

Report to the Soils and Crop Workshop
from
Saskatchewan Advisory Council on Soils and Agronomy
by
F.B. Dyck, Chairman 1990

1. Introduction

Soils and Agronomy is one of twelve Advisory Councils that report to the Saskatchewan Agricultural Services Coordinating Committee (SASCC). SASCC is the agency which provides a mechanism for the coordination of agricultural research, extension and education activities in Saskatchewan.

2. Function and Membership

The Soils and Agronomy Council performs the following functions related to soil, weed and crop management:

- (1) Identify and coordinate research activities and develop research priorities;
- (2) Coordinate education and extension needs and requirements and encourage development of extension material for farmers;
- (3) Advise SASCC on agriculture policies and programs;
- (4) Provide a forum for discussion of policies and programs related to soil, weed and crop management.

Membership in the Council includes representation from Dealers, Producers, Agriculture Canada, University of Saskatchewan; Crop Science and Soil Science Departments; PFRA, Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food, Saskatchewan Rural Development and Chairperson of Sub-councils. The current membership is listed in Appendix I. There are three functional Sub-councils; Weeds, Soil Fertility, Soil and Crop Management.

The Sub-councils met separately twice during 1990. The Soils and Agronomy Council met in May and November 1990.

3. Advisory Council Activities

Two meetings were held dealing with the following issues.

(1) Sub-councils

To carry out the councils mandate more efficiently the sub-council structure has been reorganized. The Tillage and Special Soils Problems sub-councils have been discontinued and a new Soil and Crop Management sub-council was created. It's mandate focuses on cropping systems and rotations (including organic farming and sustainability), soil and water conservation, tillage and seeding practices, problem soils and salinity. The council now has three sub-councils: Weeds, Soil Fertility and Soil and Crop Management.

(2) Publications

Two publications were put out in 1990; (a) Weed Control in Cereal, Oilseed, Pulse and Forage Crops (b) Water Management Fact sheet (published by SOS). Council continues to be concerned about low publications budgets and that reprinting of existing useful bulletins is not being done.

(3) Soils and Crops Workshop

Council would like to thank the committee chaired by Eric Johnson and the University of Saskatchewan Extension Department for organizing the 1991 Soils and Crops Workshop.

(4) Research Priorities

Soils and Agronomy has compiled a list of research priorities based on priorities of its sub-councils.

- a) Enhance soil conservation and erosion control through:
 - the development of economic alternatives to conventional summerfallow.
 - improved methods of conventional summerfallow.
- b) Develop economical and environmentally sustainable weed control methods which will help to maintain and improve soil quality through maintenance of adequate crop residue levels.
- c) Evaluation of fertilizer response including interactions between nutrients, fertilizer placement, fertilizer sources, moisture effects and cropping practices taking into consideration effects on environmental quality and sustainability of production.
- d) Investigate the effects of reduced tillage systems on seeding dates, seeding equipment requirements, seed and fertilizer placement requirements, plant diseases, soil and crop quality, weed control and crop yields.
- e) Management effects on soil quality, water availability and soil fertility requirements. Factors affecting sustainable production including the use of legumes and nitrogen fixation.

(5) New Technologies

SASCC annually requests Advisory Councils to identify new technologies for demonstration through the AGricultural Development Fund program.

Councils response: It should be recognized that some technologies are easily demonstrated and some are not. Council is concerned that much demonstration work is conducted in the absence of qualified agrologist input and evaluation. Value of demonstrating proven

technology is well recognized but are too many resources going into "demonstrations" when research is suffering from lack of resources. With the current situation of the NSCP and SOS programs emphasizing application of proven technology in farmers fields (i.e., demonstration); therefore perhaps other agency resource allocations to "demonstrations" should be cut back in favor of research projects to achieve a better balance.

(6) Key Issues and Concerns

- (a) Lack of funds for publication of extension bulletins of new information and reprinting old useful information.
- (b) The vacancy in the provincial Soil Fertility Specialist position is reducing Technology Transfer capability in this area of expertise.
- (c) Increased public emphasis for "chemical free" food production, may not be the cure for environmental degradation and may result in increased soil erosion.

4. Future Activity and Plans

- (1) Continue fulfilling mandate as issues arise.
- (2) Soils and Crops Workshop, 1992. Where and when should it be held? The University of Saskatchewan is planning to move Farm and Home Week from the usual January time slot to the week of the February mid-term break (i.e., the time the Soils and Crops workshop is normally held.) Can the two events be run simultaneously or should another time be considered? Funding of this event is also a concern! It is presently funded by the Extension Department of University of Saskatchewan, with the expectation that registration fees will cover the costs of the meeting and publication of the proceedings. This makes budgeting very tight and somewhat limits the program committee on the personnel they can bring in as key note speakers. This year registration fees were raised to address this issue. Outside funding is being sought to help solve the problem.

5. Conclusion

I would like to thank the secretary of council, Rick Holm, and all members of council for their support and active participation in the past year.

If you think there are issues that council could and should address feel free to discuss it with one of our members. The membership list is attached.

APPENDIX I

SASKATCHEWAN ADVISORY COUNCIL ON SOILS & AGRONOMY
MEMBERSHIP LIST, JANUARY 1991

<u>Representative</u>	<u>Name and Addresses</u>	<u>Term</u>	
		<u>Appointed</u>	<u>Expire</u>
Agriculture Canada	Ben Dyck, Chairman Research Scientist Agr. Canada, Research Station P.O. Box 1030 SWIFT CURRENT, Sask. S9H 3X2 Phone: 773-4621 FAX: 773-9123	1989	1991
Crop Science & Plant Ecology	Rick Holm, Secretary Associate Professor Crop Science & Plant Ecology University of Saskatchewan SASKATOON, Sask. S7N 0W0 Phone: 966-5006 FAX: 966-5015	1990	1992
<u>Sub-Council Chairperson</u>			
Weeds	M.D. Devine Crop Science & Plant Ecology University of Saskatchewan SASKATOON, Sask. S7N 0W0 Phone: 966-4947	1990	1992
Soil Fertility	Regas Karamanos Saskatchewan Soil Testing Lab. General Purpose Building University of Saskatchewan SASKATOON, Sask. S7N 0W0	1989	1991
Soil & Crop	Mike Grevers Sask. Institute of Pedology University of Saskatchewan SASKATOON, Sask. S7N 0W0 Phone: 966-6888 FAX: 966-6881	1990	1992
Sask. Rural Dept.	Eric Johnson Soils & Crops Agrologist Saskatchewan Rural Development 509 Pioneer Ave. NORTH BATTLEFORD, Sask. S9A 1E9 Phone: 446-7475	Dec.'89	Dec.'9

Soil Science Dept.	Les Henry Professor of Soil Science Department of Soil Science University of Saskatchewan SASKATOON, Sask. S7N 0W0 Phone: 966-6856	Dec.'89	Dec.'9
PFRA	Gerry Luciuk Manager, Program Planning Div. PFRA Motherwell Building 1901 Victoria Ave. REGINA, Sask. S4P 0R5 Phone: 780-5164	Dec.'90	Dec.'9
Saskatchewan Agriculture & Food	Ken Panchuk Cereal Crops Specialist Soils & Crops Branch Saskatchewan Agriculture & Food 133 - 3085 Albert Street REGINA, Sask. S4S 0B1 Phone: 787-4664	Dec.'89	Dec.'9
Western Canada Fertilizer & Chemical	Bob Evans Sales Agronomist Gates Fertilizer Ltd. P.O. Box 336 NIPAWIN, Sask. S0E 1E0 Phone: 862-9811	Dec.'89	Dec.'9
Liaison with Sask. Advisory Council of Agr. & Food Engineering	W.B. (Bill) Reed Dept. of Agricultural Engineering University of Saskatchewan SASKATOON, Sask. S7N 0W0 Phone: 966-5317	Dec.'90	Dec.'9
Producer Representative	Art Walde P.O. Box 596 KINDERSLEY, Sask. S0E 1S0 Phone: 463-3302	Dec.'90	Dec.'9