

Report of the
Saskatchewan Advisory Council
on Soils and Agronomy

by

J. L. Henry
Department of Soil Science
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

The major work of the council consists of formulating recommendations on agronomic matters for farmers and in putting forth recommendations on research and service priorities to our parent body, the Saskatchewan Agricultural Services Coordinating Committee. The work of our council is executed through four standing committees, and the past year has seen changes in chairmanship of a number of these committees. The committees now operating together with the current chairman are as follows:

Fertility Committee--chairman R. Button, Saskatchewan Agriculture, Tisdale; Tillage Committee--chairman K. Bowren, Agriculture Canada Research Station, Melfort; Weeds Committee--chairman K. Kirkland, Agriculture Canada Experimental Farm, Scott, Saskatchewan; Soil Problem Committee--chairman H. M. Holm, Saskatchewan Agriculture Plant Industry Branch, Regina.

Let me first acknowledge the very excellent work of the committee that was responsible for putting together the program for the workshop we are now attending. The chairman was Allen Sturko, and he was assisted by K. Foster, D. Cameron, W. Janke, E. Makowski, and R. Holm. The attendance here today is evidence enough of their success in putting together a good program.

During 1980 our council hosted a summer tour out of Swift Current, and for this we are indebted to Don Read and Gordon Parker. Current plans are to hold a tour in the summer of 1981 at some location in southeastern Saskatchewan.

The past year has been active with respect to publication of recommendations. In addition to the general publication of weed and fertilizer recommendations, there were two special publications prepared; one each for nitrogen and phosphorus fertilizer use. In addition, the 0-till bulletin was updated and a brochure on drainage has been prepared.

The non-research and development recommendations put forward to the Saskatchewan Agricultural Services Coordinating Committee related to the necessity for the early establishment of a service oriented pesticide residue laboratory with the first priority being on the capability to analyze soils for selected soil applied herbicides. We also pointed out to our parent body the need for a very large increase in the extension and service component for weed control both at the provincial and at the rural municipality level.

Our recommendations for research and development related to:

- 1) Increased support by Agriculture Canada for field agronomic research.
- 2) Support by Saskatchewan agriculture for long-term work on tillage systems.
- 3) Research on weed control for corn and sunflowers--our weed committee finds itself in the embarrassing position of having to prepare weed control recommendations for these two crops with no field research information available in Saskatchewan.
- 4) Fertilizer placement.
- 5) Sulfur deficiency of crops with the emphasis being on sulfur sources to overcome deficiencies.
- 6) Soil salinity--is an ongoing problem, and the level of support seems to have stagnated.
- 7) Micronutrients--our council pointed out an urgent need to embark on an active program in this area to more effectively anticipate needs rather than reacting to crisis situations.

In addition to the official recommendations, we did bring to the attention of council the fact that work is progressing within our weed committee and other weed committees across Canada to prepare an impact statement on the use of 2,4-D. We also pointed out that in light of projected large sales for cereal grains, there would be a need to ensure that some priority remain on research activity on minor crops such that information would be available at the time the next major wheat glut occurs. We reaffirmed our stand that recommendations be made in either metric or English units but not both; pointed out that new drainage legislation would require a strong education program to inform all concerned, and we pointed out that recent soil survey activity has defined the area of acid soils in westcentral Saskatchewan.