

**Development of a Forage and Amenity Seed Check-off for Saskatchewan
CARDS Project Number S360
Final Report**

Submitted to:

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**Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development in Saskatchewan
(CARDS) Program**

Final Report (to March 31, 2006)

Project Title: **Development of a Forage and Amenity Seed Check-off for Saskatchewan - CARDS Project Number S360**

Client: Saskatchewan Forage Council (Client #C333)

Background and Project Objectives

The objective of this project involves developing the framework of the Saskatchewan Forage Seed Development Commission (SFSDC). The commission will consist of two part-time staff and a board of directors consisting of forage seed producers, the seed trade, provincial research personnel, and Saskatchewan government liaisons. The SFSDC will be responsible for the forage seed check-off, its administration, and coordinate research and extension activities with this producer money.

Project Description

Activities to be completed under this project include:

1. Development & Distribution of Program Information – development of a brochure, bylaws, and other administration requirements of the Agri-Food Council of Saskatchewan.
2. Conference Calls – keeping the board updated of activities and of their responsibilities.
3. Levy Form Development, Printing & Distribution– seed buyers are required to submit levy forms on a regular basis and these have to be developed. Producers must also be made aware of their responsibilities. Levy forms will be mailed and discussed with the seed buyers of the province.
4. Program & Data Entry – includes the development of databases (including both seed buyer and grower information) and reporting requirements. Assistance has been offered from other similar producer boards and commissions.
5. Travel – the CARDS Executive Committee approved a request on Aug. 5, 2005 to re-profile \$800.00 from the previously approved category of “Development and Distribution of Program Information”. Travel expenditures will be related to one-on-one visits with seed processors and buyers to distribute program information.

Results and Conclusions

The regulations for the Saskatchewan Forage Seed Development Commission (SFSDC), defining the forage and amenity seed check-off for Saskatchewan, were officially approved and enacted by provincial Cabinet on June 28, 2005. Implementation of the forage seed check-off began effective July 1, 2005. The SPSDC has become fully operational and has established a head office (Melfort) and has hired an Executive Director (Phil Curry). All forage seed buyers/processors of Saskatchewan forage seed

have been contacted and have been registered with the Commission. Levies have been submitted by the buyers/processors during the past nine months.

All activities outlined above have been completed.

1. The SFSDC has developed a brochure and has met all administrative requirements of the Agri-Food Council of Saskatchewan. This has included review and adoption of the Forage Seed Development Plan Regulations. The SFSDC continues to work with the Council on review of any proposed changes to the amendments.
2. Several conference calls and informational meetings were held to deal with SFSDC business during the period. This included an informational meeting on April 14, 2005 in Nipawin and the annual meeting on December 13, 2005 in Tisdale.
3. All required levy forms have been printed and distributed to all registered seed buyers/processors.
4. The SFSDC data base has been developed by Art Westlund and Phil Curry. It includes all registered buyers and processors, seed producers, levies and refunds, and quantities and value of Saskatchewan forage seed species purchased.
5. All purchasers/processors of Saskatchewan forage seed have been contacted and personal visits by the Executive Director have been made to most of them.

Reach

- A) The primary target of this project is agricultural producers, specifically the forage seed industry. Forage seed processors and buyers are included in this group by association.
- B) The total number of primary forage seed producers reached by this project is unknown, but on twelve different occasions and in public documents, the information about the development commission was available. Some producers, particularly in the northeast, would have been bombarded with information, but not all. It is estimated that at least 500 forage seed growers would have heard about the proposal.

Project Impact

- A) This project was critical in addressing a fundamental part of the forage industry in Saskatchewan (i.e. the forage seed industry). It is within the mandate of the Saskatchewan Forage Council (SFC) to address all aspects of the forage industry and through the stewardship of the SFC, the Saskatchewan Forage Seed Development Commission (SFSDC) was successfully established. Forage seed producers now have a check-off in place where producer money will be directed to current research priorities.
- B) A short-term impact that will be derived from the SFSDC check-off is to improve business practices of both producers and seed buyers and processors. By having producer-directed research address their most important agronomic needs, they should be able to produce optimum yields with seed quality that will allow them

to access any market in the world. A long-term impact is that Saskatchewan forage seed producers will be responding to emerging opportunities. Forage seed companies work with Canadian companies to multiply their proprietary varieties. This offers a guaranteed export market, with often higher returns than annual crop production, if we can produce to their quality standards.

Communications

An informational brochure (see copy attached) was developed and made available to all forage seed producers through the various seed buyers/processors in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Two informational meetings were held throughout the year, including the annual meeting in December. At this meeting, several speakers spoke to producers on forage seed fertility. In addition, several press releases and media articles were produced during the period. This included a press release announcing the establishment of the new commission, a newspaper article for the Western Producer and several radio interviews (CJGX Yorkton and CJVR Melfort).

Evaluation

The project will be evaluated by the success of the Saskatchewan Forage Seed Development Commission in registering producers, collection of levies, and development of research priorities for the industry. This is a voluntary checkoff and we can judge the success of the proposal by the amount of refund requests and their reasons for the requests. To date, there have been a relatively low number of producers that have requested refunds of their levies. The major reasons cited for this are the poor cash flow and low income situations that most producers are facing in 2006.

Recommendations for Further Development

There is a continuing need to identify forage seed species and varieties that can be grown in Saskatchewan that will provide a reasonable rate of return for producers. We need to continue to evaluate and demonstrate new species and proprietary varieties under Saskatchewan conditions – species and varieties for which there is a current market demand. Finally, there is a need for producers to develop and improve their agronomic techniques for growing all forage seed, as there is always a premium paid for producing quality seed.

Please refer to the CARDS S313 Final Project Report “Development of a Forage and Amenity Seed Check-off in Saskatchewan” (June 30, 2004) to help address specific questions about the project and its activities.

Statement of Expenditures

Table 1 – Expenses by Current Reporting Period

The following table has been included to report budgeted and year to date amounts.

Reporting Period: to March 31, 2006

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Activity Eligible Expense	CARDS Code	Expenditures (current)	Budget Amount	Year to Date Amount
1. Develop/Distribute Program Information	1.0	\$0	\$500.00	\$477.40
2. Conference Calls	2.0	\$0	\$800.00	\$0
3. Development/Printing/Distribution of Levy Forms	3.0	\$0	\$1900.00	\$895.68
4. Program & Data Entry	4.0	\$3001.51	\$4000.00	\$4176.76
5. Travel	5.0	\$0	\$800.00	\$429.24
TOTAL		\$3001.51	\$8000.00	\$5979.08

Note: 50% of GST submitted as statement of expenditures.

Eligible CARDS Expenses for Period Ending March 31, 2006

4.0 Program & Data Entry	
Art Westlund – Invoice #02-06 SFSDC (Paid February 28, 2006 – cheque #1253)	\$1992.38
Philip Curry – Invoice No.2 (SFC-06) (Paid March 31, 2006 – cheque #1258)	<u>\$1009.13</u>
Total Eligible Expenses	\$3001.51
70% CARDS reimbursement	\$2101.06

See attached invoices for eligible expenses within each category

Janice Bruynooghe
SFC Executive Director