Demonstration and Stewardship** work helps ensure that irrigation practices support strong production while protecting the province's land and water resources. Developing an irrigation project can involve up to 15 pieces of legislation and input from 11 public and private organizations, depending on the project's complexity. This co-ordinated approach helps maximize the public benefit of the lands and water allocated for irrigation use while fostering responsible use of resources. Since 2020, over \$3 million has been invested in agronomic research and demonstration projects to better understand how different crops perform under irrigation in Saskatchewan.

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Why It Matters

Sustainable irrigation development provides production security and the opportunity to grow diverse, high-value crops. This enhances on-farm profitability, value-added processing opportunities, business attraction and employment. Irrigation boosts provincial revenues and gross domestic product, benefitting all of Saskatchewan.

Links to Related Information

[Water Security Agency – Irrigation and Economic Development](#)

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