



# 10th Annual Irrigation Conference

Irrigation is at a pivot point in Saskatchewan.

This province has untapped water resources adjacent to irrigable land, a rare combination on this continent today, and we have the unique opportunity of developing responsible, sustainable plans for its use.

The Action Committee on the Rural Economy and the Saskatchewan Irrigation Projects Association (SIPA) agree that this province should develop its irrigation potential. Major expansion feasibility studies are being funded under the Canada Saskatchewan Water Supply Expansion Program, and results will be available early in 2006.

Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food is developing a provincial irrigation strategy. The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority is preparing a Water Conservation Plan for Saskatchewan; Saskatchewan Agrivision Corporation Inc. has developed a 50 Year Plan for Water in Saskatchewan; and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada is investigating a national irrigation strategy.

Ten years ago, irrigators from across Saskatchewan came together for the first time. From that event, two producer organizations have emerged and matured - SIPA and the Irrigation Crop Diversification Corporation (ICDC). SIPA has promoted irrigation and is tackling irrigation policy issues such as infill,

irrigation awareness, power rates for irrigators and crop insurance. The ICDC runs an effective R&D program, including work on alfalfa, corn, timothy, beans, crop varieties for irrigation, cereal silage, pocket gopher control, irrigation education opportunities and the joint SIPA/ICDC website [www.irrigationsaskatchewan.com](http://www.irrigationsaskatchewan.com). SAF supplies ICDC with irrigation agronomists to implement this R&D program.

Both SIPA and ICDC are accountable to their producers.

The 10th Annual SIPA / ICDC Irrigation Conference is the forum for that accountability, interaction, formulation of policy and programs, and just plain visiting with each other. This year's agenda includes an update on the International Joint Commission task force on the St. Mary and Milk River systems, which could impact irrigators in South West Saskatchewan. It also includes updates on the irrigation development and water conservation initiatives by both federal and provincial government agencies.

The 10th Annual SIPA/ICDC Irrigation Conference will be held in Swift Current on December 5 and 6.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

- call Sandra Bathgate of SIPA at (306) 796-4420.



## SEED POTATO GROWERS MEETING

The Saskatchewan Seed Potato Growers Association will hold their Annual Meeting and Trade Show, in conjunction with the 34th Western Potato Council Meetings, on November 29, 30 and December 1, 2005.

The conference will be held at the Saskatoon Travelodge and will feature local experts, as well as speakers from as far away as Prince Edward Island. Registration is \$150.00 for members and \$175.00 for non-members, and includes all meals.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

- Call Linda Sinclair, SSPGA, at (306) 867-2078; or
- call Connie Achtymichuk, SAF, at (306) 787-2755.



## FARM STRESS LINE



Saskatchewan farm families and rural communities have faced many challenges over the years.

In the face of crises or challenges, farm families have persevered by making changes and adapting to new situations. This usually means making a tough decision; which can alter one's course in life.

The Farm Stress Line, established in 1992, can assist with these decisions. Farm Stress Line counsellors are fully aware of the impact that crises have on behaviour, thinking and emotions, and how crises can affect family relationships. All of the Farm Stress Line counsellors have faced challenges and made choices. This life experience, in addition to training in counselling skills, is the basis of the

Farm Stress Line's farmer-to-farmer, rural-person-to-rural-person telephone support and information service.

Farm Stress Line counsellors work from the perspective that farm people want to solve their own problems. This perspective dominates the interaction between the caller and the counsellor. Sometimes, the people who call the Farm Stress Line feel that they don't have power over their own situation or circumstance. The role of the Farm Stress Line is to strive to empower people by providing current information and knowledge, which supports the decision making process.

By contacting the Farm Stress Line or CONNECTIONS toll-free numbers, farm families have been able to discuss their situation in the strictest of confidence. Counsellors and farm families can explore options, and the counsellors will offer information and referrals to agencies and services that can provide one-on-one support and professional advice.

Another essential component of the Farm Stress Line is an electronic database called the CONNECTIONS Services Directory. This can be accessed by calling toll-free 1-866-680-0006, or by visiting [www.agr.gov.sk.ca/connections](http://www.agr.gov.sk.ca/connections).

The information available includes federal and provincial government programs, and a wide range of community-based services throughout Saskatchewan.

The Farm Stress Unit staff serve as resources for workshops and deliver presentations on topics related to the Farm Stress Line service. Topics include Neighbours Helping Neighbours, Communication Skills, Stress Management, and Farm Transfer: Getting the Discussion Started.

The Farm Stress Line has also produced an information kit called Farming and Ranching in Difficult Times, which includes information sheets on topics common to callers' concerns, including debt-resolution issues, and stress- and relationship-related subjects.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

- call the Farm Stress Line toll-free at 1-800-667-4442;
- call Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food's Inquiry Line and the CONNECTIONS Services Directory toll free at 1-866-680-0006 or at (306) 787-5140; or
- visit [www.agr.gov.sk.ca](http://www.agr.gov.sk.ca) and select Economics and Farm Management | Human Resource Management.





# B.Y.O.B. (Build Your Own Business) seminars planned

If you are one of those people who have always dreamed about building your own business, but have done nothing about it, your procrastination could be seriously undermined by a one-day seminar planned for Watrous, Humboldt and Rosthern.

The Build Your Own Business seminar promises to be an exciting event and a day full of opportunity. Speakers will encourage you to think outside the box, to think about your prospects and how you might recognize the business opportunity that is right for you, your family and your community.

Seminar speakers will draw on their own personal and professional experiences to encourage participants to think about the opportunities that lie around untapped, and to take up the exciting challenges of small business ownership.

Sessions that follow during the seminar day will build on each other by focussing on what comes next. Speakers will address what critical points need to be acted upon to ensure the opportunity selected has the best possible chance of success as a thriving, sustainable business. The

importance of knowing the marketplace for an opportunity, and how to access that market, is a critical element of this process.

Luncheon speakers will focus on the host community and describe recent local activities regarding business development.

In the afternoon sessions, participants will have the chance to hear from people just like themselves who have already developed a successful agri-business opportunity. These entrepreneurs will identify how the process worked for them, some of the most critical issues they faced when developing their business, and how they dealt with those issues to remain successful in pursuit of their business opportunity.

As well, seminar participants will hear from the local Regional Economic Development Authority, Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food's Agri-Business development consultants, Sagehill Development Corporation, and staff from the Canadian Agricultural Skills Services (CASS) program. These event partners will identify for the audience what their individual organizations do, with emphasis on how they

can help seminar participants move their business opportunity forward.

The seminar will close with a "call to action" speech from agricultural commentator Kevin Hursh, who will inspire you to trust in the fact that, given the right opportunity, the right timing, and the proper help, you too can follow your dreams and build your own business.

Date:	Town:	Location:
Jan. 18/06	Humboldt	Bella Vista Hotel
Jan. 25/06	Watrous	Watrous Community Centre
Feb. 1/06	Rosthern	Catholic Church Hall

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

- call Ron Monette, Agri-Business Development Specialist at (306) 933-6128;
- call Curtis Krawetz of the Saskatoon REDA at (306) 664-0726;
- call Edie Spagrud of the Carlton Trail REDA in Humboldt at (306) 682-2631; or
- call Mark Knutilla of the Long Lake REDA in Watrous at (306) 946-3011.



## FOOD INDUSTRY SEMINAR HELD IN SASKATOON

More than 70 food industry members attended the Natural Ingredients, Packaging and Processes seminar September 20th in Saskatoon. The Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Centre seminar focused on a key trend in the global food industry - health and wellness.

The seminar featured speakers from across Canada. Kathryn Cooper from the Guelph Food Technology Centre identified increasing consumer trends toward healthier food choices. Dr. Fereidoon Shahidi of Memorial University in Newfoundland presented natural alternatives to food additives and preservatives, and labeling consultant Rob Noble spoke about the details of labeling natural foods. Bill Stewart of Canadian Ingredients Sales Inc. presented on chemical and carcinogen-free natural smoke vapours that enhance the flavour of meat and other food products. Dr. Jonathon Curtis of Ocean Nutrition Canada discussed the benefits of omega-3 fatty acids and described cutting-edge technology that sets his company apart from competitors.



Kathryn Cooper - Guelph Food Technology Centre

On the packaging side, Michael Olejnik of BI-AX International identified a significant opportunity for Saskatchewan in natural packaging made from starch-based products such as corn, lentils or potatoes.

"The seminar was a big success," Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food Senior Food Scientist Shika Agblor said. "Everyone in attendance learned something new."

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

- contact Shika Agblor, Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food, at (306) 933-5769.

## ORGANIC EVENTS

**Organic Matters:** November 12 and 13, 2005 in Brandon, Manitoba. This conference will focus on healthy soils, healthy lifestyles and a positive vision for food and farming in the future. For more information, call (204) 299-6614 or (306) 878-8816.

**Northeast Food Charter Forum and Feast:** November 15, 2005 in Tisdale. This informational meeting will focus on encouraging producers and consumers to grow and buy locally produced food. For more information, call (306) 752-6310 or (306) 878-8816.

**Organic Crop Improvement Association (OCIA) Chapter #2 Meeting:** November 12, 2005 in Maymont. For more information, call (306) 825-7584.

**OCIA Chapter #5 Meeting:** November 17, 2005 in Marysburg. For more information, call (306) 327-4753.

**Annual Organic Update:** February 15 and 16, 2006 in Bruno. This event will focus on the production, marketing and further processing of your farm products.

**OCIA Annual General Meeting:** February 19 to 23, 2006 in La Crosse, Wisconsin. This event is an annual general meeting for all OCIA chapters. For more information, call (306) 878-8816.





# Ranchers grow their business, protect the environment

**B**ruce and Patti Chern have been busy since making the move from Smoky Lake, Alberta to Stockholm Saskatchewan about two years ago. In that time, they've converted nearly 2,300 acres from grain production to ranch land and put in more than 110 kilometres of fencing – that's enough to get them nearly halfway to Regina!

The Cherns manage Golden View Ranch, a 500 cow operation nestled alongside the Qu'Appelle Valley, just south of town. They're also concerned environmental stewards.

"The two concepts fit together quite nicely," explains Patti. "We want to make sure we leave our land in better condition than when we got it. At the same time, environmental sustainability fits into our marketing plan."

That's where Saskatchewan's Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) program comes in. Environmental Farm Planning is a voluntary and confidential process used by farm managers to identify the environmental strengths and risks to their operations, and to develop a plan to reduce the risks.

The Cherns participated in their first EFP workshop in early 2005. At that time, they were introduced to the EFP workbook, which guided them through assessing soil and site characteristics of their operations.

"The workbook seemed a little intimidating at first because it's pretty big, but once we got going, it wasn't that bad – and it provided a wealth of excellent information that we couldn't otherwise have found in one place," explains Patti. "The process is very straightforward. You start with some reading

on a specific topic, then answer a few questions about your operation.

"Altogether, it took about 16 hours to get through the workbook. The kids thought it was kind of fun that Mom and Dad had homework to do each night!"

In the process, the Cherns also discovered that, in many areas, they're already on the right track. "Much of the assessment process is just common sense," said Patti. "It affirmed to us that many of the things we've been doing all along have been the right things to do."

Once they finished their "homework," the Cherns attended the second EFP workshop, where they finalized an action plan to address any risks identified in the assessment process. The action plan was then submitted to a peer review committee for confidential review.

Now, with an endorsed action plan in hand, the Cherns are eligible to apply for financial incentives to carry out tasks identified in the plan. They hope to have completed the first of those tasks within a year.

All in all, the Cherns believe the process has been well worth it.

"Doing an EFP has given us a level of environmental awareness that we didn't have before," says Patti. "Not only has it shown us



Bruce and Patti Chern manage Golden View Ranch, near Stockholm.

where we need to do things differently, but it also provides options in those cases. We've also had the opportunity to utilize what we've learned to help a friend solve an issue on his ranch."

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Visit [www.agr.gov.sk.ca](http://www.agr.gov.sk.ca), click on the Agricultural Policy Framework badge on the right side of the page, then click Environment;
- Visit PCAB's website at [www.saskpcab.com](http://www.saskpcab.com) and click on EFP Program; or
- Visit the AAFC website at [www.agr.gc.ca](http://www.agr.gc.ca) and click on [APF Home | Environment](#).

## ENVIRONMENTAL GUIDELINES FOR ON-FARM PESTICIDE STORAGE FACILITIES



**P**roper storage of pesticides on the farm is an important aspect of risk management. The trend towards increasing farm size and more intensive farming systems has increased the need for on-farm pesticide storage facilities. Regardless of farm size, any time chemical is stored on site, security risks increase, along with risks to the environment and human safety.

This increased risk underscores the need for properly designed and sited chemical storage facilities.

On-farm pesticide storage may take many forms: newly constructed buildings or compartments, renovated existing buildings and containers. Your own budget will dictate what solution works best on your farm. As you set up a pesticide storage facility, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is the storage structure to be used as a single use facility? Utilizing the building for storage of other farm inputs or equipment or as a maintenance facility can defeat the purpose of a pesticide storage facility. As a safety precaution, you should not store food, feed, fertilizer or livestock medication with pesticides.
- Can you access running water near the site in the event of a spill? Water is the most suitable means for personal decontamination at or near the storage area.
- Can I lock the container or shed?
- Do I have protective clothing, a first aid kit and a respirator, all appropriate to the pesticide stored, available at all times? Is the equipment properly maintained and working?
- Can the flooring contain spills or leaks? Is there a floor drain or catch basin, and where does any material go that enters the floor drain?
- Can the floor be readily cleaned and decontaminated of pesticides?
- Is there adequate ventilation to prevent the accumulation of toxic or flammable vapours?

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## UPDATE ON WTO NEGOTIATIONS



The last significant achievement in the current World Trade Organization (WTO) agriculture negotiations came at the end of July 2004 with the Framework agreement.

The Framework agreement provides the outline that a "modalities text" will be based on. The modalities text will define the formulas that will be used for tariff and subsidy reduction commitments. Negotiators hope to reach an agreement at the December 2005 Ministerial meeting, to be held in Hong Kong.

The next phase in the negotiations will focus on bilateral offers and concessions. Countries will discuss areas in which they would like to see concessions made by trading partners and identify areas where they can make concessions. It is hoped that a final agreement will be achieved in late 2006 or early 2007.

Since the Framework agreement was reached, progress has been slow, with negotiations essentially stalled on two issues.

The first issue surrounds attempts by U.S. negotiators to change the definitions for the subsidy categories so that one of its major farm subsidy programs would no longer be considered trade-distorting. Despite rhetoric calling for the elimination of farm subsidies,

the U.S. is essentially attempting to avoid changes to its current programs, even though they are trade distorting.

The second stumbling block is European Union (EU) efforts to negotiate flexibility on market access in addition to the flexibility already agreed to for domestic markets designated as "sensitive sectors."

It is hoped that progress on these two issues will be made at or before the Hong Kong meeting.

## AGE VERIFICATION IN THE CATTLE INDUSTRY

Canada's experience with BSE illustrated in a very practical way that our livestock industry is very dependant on export markets. When Canada found a case of BSE in 2003, markets for our beef and cattle closed quickly and are still not fully open.

The U.S. market has reopened to Canadian beef from young animals and live cattle under 30 months of age. Negotiations continue to reopen the Japanese market and indications are they may take beef from animals under 21 months of age. The common requirement for both markets is that we need to be able to verify the age of the animals.

As a result, animal traceback has been introduced in the Canadian beef industry with the use of electronic ear tags and a requirement to tag animals as they leave the farm of origin.

It was intended that this traceback system would greatly assist in tracing animals back to the herd of origin if they were found to have diseases.

To date, there has been no requirement to verify the age of animals. Instead, it is a voluntary option for producers as they register cattle using the electronic ear tags.

Packers currently separate animals for the domestic market and export markets based on age. Live animals (under 30 months of age) can be exported to the U.S. for further feeding or slaughter. Cow-calf producers offering cattle for sale in this market will be under pressure to provide age verification for their animals.

There will be a concerted effort to diversify Canada's dependence on the U.S. market, and

the ability to verify the age of cattle will be a valuable tool in competitive export market.



### FOR MORE INFORMATION

- call the Canadian Cattle Identification Agency toll free at 1-877-909-2333; or visit [www.canadaid.com](http://www.canadaid.com).



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- Do I have absorbent material to soak up a spilled pesticide? That material may include lime, coarse clay, sand, and sawdust.
- Can I prevent liquid products from freezing during winter months?

If your farm is in a location protected by a municipal fire department, you are required to provide a list of pesticides stored and estimated quantities on hand to the chief of the fire department. This is to be done semi-annually and whenever significant changes in inventories occur.

You will also be required to post a "Danger - Stored Pesticide" sign printed in block letters. The letters should be five centimetres or more in height and posted on each entrance.

Siting pesticide storage facilities is also an important consideration. These facilities

should be in a low traffic area at least 100 m from your residence and at least 30 m from a well, 15 m or more from watercourses and 30 m from water intakes used for domestic purposes.

Should your on-farm pesticide storage facility stock more than 2,000 kg of pesticides, additional requirements under The Hazardous Substances and Waste Dangerous Goods Regulations will come into effect.

Producers who have completed an Environmental Farm Plan through the Provincial Council of Agriculture and Diversification Boards (PCAB) can apply to the Canada Saskatchewan Farm Stewardship Program (CSFSP) for assistance in improving on-farm storage of pesticides. The CSFSP provides 30 per cent cost-shared funding, up to a maximum of \$15,000, for improved on-farm storage and handling of

agricultural products. The program is restricted to non-commercial storage facilities only.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

- If you require technical information about pesticide storage and handling, contact the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377.
- For further information about Saskatchewan's Environmental Farm Planning Program, contact your local PCAB facilitator listed on the PCAB website at [www.saskpcab.com](http://www.saskpcab.com).
- For further information about the CSFSP, contact the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Client Service Centre at 1-800-667-8567.

