



COMMUNITY PASTURE PATRONS ASSOCIATION OF SASKATCHEWAN
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NEWS RELEASE

“Patron frustration and uncertainty grows as imposed deadline passes”

Endless meetings through the busy season, hours of hard work, out of pocket money, lawyer and accountant bills, and the government’s inability to meet their own stated deadlines have all been sources of frustration for the patrons of the first ten pastures. However, the recent government announcement that federal lands in these pastures remain tied up in a Federal asset disposition process has driven that frustration to a boil.

From the beginning Patrons of the 1st ten pastures have been put under pressure to meet Government deadlines and pave the path for 52 pastures to follow. As set out by the Government, December 1st, 2013 was the deadline set for the 1st five pastures to be transitioned. Patrons were told they must have a grazing association formed, a solid business plan produced, and be ready to sign on the dotted line in order to lease their individual pasture. December 1st has come and gone and Patron groups are still waiting to receive an official lease agreement for review. This agreement is necessary to take back to the patron group for discussion and to understand the risks which will be taken on by patron groups.

Minister Stewart has stated clearly in many contexts that he remains committed to patrons and a successful transition of the pastures to patrons.

CPPAS, in consultation with member pastures scheduled to transition this year developed a set of objectives which outlines what a successful transition should involve. These objectives are outlined below:

1. Maximize the number of existing pasture patrons who are able to continue receiving summer grazing on the Community Pastures.
2. Ensure that the community pastures remain financially sustainable in the long run, in order to provide supplemental grazing on an equitable basis to Saskatchewan livestock producers.
3. Ensure that our community pasture’s productive capacity is maintained by effectively managing stocking rates and grazing plans, using professional pasture managers.
4. Retain the public benefit of our community pasture by maintaining the environmental integrity and bio-diversity of our community pasture, as well as maximizing the carbon sequestration potential through effective grazing management.
5. Allow continued access for non-agricultural activities on our community pasture such as hunting and grassland research, in a matter compatible with the grazing management plan for the community pasture.

These objectives , we believe, are consistent with the government’s stated policy objectives. However, to meet these broad objectives, CPPAS membership believes that the government needs to change the financial and risk terms being proposed to patrons. Specifically, we are asking the following:

1. Patrons must have assurances that the federal lands will be available for a significant, defined time period.

2. The purchase of the bulls must be subject to a breeding soundness test in the spring as is generally accepted procedure in the cattle business.
3. In recognition that the public benefits are being sustained, lease and land costs must be reduced from those initially proposed.
4. In recognition of the tremendous uncertainty placed upon patrons, lease payments need to be based on use rather than preset grazing capacity. The PFRA was unable to keep these pastures full and with increased costs and an ever decreasing time frame, patron groups will struggle to fill the pastures in the transition period.
5. Government money which was announced for transitions needs to be more flexible to allow patron groups to use the funds more generally in the business transition process.

“We wrote to the Federal Minister months ago and outlined the issues which would necessitate a delay. Those issues remain unresolved. It is now critical that an interim solution be developed in consultation with patrons and the two levels of government. If we fail to solve the short term issues, the long term viability of our patron grazing associations will be threatened by short term transition issues.” said Ian McCreary chair of CPPAS.

The CPPAS proposal represents a constructive, public-private partnership between patrons, the Ministry and other users and beneficiaries of a healthy, sustainable community pasture designed to achieve a number of key objectives.

The fully prepared proposal document is now available and may be viewed on the CPPAS website at: www.cppas.co .

CPPAS is an association of Patrons working together to attain sustainable community pastures and promote viable grassland stewardship.

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