The structure of the above council and the body which it reports to is understood poorly by many individuals. Each province within Canada has an Agricultural Services Co-ordinating Committee. The Saskatchewan body (SASCC) was established to provide advise on matters relating to agricultural programs and policy. With representation from provincial and federal governments as well as Agriculture Colleges and Veterinary medicine, SASCC is able to regularly review the broad aspects of research, education and extension. This body is chaired by the Deputy Minister of Agriculture.

The role of a SASCC advisory council, as the above soils and agronomy group is to provide information on specific areas of expertise relating to this council. The councils of which there are 9 separate groups in Saskatchewan each prepare publications for farmers and members of the SASCC system. They develop statements on specific problems for SASCC by request or on their own initiative.

This system provides an excellent opportunity for researchers, government staff, industry and farmers to discuss the challenges and problems facing agriculture as a whole and in their specific areas of expertise. Ideas can be exchanged within the council, shared concerns can be discussed with other councils and brought to the attention of SASCC. Issues of national concern are presented to the Canadian Agricultural Services Co-ordinating Committee. This
group has Federal Government Agricultural representation.

The Saskatchewan Advisory Council on Soils and Agronomy (SACSA) as a group has 56 members. Four functional sub-committees exist within its structure consisting of the following:

1. Weeds Committee - Chairman: Mr. Larry Gramiak
2. Tillage Committee - Chairman: Mr. Ben Dyck
3. Soil Fertility Committee - Chairman: Mr. Harry Ukrainetz
4. Special Soil Problems Committee - Chairman: Mr. Glen Shaw

The council meets with the chairperson of the above groups on a semi-annual basis usually in the spring and fall of the year. The sub-committees meet separately once or twice annually.

1. **Education and Extension Activities:**

1.1 **Publications:** The Guide to Farm Practice has been revised and is in the process of being reprinted. By the time you read this report the "Guide" will be available. A multidisciplinary approach has been taken by a number of sub-committees during the revision process. This approach, while more time consuming, allowed the integration of pertinent information from more than one source into specific sections.

**WEED COMMITTEE:** As in past years major emphasis has been directed towards the publication entitled "Chemical Weed Control in Cereals, Oilseed, Pulse and Forage Crops". The publication for 1987 will include new sections on "The mode
of action and use of Plant growth regulators"; "The use of Chemical Injectors on Field Sprayers" as well as an expansion of the section relating to factors affecting soil residual herbicides". This sub-committee will also be releasing publications on two special topics relating to "Non Cropland Weed Control" and "Special Weed Control Problems".

TILLAGE COMMITTEE: Efforts from this group have been concentrated on preparing "Soil Conservation Fact Sheets". These will be directed for use in extension services and cover topics such as:
- Pulse Crops as alternatives to summerfallow
- Emergency tillage for soil erosion control
- Alternative approaches to tillage on summerfallow
- Performance of tillage equipment
- Plans for a strip row seeder for summerfallow

SOIL FERTILITY COMMITTEE: Two new bulletins have been prepared, one relating to "Micro Nutrient Status and Fertilization of Saskatchewan Soils" while the other pertains to "Irrigation Water Quality". A bulletin on sulphur fertilization has also been printed and released. This sub-committee is devoting considerable effort to compiling data relating to the fertilization of forage crops in an attempt to formulate a written release on this subject matter.
SPECIAL SOIL PROBLEMS COMMITTEE: With the advent of new research information on soil salinity a revision of our existing publications was required. This revised bulletin will be released shortly. The interest in deep ripping or plowing of our soils has resulted in this group working towards completing a fact sheet relating to "Concerns with deep Tillage on Normally Productive Soils".

1.2 Soils and Crops Workshop

The annual Soils and Crops Workshop is sponsored by this Council, together with the Extension Division, University of Saskatchewan. The 1986 Workshop as chaired by Mr. M.C.J. Grevers was held on February 20-21, 1986. A workshop theme "Research in Agriculture" was topical and well attended by Research, Industry and Extension staff. Keynote speakers for the Plenary session included Mr. G.D. Weaver (Research Director, Canada Grains Council); Dr. D.A. Rennie (Dean, College of Agriculture) and Mr. L.A. McLean (Farmer and Agricultural Consultant). Following the Plenary session technical papers were presented in the following areas: Communication and Conservation, Herbicides and Water Management, Soil Fertility and Soil Salinity. A record number of papers (38) were presented during the two day session. To make efficient use of time, these were divided into concurrent sessions. The proceedings, which were released in May, 1986, were published in a 494 page text.

1.3 Summer tour

Due to the Agriculture Institute of Canada annual meeting being held in Saskatoon on July 6-10, 1986 no summer tour, as sponsored by this council, was held. There were, however, many tours associated with the above conference. An Agronomy summer tour will be held during 1987.
2. Resolutions

The Council regularly submits resolutions to SASCC relating to matters which its members are concerned about and feel require attention in order to be rectified. These are divided into two separate areas.

2.1 Research and Development

a) Northern Soils and Crop Productivity

Background: Gray luvisolic soils comprise a significant acreage of agricultural land in Northern Saskatchewan. Severe climatic risks are faced when farming in this area including frost, cool growing seasons and excessive wetness at seeding and harvest. The low organic matter content of Gray Luvisolic soils results in severe fertility and physical soil problems that result in high fertilizer costs, pulverization, erosion, poor water infiltration, crusting, poor emergence and poor aeration.

Resolution: That Agriculture Canada and Saskatchewan Agriculture research and demonstrate cropping practices that will improve the physical condition of Gray Luvisolic soils, enhancing crop production and reducing soil degradation.

b) Trash management on stubble land versus soil conservation and maximum productivity.

Background: Farmers in the wetter areas of the province are unable to seed through the heavy residues from cereal crops on land that must be reseeded for economic reasons and to retard soil degradation.
Multiple tillage operations are necessary to incorporate residues for seedbed preparation, however fall tillage reduces surface cover and leaves the soil susceptible to spring wind and water erosion. If left until spring the tillage operations dry out the seedbed resulting in poor crop establishment and lower yields. These additional tillage operations which are required for incorporation of crop residues are responsible for increased machinery investment, fuel use and labour requirements.

Resolution: In keeping with soil conservation goals, research should be expanded to reduce the problem of seeding stubble land in the black and gray soil zones. Such components of an improved crop production system may include:
1. development of trash management practices such as cutting tall stubble during straight combining.
2. development of agronomic practices for seeding into stubble of varying heights.
3. development of machinery for efficient fertilizer placement in reduced tillage systems.
4. development of locally adapted semi-dwarf varieties which will result in reduced straw production.

c) Management of Forage crops to increase economic returns:

Background: Grain prices have fallen sharply and the outlook for the next few years appears to indicate continuing low prices. This has stimulated an increased interest amongst farmers in growing forages for seed and feed. Since there is increased concern, nationwide about soil erosion and salinization of agricultural land forage crops will have a definite place in these programs. The technology for fertilizing forage crops for seed and feed is very deficient in Saskatchewan.
Resolution: That Federal and Provincial governments be urged to provide funding to enable expansion of research on fertilization of forage crops for both seed and feed in Saskatchewan.

d) **Soil test recommendations**:  
Background: The Saskatchewan Soil Testing Laboratory, soil test guidelines, have not been generally updated with soil-test fertilizer response correlations, using current research data during the past 15 years or more. There has been substantial changes in farming practices, crop types and varieties, and fertilizer sources and application methods during this period. Soil test correlation studies require substantial effort and manpower input from various research agencies in Saskatchewan, to be revised.

Resolution: That Federal and Provincial governments be requested to adequately support necessary research on soil test correlations for a period of at least five (5) years in order to bring the Saskatchewan Soil Test Guidelines up-to-date to ensure reliable fertilizer recommendations.

2.2 Non Research and Development  
a) **National Soil Conservation Policy**  
Background: Soil quality is important for both the short and long term viability of agriculture in Saskatchewan and Canada. There is strong evidence that the quality of our agricultural land resource is deteriorating.
The need for a National Soil Conservation Strategy has been discussed on numerous occasions including the Sparrow's Senate Committee Hearings, the National Agricultural Policy Discussions and the April 1986 National Soil Conservation Strategies Conference.

Resolution: That the provincial and federal governments develop and implement a National Soil Conservation Strategy as soon as possible.

b) **Guide to Farm Practice Format Changes:**

Background: Revising and publishing the Guide to Farm Practice requires a large investment of time and funds. The format and frequency of publication of the Guide allows some recommendations such as varietal recommendations to become outdated while allowing too brief a discussion of some basic principles. A large amount of information to the Guide can be found in a more detailed and updated form in other factsheets and bulletins.

Resolution: That Saskatchewan Agriculture and the University of Saskatchewan conduct a survey among present and potential users of the Guide to Farm Practice to review the purpose, format, content, distribution and publishing schedule of the Guide. The survey should be conducted well ahead of any future revisions (1990) and should be conducted among both the farming and non-farming public.
c) 2,4-D Usage in Canada

Background: The herbicide, 2,4-D is the most widely used weed control product in Saskatchewan. This product is becoming increasingly popular as a tool for reducing tillage and conserving soil. Recent epidemiological and toxicological studies have linked the frequent and prolonged exposure to 2,4-D with increased rates of some forms of cancer. The studies mentioned above DO NOT prove a clear cause and effect relationship between 2,4-D and cancer.

Resolution: That the government of Saskatchewan continue to support the use of 2,4-D in the province pending further review of the available data and on-going studies.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Saskatchewan Agriculture increase its extension emphasis on the safe use and handling of pesticides in general and 2,4-D in particular with the aim of reducing user exposure to a minimum.

A reply from SASCC relating to the method of dealing with the above resolutions is directed back to our Council. This occurs following discussion and/or implementation at the provincial or national level. A spring meeting of the Saskatchewan Advisory Council on Soils and Agronomy is scheduled for April 29, 1987 in Saskatoon.