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Peace Region Forage Seed Association

Five Year Strategic Plan for Forage Seed Industry in Peace Region of Alberta and British Columbia including Stable Funding Initiative

**Discussion Draft
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for discussion purposes only

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Alberta and British Columbia Peace Region is the world's 2nd largest turf and forage seed production region. Traditionally, the Peace Region has 220,000 to 250,000 acres of turf and forage seed production, translating into \$30 to \$40 million of farm gate sales per year. Certified seed production is on the rise as this region becomes recognized for its ability to produce quality cool season turf and forage seed crops. The production of native grass seed has blossomed in recent years. This region will continue to have a competitive advantage over other forage seed producing areas in the world and the trends of growers producing top quality seeds is expected to continue.

There is currently a willingness by growers, seed trade and researchers to work cooperatively together on a number of research and extension initiatives. This atmosphere of researchers, growers, seed processors and marketers pulling together is one of the region's most important strengths and represents a great opportunity for the forage seed industry in the Peace. The region's forage seed industry recognizes the Peace Region Forage Seed Association as the most logical and credible for a single voice to represent their interests.

The Peace Region Forage Seed Association coordinates forage seed activity in the Peace River Region of both Alberta and British Columbia. In order to have continued growth in the forage and turf seed industry, there must be a consistent supply of high quality seed produced. As the Peace Region Forage Seed Association entered its seventh year, this relatively new association faced some unique challenges and opportunities. Funding programs to maintain a part time manager were disappearing and government support was declining. The association had reached a stage where it had to make decisions about whether it should decrease its activity level to mostly extension projects (e.g. newsletters, tours, seminars) or continue with its goal of further developing the forage and turf seed industry in the Peace River Region.

A strategic planning process for the forage seed industry in the Peace River Region was initiated with 25 stakeholders, including a balance of growers, processors, researchers and extensionists. It became apparent during this process that stable funding for the association was critical to continue to enhance the development of the region's turf and forage seed industry. This highly prioritized goal was supported by subsequent meetings of the seed trade companies and by the general membership at the annual meeting. A Stable Funding Initiative Committee was formed and a contractor was hired to facilitate the next steps.

The goals of the forage seed industry in the Peace Region were identified and detailed with strategies, proposed actions and budgets. The goals are:

1. Stronger forage seed research capabilities and increased producer directed research.
2. Higher quality, consistency and profitability of forage seed production.
3. Peace Region producers making informed responses to global and regional opportunities and markets for forage seed.
4. A stronger voice for the Peace Region forage seed industry through the Peace Region Forage Seed Association.
5. Stable funding for research & extension through a forage seed levy in the Peace Region.

A refundable forage seed levy will be collected at a scale appropriate for the size of operation and sales, on all forage seed crops at point of sale in the Peace Region of Alberta and British Columbia. The levy rate will be based on total annual sales of forage and turf seeds as follows: 0.75 % on sales of \$0 to \$200,000; 0.50 % on sales of \$200,000 to \$500,000 and 0.25 % on sales of \$500,000 and over. The levy will be collected at all points of sale at the time of sale over the whole year. It will be submitted to the Peace Region Forage Seed Association a minimum of two times annually. Confidentiality of information and accountability of funds will be assured.

The Peace Region Forage Seed Association will undertake a comprehensive communication plan to ensure the majority of turf and forage seed growers in the region are aware and in favour of the proposed levy and have an opportunity to have input into its development.

2. INTRODUCTION

Linkages Between Forage Seed Industry and the Peace Region Forage Seed Association

The Peace Region Forage Seed Association coordinates forage activity in the Peace River Region of both Alberta and British Columbia. In order to have continued growth in the forage and turf seed industry, there must be a consistent supply of high quality seed produced. Resources for production and extension work to meet the needs of the industry are becoming limited as government agencies cut back on the resources to assist growth of the forage and turf seed industry in the region. A group such as this association, involving both producers and seed traders, must begin to take more responsibility to ensure growth in the industry continues. Active coordination and setting of priorities through the Peace Region Forage Seed Association (PRFSA) would continue to enhance the forage and turf seed industry development in the region.

The Peace Region Forage Seed Association coordinates forage seed activity in the Peace River Region in both Alberta and British Columbia. Many of the seed trade outlets and seed cleaning facilities are located in Alberta, so the majority of the marketed and contracted forage seed flows through the Alberta Peace. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's research station focusing on forage seed research is located in Alberta at Beaverlodge. BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (BCMAFF), Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development (AAFRD) and local applied research associations have been strong supporters of forage seed initiatives and extension publications. Through effective coordination and communication among various groups, the association has accomplished many of its original goals.

The association had attempted to address the need for increased research funds in two ways. First of all, they had worked with producers to launch a voluntary Producer Research Fund. All funds collected were effectively matched and two projects were initiated that producers were particularly interested in. Secondly, the association's board of directors also worked with its seed trade members to establish a Seed Trade Consortium of 12 companies. Research funds were collected by the Consortium and contracted to Beaverlodge Research Station to match and fund a number of projects over 3 years. Both these efforts established important partnerships. However, funds collected were inadequate to meet the needs of the growing forage and turf seed industry in the region.

As the Peace Region Forage Seed Association entered its seventh year, this relatively new association faced some unique challenges and opportunities. Funding programs to maintain a part time manager were disappearing and government support was declining. The association had reached a stage where it had to make decisions about whether it should decrease its activity level to mostly extension projects (e.g. newsletters, tours, seminars) or continue with its goal of further developing the forage and turf seed industry in the Peace River Region.

Methodology and the Consultative Process

A strategic planning process for the forage seed industry in the Peace River Region was initiated in early 2002. Twenty-five stakeholders were invited to participate. Stakeholders included a balance of growers, processors, researchers and extensionists from both Alberta and British Columbia. The first meeting identified: 1) milestones in the industry over the past five years, and 2) the top priorities and requirements of the industry for the next five years. These requirements were then taken back to the directors of the association who prioritized them and determined which priorities the association could actually address. It became apparent throughout the process, that stable funding for the association was critical to move forward with the association's program. It was decided at the director level the best way to address stable funding was through a commission on forage and turf seed produced in the Alberta and BC Peace River Region. A meeting with the forage seed trade in the Peace Region was also held to discuss this issue; they also felt this was the only means to raise the funds for forage seed research and extension activities.

The stable funding issue was put forward to the members at the 2002 annual meetings. Membership was in full support of the association moving forward with the background work to investigate the establishment of levy on forage and turf seed in the Peace Region of Alberta and British Columbia.

A coordinator was contracted to assist them through this next year of development, assist with transition and design of a framework for implementing a forage seed levy. A Stable Funding Initiative Committee consisting of 8 stakeholders was formed to spearhead the business planning process and pursue a forage seed levy. Progress to stakeholders, members and funding partners is being reported as required.

3. PROFILE of the PEACE REGION FORAGE SEED ASSOCIATION

Legal Name of Organization: Peace Region Forage Seed Association
Name of Authorized Person(s): David Forgie, President
 Randy Graw, Treasurer
 Don Pedersen, Past President

Type of Organization: Non-Profit Society

Registration Number: incorporation. #S – 33581

Revenue Canada Registration #: (non-profit society) 86623 4784 RT0001

Number of Members: 202 paid members on December 31, 2001

Characteristics of the groups, which use the services of the organization: They are primary producers (farmers), seed companies and agribusinesses (24), researchers and crop consultants.

Vision:

In essence, the association's vision is a profitable turf and forage grass seed industry in the Peace River Region, consistently producing quality seed for turf and forage customers. The Peace Region Forage Seed Association (PRFSA) moves towards this goal by facilitating appropriate research projects, timely extension activities and enhanced communication and respect among producers, seed trade/agribusinesses, researchers and crop consultants.

Mandate or Mission of Peace Region Forage Seed Association is:

- To collectively develop the forage seed industry in the Peace Region.
- To exchange information, prioritize issues and coordinate extension and research activities.
- To cooperate within the forage seed industry of the Peace Region.
- To encourage mutual respect among members.

History of the Association:

The Peace Region Forage Seed Association was formed in 1995. The association brought together the longer histories of several associations in the Peace River region of both Alberta and British Columbia. The Fine Seed Committee of the BC Grain Producers Association and the Alberta Alfalfa Seed Producers Association - Peace Branch and local members of the Canadian Seed Trade Association added their years of experience and expertise working for the industry, to our association.

From a handful of committed people in 1995, the membership in the Peace Region Forage Seed Association has grown to 202 memberships in 2001 (24 corporate memberships, 178 producer memberships).

A seven member Board of Directors drawn from the PRFSA membership governs all activities of the Peace Region Forage Seed Association. The board currently consists of three Alberta producers, three BC producers and one seed trade member. The association also has two extension advisors and one research advisor as well as a part time manager. The directors volunteer their time and expertise. They are reimbursed for direct expenses only and only for those pertaining directly to PRFSA business or projects, not including board meetings.

Information is shared with members in several ways. PRFSA collaborate with authors across Canada to produce a quarterly high quality magazine, Forage Seed News. They partnered with AAFRD to produce publications such as the "Creeping Red Fescue Seed Production" Agr-Facts sheet in 2000. They organize two annual marketing and production seminars and AGM in Fort St. John and Fairview that attracts 150 to 180 people over the 2 days. As well they organize tours over the summer.

The PRFSA directors respond to the concerns of producers as they arise. Endophyte surveys and an information blitz were initiated in response to reported endophyte concerns in forage seed aftermath bales (1998). They responded to the glassy cutworm outbreak with timely research and information fact sheets (2000). They have also launched a recent initiative to keep leaf cutter bees disease free in the Peace Region (2001).

Research Projects:

Currently, PRFSA facilitates, sponsors and/or coordinates several research projects including:

- Herbicide Tolerance of Grasses for Minor Use Registration
- Weed Control Trials in Grasses
- Herbicide Tolerance Trials in Established Red & Alsike Clover
- Control of Silvertop in Fine-leaved Fescues
- Stem Eyespot Resistance Breeding Research with Creeping Red Fescue
- Western Canadian Forage Seed Variety Testing Program (2 locations in the Peace)
- Timing of Nitrogen Application on Tall Fescue

PRFSA, in conjunction with the Seed Trade Consortium, is involved on several research projects including:

- Establishment Systems for Seed Production of Creeping Red Fescue.
- Wild Oat Control in Established Seed Crops of Tall Fescue.
- Silvertop Damage Control on Creeping Red Fescue
- Stem Eyespot Control in Creeping Red Fescue
- Arthropod Related Insect Control in Forage Seed Crops

PRFSA, also initiated a voluntary Producer Research Fund and has initiated 2 projects with those funds by partnering with PRAD including:

- Fescue Rejuvenation Project
- Control of Cutworms in Grass Seed Fields Project.

PRFSA has partnered with several other funding agencies in the past few years on many successful projects. Funding partners over the years have included: Western Canadian Grass Seed Testing Program, Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Alberta Agriculture Food & Rural Development, BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Fisheries, Peace River Agriculture Development Fund, BC Investment Agriculture Foundation, Smoky Applied Research and Demonstration Association, Fine Seeds Committee of BC Grain Producers Association, Farming for the Future, AAFRD, and Lamorna Enterprises Ltd. Their projects and activities have been recently compiled into a 4 page handout (attached) and onto a CD of 5 PowerPoint presentations (available on request).

The Peace Region Forage Seed Association has earned the trust and respect throughout the forage seed industry and is recognized as the ideal vehicle to represent this region's industry and spearhead initiatives on its behalf.

4. PROFILE of the FORAGE SEED INDUSTRY in the PEACE REGION

Extent of Turf and Forage Seed Production in the Peace Region

There are 4.64 million acres of cropped land in the Peace River Region (Alberta and British Columbia), of which 9.3% is seeded for turf and forage seed production (source: 2001 Canada Census). The 2001 census indicate there were 340,768 acres of turf and forage seed in the Peace River block of Alberta. Another 89,447 acres of turf and forage seed was in the BC side of the Peace Block. In total, there were 430,215 acres in the region. This acreage is up 198,135 acres from the 1996 census. This acreage makes turf and forage seed production the 3rd most widely grown crop type in the region.

Table 1: Crop Production in the Peace Region (Acres)

Crop	1996	2001
Wheat	1,148,000	975,000
Canola	937,000	682,000
Turf and Forage	232,000	430,000
Barley	563,000	156,000
Oats	268,000	96,000
Field Peas	79,000	90,000

The Alberta Peace has close to 83.2% of Alberta’s forage seed production. 1086 farmers in the Alberta Peace are involved in turf and/or forage seed production. The turf and forage seed acreage in the Alberta and BC Peace Region comprises 53.8% of Canada’s total forage seed acres, making this region the world’s 2nd largest turf and forage seed production region (after Oregon State, USA).

Table 2: Turf and Forage Seed Acres - Canada

	1986		1991		1996		2001	
	Farms	Acres	Farms	Acres	Farms	Acres	Farms	Acres
Canada		406350		510108		454262		799415
Alberta	1378	200013	1465	230609	1281	236974	1506	409,251
Alberta Peace	1014	157468	1087	186382	916.0	187135	1086	340768
BC Peace	167	35882	227	52597	148	44945	212	89447

Note: due to exceptionally high prices for creeping red fescue in 1999-00, acres increased substantially and were recorded as such in the 2001 census.

Turf and Forage Seed Crops Grown in the Region

Turf and forage seed crops in the region include perennial grasses and legumes grown to produce seed, including both common and pedigreed seed. The region is world renowned for the production of creeping red fescue seed, which comprises over 50% of the turf and forage seed acres in the area. Although a variety of species are grown in the region, the main crops include the brome grasses, timothy, the clovers and specialized production of other turf and grass species.

Turf Seed Crops: Creeping Red Fescue, Hard Fescue, Tall Fescue, Chewings Fescue, Sheep’s Fescue, Annual and Perennial Ryegrass, Kentucky Bluegrass,

Forage Seed Crops: Alfalfa, Birdsfoot Trefoil, Alsike Clover, Red Clover, Sweet Clover, Smooth Bromegrass, Meadow Bromegrass, Hybrid Bromegrass, Tall Fescue, Meadow Fescue, Creeping Red Fescue, Fine Fescues, Orchardgrass, Reed Canarygrass, Timothy, Wheatgrasses (crested, slender, tall, intermediate, western, northern)

Native Grasses (numerous species)

Pedigreed Production

Turf and forage seed is produced at both the common and certified level, although the majority of the seed produced is designated as common production (approximately 85%). However, the trend is towards more certified acres in the region.

Table 3: Percentage of Certified Seed

	1991			1996			2001		
	Certified Acres	Total Acres	% Certified	Certified Acres	Total Acres	% Certified	Certified Acres	Total Acres	% Certified
Alberta Peace	24206	186382	13.0	43912	187135	23.5	48488	340768	14.2
BC Peace	7984	52597	15.1	5368	44945	11.9	10272	89447	11.5

Forage Seed Processing

To accommodate the turf and forage seed industry in the region, the seed processing infrastructure is well established with 12 seed processing facilities located throughout the region. Typically, raw seed is harvested, then processed (cleaned and/or mixed) and bagged. The majority of forage seed that leaves the regions is hauled out via container trucks in bags. (grass seed at 40-50,000 lb truckloads). Current existing markets are into the North West region of the USA (Oregon/ Washington), Eastern Canada and the Eastern Seaboard (USA), Europe, Southern and Mid-western USA, Pacific Rim and some into South America.

Active forage seed companies with seed processing facilities in the region include:

- Agricore United, Grande Prairie, AB
- Bison Seeds, Hines Creek, AB
- Brett Young Seeds, Rycroft, AB
- Clairmont Seed Processors Ltd. (Hannas Seeds), Clairmont, AB
- Dawson Seeds, Dawson Creek, BC
- Dynamic Seeds, Fairview, AB
- Fosters Seed and Feed, Beaverlodge, AB
- Golden Acre Seeds, Fairview, AB
- Peace River Forage Seed Co-op, Rycroft, AB
- Pickseed Canada Ltd., Dawson Creek, BC
- Red Willow Seeds, Beaverlodge, AB
- Turf Seeds, Deadwood, AB
- Peace Country Seed, Dawson Creek, BC

Other forage seed companies active in the seed industry in the Peace include Prairie Seeds, DLF Jenks, Scott Seeds, Barenburg, Newfield Seeds and other companies contracting in the region.

Summary

Traditionally, the Peace Region has 220,000 to 250,000 acres of turf and forage seed production, which translate into \$30 to \$40 million of farm gate sales per year. In addition to revenue generated from seed, the aftermath is baled off the field to use for winter feed for livestock. In some cases the grass seed fields are grazed in the fall, which extends the grazing season and reduces winter feeding costs. In recent years, interest in diversifying crops has attracted interest from new growers and seed companies. Certified seed production is on the rise as this region has become well recognized for its ability to produce quality cool season turf and forage seed crops. With a better understanding of their requirements, the production of native grass seeds has also blossomed in recent years. This region will continue to have a competitive advantage over other forage seed producing areas due to a less expensive land base and good production. Even though the requirements to meet new and demanding technology related to producing quality crops will change, the venture by growers into producing top quality turf and forage seeds is expected to continue.

5. FORAGE SEED INDUSTRY STRENGTHS, OPPORTUNITIES, NEEDS and CHALLENGES**The Strengths and Opportunities of the Forage Seed Industry**

The strength of the forage seed industry in the Peace Region arises from a broad land base, suitable climate for grass and legume seed production, increasing acres, experienced producers, lower production costs, stable infrastructure for processing, expanding markets and increasing foreign production contracts. These strengths are described below.

Over the last 5 years, there has been an increase in forage acres for grazing, hay, reclamation and seed production. Producers in the region use forage and turf seed crops as a cash crop in crop rotations, to spread out the workload throughout the year and to provide a source of fibre to improve soil quality. In addition to the grass seed harvested from fields, straw is baled off the fields and used for winter feed by livestock producers. The amount of grass seed straw utilized by livestock is increasing as the livestock numbers increase in the region.

Contracted production of forage and turf seed acres, both domestically and internationally, has increased. Shrinking acreages in some of the main producing areas of the world (Oregon and Europe) are providing opportunities for increased production in the Peace Region. Foreign companies are establishing fields through local companies to spread production risk and to reduce their costs of production. The amount of certified acres of forage and turf seed has doubled in the past ten years. In order to meet these needs, the seed processing capacity in the region has increased over the past five years.

There is international interest in the Peace Region as an area of quality forage seed production. In addition, to increase contract production of proprietary varieties, the market for common seed appears to be stable. Potential for developing or expanding markets in China exists, which may increase the demand for some of the more commonly grown forage and turf seed species in the region.

The use of native grasses for reclamation in the oil, gas, mining and forestry industries is also increasing. Guidelines for the use of native species in both Alberta and British Columbia have been developed, and once initiated, the use of native seed will expand.

Over the last years there have been rapid advances in technology and communication of information. As more production techniques and marketing information is available and shared, the quality and viability of forage seed products becomes higher and more consistent.

There is currently a willingness by growers, seed trade and researchers to work cooperatively together. Both the growers and the seed trade value research efforts. In the last few years, we have seen a Seed Trade Consortium established to contribute to forage seed research projects in the Peace. Producers too have shown their willingness to work together by voluntarily writing cheques to a Producer Research Fund, and contributions to this fund have doubled over the last year. This atmosphere of researchers, growers and seed processors and marketers pulling together is one of our most important strengths. The emerging mutual respect represents a great opportunity for the forage seed industry in the Peace

The linkages between the forage seed industry and the Peace Region Forage Seed Association are strong. The membership in and respect for the Peace Region Forage Seed Association is increasing. The forage seed industry recognizes this group as the most logical and credible for a single voice to represent their interests.

The Needs and Challenges of the Forage Seed Industry

The needs and challenges of the forage seed industry in the Peace region of Alberta and British Columbia are discussed below under the 5 important components of the industry: research, production, processing, marketing and communication.

Research Needs and Challenges

Research to improve the quality and consistency of new and traditional turf and forage seed crops has been identified as a priority. Research initiated must be in consultation with the growers and the seed trade. Stable core funding is critical for forage seed researchers to be responsive to the rapidly changing industry. Implementing a forage seed levy in both provinces would help address research needs of the industry.

This region needs to strengthen research capability by generating dollars for research. There is currently a program, infrastructure and expertise in place at the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Station in Beaverlodge to conduct forage and turf seed research, but dollars for support are lacking. In addition the region has several applied research associations, private research companies and AAFRD extension and research personnel that can be contracted to conduct on-farm trials. Two main challenges facing research in the region are: 1) a consistent supply of funds to conduct research; and 2) direction from producers, seed trade companies and agri-businesses as to what type of research must be conducted.

At industry planning meetings, the following areas of plant breeding and variety evaluation research were identified as requiring more research:

- Cultivar testing
- Variety development: need to develop varieties with better disease and insect resistance, for example, need to replace Boreal creeping red fescue with a variety having greater resistance to stem eyespot
- Forage and turf quality balanced with seed production potential
- Plant survival problems: e.g. winter hardiness in tall fescue
- Seed set in legumes

The areas of production research were identified as:

- Pest management – weeds and insects
- Production practices – establishment, fertility, harvesting, post harvest management
- Cropping rotations - rejuvenation, moving in and out of perennial grass and legume seed crops in crop rotations
- Aftermath use by livestock – feeding straw and grazing re-growth in the fall

Production Needs and Challenges

Growers and seed trade companies must identify what forage, turf and native grass crops are best suited for seed production in the Peace. Consultation with the industry is needed as to what species have the largest potential for growth in the region. It is also critical to integrate yield performance with disease/insect resistance of varieties within species to ascertain if they are economically feasible to grow here. Growers and seed companies have lost money experimenting with various species/ varieties on a field scale production levels that did not perform well here.

Information packages focussing on a systems approach to seed production of both new and traditional seed crops are required. The importance of high quality seed and consistent yields cannot be underestimated if the region is to continue as one of the main seed producing areas in the world. There is continued need for minor use registration for pesticides (herbicides and insecticides) for the growing number of forage seed crops being grown in our region. Quality seed production is one of the main challenges of seed production in the region.

Growers have expressed a need for amendments to Crop Insurance. They feel there is a need to increase grass and legume species covered under Crop Insurance and expand coverage under Crop Insurance for swathed forage seed. The challenge here is that provincial policies may not be harmonized across this region.

Processing Needs and Challenges

To maintain a consistent, high quality supply of seed, weed issues continue to be a challenge. "Noxious" weeds need definition where forage seed is sold. There needs to be a clarification of standards, especially for native grass seed.

Marketing Needs and Challenges

There is a need to better understand both our current and potential markets. Information must be relayed from industry to the producers. On a global scale, the industry needs more information on policies, subsidies and production in other countries. On a North American scale, the industry needs more interaction with conservation and set-aside programs. There is a need to change the image of creeping red fescue as filler in seeding mixes. On a regional scale, the industry needs more information on other markets for seed uses (oil and gas or municipal uses).

There is a need for getting a "Peace Brand" recognized to take advantage of area opportunities. The challenging ingredients for success would be value adding and labelling concurrent with market development to promote and expand the Peace identity of quality forage seed. The challenge here is to identify the most effective mechanism to partner with efforts like the Branding the Peace project.

Communication Needs and Challenges

As the forage seed industry continues to diversify and expand, the need to maintain a single voice on behalf of all components of the industry becomes even more critical. Growers need accurate, rapid communication of information and interpretation of the impact of world farm policies on the forage seed industry. This will enable members and growers to be more involved in industry trends

Growers identified a clear need for more updated information on grass and legume seed production in several topic areas. They would also like more agronomy information for production during renovation crop rotation cycles. Growers would like to see production and marketing courses and seminars.

There is also a clear need for more communication between the forage seed industry and end users. The oil and gas industry and the reclamation companies are not always aware of the quality and variety of seed grown here in the Peace; and there needs to be a rationalization of revegetation requirements. We need to improve forage users knowledge about adaptations and use of forage varieties and species. Growers would like to see more integration of forage seed and livestock industries, and resolution of the endophyte issue.

The key to all these communication challenges is stable core funding for the Peace Region Forage Seed Association to be able to lead and coordinate forage seed communication and extension efforts. They need a more stable way of securing funding than patching small projects together, year by year. The challenge is balancing the need for funding agencies to have clear project deliverables with our industry's need for a more coordinated approach to funding several extension efforts within a theme. An annual communication plan needs to be developed and larger sums of funding applied for.

6. GOALS and STRATEGIES of the FORAGE SEED INDUSTRY

The goals of the forage seed industry in the Peace Region are to have:

1. Stronger forage seed research capabilities and increased producer directed research in our region.
2. Higher quality, consistency and profitability of forage seed production.
3. Peace Region producers making informed responses to global and regional opportunities and markets for forage seed.
4. A stronger voice for the Peace Region forage seed industry through the Peace Region Forage Seed Association.
5. Stable funding for research & extension activities through a forage seed levy in the Peace Region.

These 5 goals are described in more detail with strategic priorities and proposed actions:

❖ **Goal 1: Stronger forage seed research capabilities in the Peace Region.**

- Strategy 1: Encourage producer directed research.
 - Action 1: Establish an advisory committee for working with Beaverlodge researchers and for initiating projects with producer research funds.
 - Action 2: Improve forage seed producers representation on funding boards (e.g. ACIDF in AB, Advisory Committee of PRAD in BC).
 - Action 3: Promote the Producer Research Fund with canvassing by producers.
 - Action 4: Initiate new Producer Research Fund projects according to priorities set by producers, with clear traceable funding pathways.
 - Action 5: Encourage producer directed research through continued work on the requirements for a tax credit for producers contributing to research.
- Strategy 2: Support the “Grass Seed Program” at the Agriculture and Agri-Food Research Station.
 - Action 1: Provide funding to researchers
 - Action 2: Ensure research from Beaverlodge is extended to producers and seed trade.
- Strategy 3: Expand species and cultivar testing program.
 - Action 1: Encourage seed companies to enter varieties into Western Canadian Grass Testing Program.
 - Action 2: Integrate disease and insect assessment into variety testing.
 - Action 3: Encourage stem eyespot resistant creeping red fescue.

❖ **Goal 2: Higher quality, consistency and profitability of forage seed production.**

- Strategy 1: Investigate economical weed control practices.
 - Action 1: Continue herbicide minor use registration trials on seedling and established crops.
 - Action 2: Evaluate herbicides applied in spring and/or fall for weed control.
- Strategy 2: Develop crop management systems for various species.
- Strategy 3: Streamline seed certification system.
- Strategy 4: Improve the crop insurance for forage seed growers.
 - Action 1: Extend coverage to all crops and grades, not just certified.
 - Action 2: Extend coverage to include swathed forage seed crops.

❖ **Goal 3: Peace Region producers making informed responses to global and regional opportunities and markets for forage seed.**

- Strategy 1: Integrate and interact with forage/ livestock industry.
 - Action 1: Investigate feed quality and endophyte levels of aftermath.
 - Action 2: Cooperate with value added initiatives with benefits to this industry.
- Strategy 2: Promote the Peace Region as a leaf cutter bee chalk brood free zone.
 - Action 1: Inform the current alfalfa seed and leaf cutter bee producers that this region is recognized for being disease free and of the potential market for disease free bees in Australia.
 - Action 2: Discourage bringing bees into our region.
 - Action 3: Inform the public of the Chalk Brood Free Zone and educate new producers.
- Strategy 3: Increase producer awareness of issues affecting our forage seed markets.
 - Action 1: Inform producers of other government policies.
 - Action 2: Monitor GMO issue and impact on forage seed markets.
 - Action 3: Inform producers of environmental issues affecting forage seed industry.

❖ **Goal 4: A stronger voice for the Peace Region turf and forage seed industry through the Peace Region Forage Seed Association.**

- Strategy 1: Improve written and verbal communication.
 - Action 1: Host annual seminars and tours.
 - Action 2: Host Canadian conference once every 6 years.
 - Action 3: Write articles for Forage Seed News magazine.
 - Action 4: Enhance information available through FBI Net or Ropin the Web.
 - Action 5: Compile production information and herbicide research updates and handbooks.
- Strategy 2: Maintain a single voice for forage seed industry in Peace Region.
 - Action 1: Continue to promote membership in PRFSA to represent all producers.
- Strategy 3: Reduce burden and compliment efforts by volunteer leaders.
 - Action 1: Access funding to hire administrator/ coordinator for organization.
 - Action 2: Maintain BCMAFF and AAFRD support for associations and projects.
- Strategy 4: Improve communication with livestock producers.
 - Action 1: Share information about variety selection, feed value and endophytes. through seminars and news articles.

❖ **Goal 5: Stable and optimal use of funding for research and extension activities through a forage seed levy in the Peace Region.**

- Strategy 1: Work with seed processors and trade to implement a forage seed levy where confidentiality and efficiency are assured.
 - Action 1: Investigate and coordinate requirements to legislate in both Alberta and BC
 - Action 2: Discuss options and select most appropriate and cost efficient method of collecting a levy on forage and turf seed.
 - Action 3: Communicate progress to industry through articles and meetings.

7. OPERATIONS and BUSINESS PLAN

The following chapter describes the operations and business plan, with expected income and expenses over the next 3 years. Table 4 details sources of all potential and confirmed income with the projected amounts in years 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006. Since levy funds will not be available for allocation until early 2005, the income will vary dramatically from the first to the latter years.

Table 4: Income From All Sources 2003-2006

Levy Funds Scenarios	Amount	Units			
Levy rate	0.75 %				
Average acres of production	225,000 acres				
Average yield of seed	300 lb/ac				
Price	\$0.40 per lb				
Farm gate sales	\$27,000,000				
Levy collected	\$202,500.00				
Refunds requested/ processed (%)			30	25	20
Net Levy funds			\$141,800.00	\$151,900.00	\$162,000.00

Industry Funds	Year 2003	Year 2004	Year 2005	Year 2006
Contributions from growers				
Levy funds (from previous year)			\$141,800.00	\$151,900.00
Producer Research Funds (previous year)	\$7,700.00	\$5,000.00		
Memberships	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00
Registrations at events	\$2,300.00	\$2,400.00	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
Peace Region Forage Seed Association	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00		
Agribusiness contributions				
Corporate memberships	\$3,500.00	\$3,500.00	\$3,500.00	\$3,500.00
Agribusiness sponsors at events	\$2,300.00	\$2,300.00	\$2,300.00	\$2,300.00
Minor use registration funding	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00
Total Industry Funds	\$38,800.00	\$36,200.00	\$166,300.00	\$176,400.00
Other Income				
PRAD (BC Research Sites, Events)	\$27,550.00			
BC Investment Agriculture Fdn (current)	\$6,150.00			
BC Investment Agriculture Fdn (approved)	\$21,000.00	\$30,625.00	\$19,600.00	\$0.00
Alberta CARD (approved)	\$39,000.00	\$56,875.00	\$36,400.00	\$0.00
Other Alberta Sources (eg. ACIDF)				
Total Matching Funds	\$93,700.00	\$87,500.00	\$56,000.00	\$0.00
Total Funds for Industry Development	\$132,500.00	\$123,700.00	\$222,300.00	\$176,400.00
<i>Compare to Total Expenses</i>	<i>\$135,300.00</i>	<i>\$165,400.00</i>	<i>\$250,500.00</i>	<i>\$240,400.00</i>

Organizing the Funds to Implement Business Plan				
Industry Funds to CARD/IAF Proposal	\$15,000.00	\$15,500.00	\$84,000.00	\$104,000.00
Approved CARD/IAF funds	\$60,000.00	\$87,500.00	\$56,000.00	\$0.00
Industry Funds Left for Other Commitments	\$23,800.00	\$20,700.00	\$82,300.00	\$72,400.00
BC Funds Committed to Date	\$33,700.00			
Funds Needed from Other Sources	\$2,800.00	\$41,700.00	\$28,200.00	\$64,000.00

Discussion and Explanations of Budget Income

To meet the goals and strategies over the next year, the PRFSA will need to use funds from the voluntary Producer Research Fund and other reserves. Income in year 2004 and 2005 includes levy income using average estimates of acres, yields and market value. In 2006, the PRFSA would take its turn hosting the Canadian Alfalfa and Forage Seed Conference in January. Thus the expected income includes more registration and agribusiness sponsorship.

The projected income from levy funds is based on average acreage figures between those of Canada Census figures of 1991 and 2001. Price per pound used is the long term average market price for the major crop grown. Levy rate used is the initial rate collected. A high refund percentage is used to compensate for both the graduated rate and the higher refund requests that historically are associated with the early years of bringing a levy system into an industry. The levy rate, graduated rate and refunds are discussed in more detail in the "Collection of Forage Seed Levy" section.

Ideally, a reserve would be set aside as the levy funds are collected. This is important to buffer and stabilize the budget available for research and extension from the extreme highs and lows of the market place.

At the time of writing this strategy report, the majority of funds required to work on these strategic priorities has been negotiated and confirmed. However, the last line in the income statement includes a budget shortfall. This line identifies the need to either organize more funds from other sources or revise the timing of the strategic plan activities. The Peace Region Forage Seed Association has the resources to meet the budget shortfall for 2003. As this industry builds on its existing reputation and track record, it is anticipated that there will be other funding partners for specific initiatives in 2004 to 2006.

Table 5: Financial Plan 2003-2006 for Research & Extension Activities of Peace Region Forage Seed Assoc.

Expenses by goal:	Year 2003	Year 2004	Year 2005	Year 2006
1.Stronger forage seed research capabilities in the Peace Region:				
	\$25,000.0	\$20,000.0		
Baldonnel Research Trials	0	0	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00
Beaverlodge Research Trials (<i>includes fertility, entomology, disease & varietal testing</i>)			\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00
Stem Eyespot Resistant Creeping Red Fescue Trials		\$5,000.00	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00
2.Higher quality, consistency & profitability of forage seed production:				
Fall/ Spring Weed Control Trials (Cleavers, Thistle, Grasses)	\$15,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
Weed Control in Established Red/Alsike Clover		\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00
Wild Oat Control in Bromegrass		\$7,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
Herbicide Minor Use Registration Trials	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
Control of Stem Eyespot on Creeping Red Fescue		\$9,000.00	\$9,000.00	\$9,000.00
Crop Rotation/ Crop Establishment Trials/ Rejuvenation	\$7,000.00	\$12,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00
3.Peace Region producers making informed responses to global or regional opportunities and markets:				
Integrate with Livestock Sector: Feed/Endophyte Survey	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00		
Integrate with Disease Free Bee Market: Chalkbrood Survey			\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00
4.A stronger voice for the Peace Region turf and forage seed industry:				
Annual Seminars/ Conference/ Trade Shows	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$8,000.00	\$10,000.00
Annual Summer Tours/ Field Days	\$3,000.00	\$4,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$7,500.00
Info transfer from Activities 1,2,3 by appropriate methods	\$8,000.00	\$11,000.00	\$23,400.00	\$23,400.00
Production Handbooks & Herbicide Research Updates	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00	\$8,000.00	\$9,000.00
Alberta Forage Seed Database/ Website Updates		\$1,000.00	\$3,000.00	\$10,000.00
Contracted compiling/distributing updates & information	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$6,000.00	\$7,000.00
Postage for 4-6 updates per year	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00	\$6,600.00	\$6,600.00
5.Stable and optimal use of funding for research and extension activities:				
Administration				
Bank charges, society fees & directors insurance	\$100.00	\$200.00	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00
Bookkeeping, audits	\$3,000.00	\$4,000.00	\$5,200.00	\$8,100.00
Equipped Office, Phone, Internet, Fax, Operating Supplies	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00
Administrative Setup				
Levy systems design & setup	\$8,500.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	
Amalgamating business plans for 3 levy groups & accountability		\$4,000.00	\$8,000.00	
Stable funding industry meetings & communication plan	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00	
Incremental office & directors expenses	\$4,500.00	\$6,000.00	\$10,000.00	
Coordinator of PRFSA Activities				
Proposals & reporting to funders, meeting prep & follow up	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00
Extension: organizing tours, seminars, presentations	\$4,800.00	\$4,800.00	\$4,800.00	\$4,800.00
Extension: FSN, letters, articles, posters, displays	\$4,800.00	\$4,800.00	\$4,800.00	\$4,800.00
Research projects & student coordination	\$5,600.00	\$5,600.00	\$7,200.00	\$7,200.00
Board Expenses (<i>meetings, conference calls, meals, travel</i>)			\$5,000.00	\$7,500.00
Total Expenses	\$135,300.00	\$165,400.00	\$250,500.00	\$240,400.00

Discussion and Explanations of Budget Expenses

Each line in the projected expenditures budget refers to a specific research and extension project or initiative that is critical to meeting the goals and strategies of the forage seed industry. Projects are grouped by the goals they address. Each project or initiative will be developed into detailed proposal(s) for submitting to appropriate funding agencies and partners. Annual evaluation by Research Advisory Committee and PRFSA Board of Directors will monitor their progress in meeting priorities of the strategic plan.

Research and extension projects are described in more detail in Appendix A, with who is expected to take the lead role, objectives, potential funding partners and total budget. As funding partners are confirmed, relevant funding ratio information will be added.

Under the current climates of declining provincial government support and without a forage seed levy in place for 2003, the Peace Region Forage Seed Association will need to delay funding some important initiatives until 2004 or 2005. Our support of a Minor Use Consortium to improve on the efficiency of the herbicide registrations for minor uses and some key weed control trials will have to be delayed. Some of the initiatives to produce publications, herbicide updates and production information, that producers have requested, must also be delayed. PRFSA will be unable to provide continuity to several valued initiatives that were initiated with funds from the Seed Trade Consortium. Once the levy is in place in both provinces, these projects and initiatives that are valued by growers will be possible.

Expenditures for the Forage Seed News and distribution costs will increase in year 2004 and 2005. It is envisioned that every levy paying grower will receive the quality magazine as part of their levy paying member benefits. Circulation during the initial years of promoting the levy is expected to be over 1200.

The other expenditure to note is the line in the budget for: annual seminars, conferences and trade shows. PRFSA envisions spending more time, effort and funds on extension initiatives to ensure all forage seed growers are informed of the details of the forage seed levy. The increase in 2005 reflects that as the year when PRFSA will take its turn hosting the Canadian Alfalfa and Forage Seed Conference.

Budget estimates will change with any delays in establishing the levy collection and allocation process. Expenses on both research and extension activities would need to be scaled down to match the delay or drop in income, but this association already operates very efficiently and economically. Alternately, recognizing the importance of continuity for a growing industry, some funds may need to be organized, to assist the forage seed industry with the next period of transition and getting the levy collection, administration and allocation process running smoothly.

8. ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN

The following section describes the committee structure, collection of forage seed levy, process of allocating funding expenditures and the communication plan. It also addresses the issues of accountability, confidentiality and performance measurement.

Commission Structure and Accountability

There is need for 3 organizations, each with a critical role in the development of forage seed industry in the Peace Region. First, the role of the Peace Region Forage Seed Association will be more important than ever in coordinating the funding allocations from 2 commissions in 2 provinces to progress in a cohesive manner towards meeting the goals and priorities of the five year strategic plan for the forage seed industry in the Peace Region (as outlined in this document). Within the region, two sets of provincial legislative requirements must be met, and thus there is a need for a commission in each province. In Alberta, a new commission will be formed: the Alberta Peace Region Forage Seed Growers. In British Columbia, the forage seed levy collection will become an additional role for the existing BC Peace River Grain Industry Development Council (BCPRGIDC).

The Board of Directors of the Peace Region Forage Seed Association is a seven member board consisting of three Alberta producers, three BC producers and one seed trade member. The Board currently has three advisors from AAFRD, BCMAFF and AAFC. At the next Annual General Meeting before the levy start up, elections will be held for directors of the association and commissions in terms as laid out in the bylaws. The 3 Alberta growers will serve on both the PRFSA Board and the Board for the Alberta Peace Region Forage Seed Growers commission. The 3 BC growers will serve on both the PRFSA Board and act as advisors to the BCPRGIDC Board.

Confidentiality

The administrators/managers of the BC Grain Industry Development Council and the Alberta Peace Region Forage Seed Growers and the Peace Region Forage Seed Association will maintain all records. Information regarding individual farms will be held strictly confidential. Both administrators/ managers will sign confidentiality agreements and records from both offices will be subjected to a full audit annually.

Confidentiality of individual producer and trade information will be assured.

Collection of Forage Seed Levy

The forage seed levy will be collected from the sale of all perennial legumes and grasses grown to produce seed, and will include both pedigreed and common seed. Levied crops will include, but not be limited to, the following perennial seed crops: alfalfa, birdsfoot trefoil, sweet clover, red clover, alsike clover, smooth and meadow bromegrass, Kentucky blue grass, reed canarygrass, orchard grass, canary reed grass, meadow fescue, creeping red fescue, tall fescue, fine fescues, creeping bentgrasses, perennial ryegrass, Russian wild rye, Altai wildrye, slender western wheat grass, northern wheat grass, native grasses and native legumes.

A levy will be collected at a scale appropriate for the size of operation and sales, on all forage seed crops at point of sale in the Peace Region of Alberta and British Columbia. The levy rate will be based on total sales of forage and turf seeds as follows:

<u>Rate:</u>	<u>Amount of sales:</u>
0.75 %	\$ 0 to \$200,000
0.50 %	\$200,000 to \$500,000
0.25 %	\$500,000 and over

This graduated levy rate was set as an alternative to a levy cap after lengthy discussion of the following considerations. There is a wide range in the size of forage seed operations in the Peace Region. All growers contributing to a commission receive the basic services provided by the funds eg. newsletters, tours, seminars, etc. regardless of the amount contributed. We have a significant number of larger seed producing farms that could significantly affect the operating budget with their refund requests. The benefits for the amount contributed decline after a certain level. However, caps are difficult to arbitrarily set and their appropriateness changes over time. Since the levy is a refundable levy, every grower has the option of setting their own cap, and applying for a partial or full refund.

The levy will be collected at all points of sale by the seed trade companies or first receivers at the time of sale over the whole year. Collected funds will be passed on to either the BC Peace River Grain Industry Development Council or the Alberta Peace Region Forage Seed Growers. This will be done at a minimum of two times annually, or seed companies may elect to submit levy funds monthly.

When the fees are forwarded to the commissions and PRFSA, the seed company or purchaser will supply: the name and address of each producer from whom the fees were withheld, the amount of the fees, the quantity and type of forage seed purchased and the crop class, whether common, certified or foundation seed.

There will be two types of refunds provided to producers: 1. refund in response to an application and 2. refund in response to a large amount of total annual sales. First of all, any producer may apply for a refund. An application in writing for refund must be received by association before January 31 for the previous twelve month period January 1 to December 31. If the refund application complies with this, the association shall make the refund within 60 days after January 31. Secondly, refunds will automatically be issued for sales over \$200,000 according to the graduated scales for larger producers.

In the future, producers may be able to receive research tax credits for the proportion of the levy funds that has been allocated to "recognized research institutions and projects". At the time of writing, there remains considerable work with accountants and Revenue Canada in getting the PRFSA on the "recognized list". For a more complete discussion see Appendix B.

Process of Expenditures of Funds and Project Allocation Process

Funds for research will be transferred to the research account at the agreed upon percentage of levy collected (ranging from 50 to 60%). Research funds will be allocated to research project proposals reviewed and approved by the Research Advisory Committee. The allocated funds will either be directly awarded to the research group for matching within their agency or matched with government funds appropriate for the specific initiative or project. Since the association has several different funding partners, depending on the type and location of the project. Therefore funding ratios of industry funds to matching funds will reflect regional priorities and appropriateness for each funding agency, ranging from 50%: 50% to 20%: 80% to some 100%:0% (for any activities considered general operations of the association).

Communication Plan

There are two important aspects of the Communication Plan:

- Communication for Industry Support of Levy
- Communication for Accountability after Levy Setup

Communication for Industry Support of Levy:

The Board of Directors will distribute the Strategic Plan for the Forage Seed Industry of the Peace Region to all interested stakeholders including growers, processors, members of the research community and appropriate government agencies.

Information about research and extension activities and the strategic plan will be provided in annual reports and aggregate statements of accounts. There will also be regular updates in the Forage Seed News, a quality magazine, published quarterly.

The communication plan for implementing the forage seed levy will include:

1. Mailing letters to all growers: a mailing list of all forage seed growers in the Peace will be developed. Letters and/or pamphlets will be sent out at least twice to all growers outlining the details of the levy collection and intended use of funds. The first update would be sent out prior to the annual meetings to encourage attendance and input into the formation of a commission. The second update would be sent after the details of the commission's structure and operation have been thoroughly discussed and finalized.
2. Discussing the levy at annual general meeting in March: time will be allocated to discussion of the commission and participation will be encouraged by including a crowd drawing speaker in the day's agenda.
3. Distributing pamphlets: outlining the answers to the most frequently asked questions about the levy on turf and forage seed, and any similarities or differences between Alberta and British Columbia.
4. Displaying information: a forage seed display and discussion platform will be at appropriate farm trade shows and agriculture events.
5. Writing articles: newspaper articles about the formation of the commission will be placed in "Agri-News" and in Peace Region newspapers such as "Northern Horizon" and "Peace Country Farm Life".
6. Discussing commission over radio programs: information will be distributed using programs such as "Call of the Land".
7. Meeting with seed trade processors: to review details of the levy and process for collecting it.

The results of the communication efforts to date by PRFSA and the Stable Funding Committee are summarized in Appendix C. These have been accepted by representatives from the Alberta Marketing Council in Edmonton and BCMAFF Minister's office in Victoria.

Communication for Accountability after Levy Setup:

The Association carries out an important communication function for the Peace Region's forage seed industry. The following are the components of the association's communication activity:

1. Discussing levy at production seminars & annual general meetings: updates about research projects, market trends and production developments keep growers informed about the forage seed industry and project expenditures.
2. Featuring articles in Forage Seed News and other appropriate media: to provide updates for growers about projects and developments in the industry.
3. Updating during tours and field days: about the use of levy funds for projects while visiting some of the research sites.
4. Compiling production manuals: will ensure growers get some hands on benefits from the levy.

In summary, the Peace Region Forage Seed Association will ensure that the majority of the forage seed producers in the Peace Region are aware of the commission and have an opportunity to have input into the development. They will also ensure that levy paying growers are aware of how the funds are being spent, and have opportunities to set priorities or elect representatives to represent

them in discussions. All levy paying growers will be entitled to apply for full or partial refunds, if they are dissatisfied with how these funds are being spent.

Evaluation and Performance Measurement

The Board of Directors will monitor successful completion of objectives of all research and extension projects according to budgets and timelines approved.

The association will modify its policies and procedures in cooperation with and as per requirements of Alberta and British Columbia legislation for industry commission guidelines.

The association will have competent accounting procedures and will provide financial statements as determined necessary by Alberta Marketing Council and by BC Levy Council to ensure that the fees paid to the association are properly used for the purpose of the association.

Every purchaser of forage seed grown or harvested in the Peace Region of Alberta and British Columbia will keep and maintain complete and accurate books and records respecting the purchase of forage seed and provide copies of them when requested to do so by the agency.

Every levy contributor will annually receive an account statement indicating the contributions made in the previous year. Each contributor will also receive regular detailed reports in the magazine "Forage Seed News" reporting on projects and research funded by the levy funds.

In summary, conscientious effort will be made to keep all parties informed about the amounts and uses of forage seed levy funds collected and allocated each year.

APPENDIX A:**Research & Extension Activities of PRFSA: Description of Projects Within Business Plan**

The following pages describe briefly research and extension projects to be undertaken in the near future, grouped according to the goal or strategy they address within the business plan. For a more complete list of goals and strategies for the next five years, refer to page 11.

❖ **Goal 1: Stronger forage seed research capabilities in the Peace Region.**➤ **Strategy 1: Encourage producer directed research.**Objectives:

- a) To establish an advisory committee for working with Beaverlodge researchers and for initiating projects with producer research funds.
- b) To improve forage seed producers' representation on funding boards (ACIDF in AB, Advisory Committee of PRAD/Grain Levy Council in BC).
- c) To initiate new Producer Research Fund projects according to priorities set by producers, with clear traceable funding pathways.
- d) To encourage producer directed research through continued work on the requirements for a tax credit for producers contributing to research.

Lead Role: PRFSA directors, members and Sandra Burton, Coordinator

Partners: AAFC, AAFRD, BCMAFF

Budget: *no separate budget line at this time, within coordinator budget under Goal 5.*

➤ **Strategy 2: Support the “Grass Seed Program” at the Agriculture and Agri-food Research Station by providing funding to researchers.**

Cultivar Trials: *a recognized part of the Grass Seed Program covered under Strategy 3 below.*

Fertility Trials:**Timing and Amount of Fertilizers on Grass Seed Crops**

Objective: To determine the appropriate rates and timing for the application of fertilizers to seed production stands of grass seed crops.

Lead Role: Dr. Nigel Fairey

Partners: AAFC, AAFRD, AARI

Budget: \$5000

Entomology/ Disease Control Trials:**Silvertop Damage on Creeping Red Fescue**

Objective: To determine the effect of chemical and cultural control techniques in controlling silvertop in creeping red fescues.

Lead Role: Jennifer Otani

Partners: AAFC, (in past supported by Seed Trade Consortium)

Budget: \$5000

Stem Eyespot Control in Creeping Red Fescue

Objective: To determine the effectiveness of fungicides in controlling stem eyespot in commercial stands of creeping red fescue.

Lead Role: Jennifer Otani, Klein-Gebbnick

Partners: AAFC, (in past supported by Seed Trade Consortium)

Budget: \$5000

Crop Rotation/ Crop Establishment/ Rejuvenation Trials:

Some of the trials described under Goal 2 would be carried out through the “Grass Seed Program” at the Agriculture and Agri-Food Research Station in Beaverlodge; and some trials would be at Baldonnel and other sites.

➤ **Strategy 3: Expand species and cultivar testing program, coordinating with Western Canadian Grass Seed Testing Program, and including a satellite location in BC (Baldonnel)**

Objective:

- a) To determine the seed production potential and adaptability of grass varieties for contract seed production in support of domestic and export markets.
- b) To encourage seed trade companies to enter varieties into the testing program.
- c) To integrate disease and insect assessment into variety testing.

Lead Role: Henry Najda, Program Coordinator, Dr. Nigel Fairey, Beaverlodge Trial Coordinator and Sandra Burton, Baldonnel Trial Coordinator

Partners: AAFC, AAFRD, PRAD

Budget: \$5,000 (Beaverlodge Research Station) \$15,000 (PRAD \$ to Baldonnel site)

Stem Eyespot Resistance Breeding Research with Creeping Red Fescue

Objective: To evaluate and compare seed yields of stem eyespot resistant replacements for Boreal creeping red fescue.

Lead Role: Dr. Brian Holl

Partners: PRFSA, Lamorna Enterprises Ltd., Henry Vos, BC Inv Agric Fdn

Budget: \$0 to \$8000/ year

❖ **Goal 2: Higher quality, consistency & profitability of forage seed production.**

➤ **Strategy 1: Investigate economical weed control practices:**

Fall/ Spring Weed Control Trials (Cleavers, Thistle, Grasses)

Objective: To evaluate weed control on seedling and established grass seed crops.

Lead Role: Calvin Yoder, Dan Cole

Partners: PRFSA, SARDA, CARD/BCIAF

Budget: \$10,000 to \$15,000/ year dependent on transition funding

Weed Control Trials in Established Red and Alsike Clover

Objective: To evaluate tolerance of established red and alsike clover to herbicides.

Lead Role: Calvin Yoder

Partners: SARDA, Peace River Seed Co-op and Brett Young Seeds, CARD/BCIAF

Budget: \$0 to \$6,000/year dependent on transition funding

Wild Oat Control in Bromegrass

Objectives:

- a) To evaluate herbicides for controlling wild oats in smooth, meadow & hybrid brome seed crops.
- b) To determine the most effective timing for the use of post-emergence herbicides for controlling wild oats in bromegrass seed crops.

Lead Role: Calvin Yoder, Dan Cole

Partners: AAFRD, SARDA, AAFC, CARD/BCIAF

Budget: \$0 to \$10,000/year dependent on transition funding

Wild Oat Control in Tall Fescue

Objectives:

- a) To evaluate residual herbicide for controlling wild oats in tall fescue seed crops.
- b) To determine the most effective timing for the use of post-emergence herbicides for controlling wild oats in tall fescue seed crops.

Lead Role: Dr. Nigel Fairey, Dr. John O'Donovan

Partners: AAFC Matching Investment Initiative, Canadian Seed Growers Association

Budget: \$0 to \$3,500/year

Herbicide Minor Use Registration Trials on Seedling and Established Grasses and Legumes

Objective: To generate data to submit applications for minor use registrations of herbicides on grass and legume seed crops.

Lead Role: Calvin Yoder, Dan Cole

Partners: AAFC, AAFRD, SARDA, CARD/BCIAF herbicide companies and agribusinesses

Budget: \$10,000/year dependent on transition funding

➤ **Strategy 2: Develop crop management systems for various species.**

Establishment Systems for Seed Production of Creeping Red Fescue.

Objectives:

a) To evaluate systems of establishing seed stands of creeping red fescue, which when grown with a canola companion crop, eliminate the usual non-productive 'clip' year for the fescue in the year after establishment. The treatments include the use of fall-dormant-seeding technology for both the canola and fescue crops.

b) To evaluate the establishment of seed stands of creeping red fescue when sown together with spring-sown canola of various types of herbicide tolerance (Roundup, Liberty, Pursuit) and using the weed control opportunities appropriate for each type of herbicide-tolerant canola.

Lead Role: Dr. Nigel Fahey, Dr. John O'Donovan

Partners: AAFC Matching Investment Initiative, (in past support by Seed Trade Consortium)

Budget: \$0 to \$6000/year dependent on funding

Fescue Rejuvenation Project

Objectives:

a) To evaluate various fescue rejuvenation methods.

b) To provide information for future fescue production manuals.

Lead Role: Don Pedersen, Sandra Burton

Partners: Producer Research Fund, PRAD

Budget: \$0 to \$5000/ year dependent on PRAD funding

❖ **Goal 3: Peace Region producers making informed responses to global or regional markets and opportunities.**

➤ **Strategy 1: Integrate and interact with forage/ livestock industry.**

Feed Values and Endophyte Levels in Grass Seed Straw Bales

Objective: To survey a variety of producers and types of bales to evaluate the feed value and endophyte levels, to respond to the increased interest in utilizing forage seed straw bales as a livestock feed source.

Lead Role: Calvin Yoder, Sandra Burton

Partners: AAFRD, CARD, BCIAF

Budget: \$4000/year for 2 years dependent on transition funding

➤ **Strategy 2: Promote the Peace Region as a leaf cutter bee chalk brood free zone.**

Objective: To promote the Peace Region as a leaf cutter bee chalk brood free zone by conducting a survey and encouraging alfalfa seed producers to test for chalk brood.

Lead Role: Bernie Legault, Calvin Yoder

Partners: PRFSA, CARD, BCIAF

Budget: \$4000/year for 2 years dependent on transition funding

- ❖ **Goal 4: A stronger voice for the Peace Region forage seed industry.**
 - **Strategy 1: Improve written and verbal communication.**

Annual Production & Marketing Seminars In Winter

Objective: To provide a forum for discussing the latest research, market and production information relevant to the Peace Region.

Lead Role: Sandra Burton, Calvin Yoder

Partners: AAFRD, PRAD, AAFC

Budget: \$5000 to \$8000/year dependent on number of events

Canadian Alfalfa and Grass Seed Conference

Objective: To take our turn hosting the Canadian Alfalfa and Grass Seed Conference; to provide a forum for information sharing from all components of the forage seed industry across Canada.

Lead Role: once every 6 years, PRFSA

Partners: AAFRD, BCMAFF, AAFC, Seed Trade Companies and Agribusinesses

Budget: \$40,000

Annual Summer Tours and Field Days

Objective: To bring forage seed producers, researchers, crop consultants, seed trade and agribusinesses together to update each other and walk through a variety of seed crops and plots in the Peace Region.

Lead Role: Calvin Yoder, Sandra Burton

Partners: AAFRD, BCMAFF, AAFC, PRAD

Budget: \$3000 to \$7,500/year dependent on number of events

Production Updates through Handbooks, Websites or Agdex/ BCMAFF Publications

Objective: To compliment extension efforts to provide production updates through appropriate means including handbooks, websites or Agdex publications.

Lead Role: Calvin Yoder, Kerry Clark

Partners: AAFRD, BCMAFF, CARD, BCIAF

Budget: \$3000 to \$9,000/ year dependent on transition funding

Coordination of Communication and Extension Initiatives

Objectives:

a) To reduce burden and compliment efforts of volunteer leaders by hiring a coordinator and bookkeeper for PRFSA.

b) To respond quickly to changing communication needs as situations arise.

Lead Role: Sandra Burton, Board of Directors

Partners: PRFSA, AAFRD, BCMAFF

Budget: \$9,600/year (Extension part of coordinator expense) + \$5,000/year (Bookkeeper)

- ❖ **Goal 5: Stable funding through a forage seed levy for the Peace Region.**

This goal of the PRFSA translates into several budget lines to insure it is administered in the most cost effective manner. Costs will be more in the initial years of implementation and getting efficiently operating systems in place.

Harmonize Business Plans and Design Administrative Systems for Forage Seed Levy

Objectives: To implement and administer a forage seed levy in both Alberta and British Columbia.

Lead Role: PFRSA Stable Funding Initiative Committee

Partners: PRFSA, BC Investment Agriculture Foundation, Alberta CARD Fund

Budget: \$12,000 to \$15,000/ year in early years

APPENDIX B: Research Tax Credits and the Peace Region Forage Seed Association

Summary prepared by Kerry Clark, BCMAFF, Fort St. John, BC

Below is a summary of my findings regarding the possibility of PRFSA participating in the Scientific Research and Experimental Development (SR&ED) tax credit program. Further information is available from the BC representative for the program Angelito Vizcarra 604 666 0198 <<mailto:vizcarra.angelito@ccra.gc.ca>> or the AB rep Jagjit Bhullar 403-233-6299.

My impression: there's a possible financial benefit to levy contributors, but the process wouldn't be easy and there would be time and expenses incurred by the association.

My concept of the benefits: Levy amounts paid by producers for a levy would be (in addition to a business expense deduction from income) partly eligible as a tax credit. The amount would be a portion (20 % for individuals, 35 % for corporations) of the amount of the levy fund used for qualifying research (including contributions to Ag Canada projects, but apparently NOT those done directly by association staff). The tax credit amount would be equivalent to a payment toward income tax owing, and refundable in some cases. The amount would be declared as "income" in the year it is received.

And the costs: There would be some work to do by the association, to establish eligibility of projects and approval of research "institutions" (universities and Ag +Ag Food Canada are OK, others would have to be approved). Hopefully much of this work would be required only once (approvals would extend to subsequent years).

As an example: farmer participants in the wheat or barley check-off program (Western Grains Research Foundation) are informed by newsletter, that (for instance) 90 % of the levy is eligible. Each farmer (knowing how much levy was paid) calculates and claims the tax credit.

Other research tax credits for each province (10 % for BC) are available, with rules for eligibility similar to those for the federal one.

Someone (or organization) who works through this process might be a valuable consultant to other associations who want to set up the same thing. It may be a job for a tax accountant. Further information:

General info on the research tax credit program

< <http://www.ccra.gc.ca/sred> > <http://www.ccra.gc.ca/sred> >

Announcement of expansion of the program for farm producers

< <http://www.ccra-adrc.gc.ca/newsroom/releases/2002/feb/agrifood-e.html> >

<http://www.ccra-adrc.gc.ca/newsroom/releases/2002/feb/agrifood-e.html> >

Further announcement re farm producers

< <http://www.ccra-adrc.gc.ca/taxcredit/sred/check-e.html> >

<http://www.ccra-adrc.gc.ca/taxcredit/sred/check-e.html> >

Specifically, the info re farm producer organization levies

< <http://www.ccra-adrc.gc.ca/taxcredit/sred/checkoff-e.html> >

<http://www.ccra-adrc.gc.ca/taxcredit/sred/checkoff-e.html> >

Guidance specifically for plant breeders/seed industry.

< <http://www.ccra-adrc.gc.ca/taxcredit/sred/plant-e.html> >

<http://www.ccra-adrc.gc.ca/taxcredit/sred/plant-e.html> >

In essence, eligibility requires that there be scientific and technical content, being performed in an environment of scientific or technical uncertainty (i.e. the outcome is not readily apparent) and leading toward scientific or technical advancement. (So far so good I think, for eligibility of PRFSA research.)

Non-qualifying work includes demonstration plots for the purpose of promoting new cultivars, and testing of lines for purposes of making registration, commercial or marketing decisions. A decision would have to be made on those points.

The process that was developed by the Western Grains Research Foundation in consultation with CCRA is:

- 1) that the check-off organization (WGRF) would act as an agent of farmers in matters pertaining to the SR&ED program. This statement was added to WGRF's bylaws. In being agents of producers, WGRF completes CCRA Form T661 each year to establish the % of the check-off that is eligible for the tax credit calculation i.e. administration and other non research expenses are not eligible.
- 2) Communication to producers through newsletters was deemed sufficient notice of the % eligibility and the research projects funded. No individual mail out informing producers of what they contributed is necessary.
- 3) To claim the tax credit it is up to each farmer to keep a record of their contributions and to complete CCRA Form T2038 if an individual or T2SCH31 if an incorporated farm business.

<http://www.westerngrains.com/> > <http://www.westerngrains.com/> > click on "More" under "Tax credit available"

APPENDIX C: Communication Plan January 1 to June 30, 2003**Demonstrating Producer Support of Levy In Peace Region of British Columbia and Alberta
by the Peace Region Forage Seed Association**

A comprehensive plan was undertaken by the PRFSA Stable Funding Committee for communication with producers and implemented from January 1 to June 30, 2003. This is part of a longer term communication process and a timeline of significant events leading up to this period of time (see "Timeline Leading to Stable Funding Initiative"), and part of a planned set of communication phases to follow as PRFSA progresses through the design and implementation of the levy and phase 2 of their business plan.

The measures of industry consultation and the indications of support of the current extensive communication plan phase 1 are highlighted below in text and in the accompanying spreadsheet in tabular form. They clearly demonstrate support of proposed levy on turf and forage seed grown in Peace Region by producers and seed trade companies in both provinces.

Phase 1: Extensive communication about details of proposed levy (January - June 2003)**1. dedicated phone line: 250 789 6895**

Why? Past experience by other associations has proven a dedicated line as an effective means to facilitate feedback

What was done:

- phone line set up Feb 1, 2003
- both with voice mail, and call display in case producers were reluctant to leave a message
- conversation record sheets set up near telephone to record concerns and comments

Indications of support: as of June 30, 2003 only 2 calls: 1 from Harvey Glasier to check line worked, 1 from Brenda Birley to interview coordinator for newspaper article.

2. newspapers, newsletters, magazines:

Why? The Northern Horizon and Peace Country Farmer newspapers are mailed to every rural post office box in both provinces. Other medias were used to increase the awareness level and compliment the coverage by these two high rural circulation papers.

What was done:

- 7 newspaper articles in Northern Horizon (circulation 28,000), Peace Country Farmer (circulation 60,000), Country Life in BC (9000), NPARA (2000) and Peace Country Forage (10,000) newsletters
- 4 newspaper ads: 4 in Northern Horizon and Peace Country Farmer to let growers know about opportunity to discuss proposed levy at meetings in Fort St. John and Fairview
- magazine articles: in Canada wide Forage Seed News in 3 issues (circulation 250 in Peace)

Indications of support: no calls expressing concern to any of directors or committee members

3. pamphlets with 4 pages of details about proposed levy and several contact numbers printed

Why? Direct mailing of information to farmers has proven itself to many organizations to continue to be one of the most effective methods of reaching producers in the Peace Region.

What was done:

- The use of confidential client lists from the major seed trade companies and the BC Peace River Grain Industry Development Council was negotiated to ensure all past, current and potential growers received the pamphlet.
- A total of 1550 pamphlets (456 BC, 1094 AB) mailed to producers in Feb, and 400 more handed out at trade shows, meetings and distributed to seed trade companies in Mar; 2003
- 470 more to be mailed out as 2 additional client lists released in May

Indications of support: several positive conversations with committee members for clarifications

4. radio ads:

Why? Popular rural Peace radio stations work well to advertise the meetings. The “Call of the Land” radio program is also listened to frequently by many farmers in both provinces.

What was done:

- ads purchased about meetings; 20 paid ads with CJXX Big Country and 4 with Fort St. John and Dawson Creek stations in prime spot near market place updates
- radio interviews with committee members on Call of the Land (run 4 times, transcripts available through AAFRD Ropin’ the Web)

Indications of support: no new telephone calls to dedicated line, good attendance at meetings

5. discussions at meetings:

Why? To facilitate input from producers and seed trade companies.

What was done:

- panel discussion & votes at annual seminars in Fort St. John and Fairview after extension advertising that levy would be discussed at these seminars
- registration fees waived at annual seminars to encourage non members to take part in the discussions

Indications of support:

- some growers who have not attended seminars in the past did attend to discuss levy
- attendance was good considering the blizzard conditions on both days
- vote by BC producers in FSJ unanimous in favor of levy as proposed (ie. 23 farm units representing 22,600 ac), concern expressed about funding gaps in next 2 years, questions about paying into levy in advance, suggestion to harmonize with BCGIDC year end
- vote by AB producers in Fairview 81% in favor of levy (ie. 53 farms voted representing 20,326 ac), some concerns about tiered rate system and start date of levy
- forage seed can be grown one year and stored for sale in subsequent years, on any farm that usually produces grain, so the exact “size of the industry” in a particular year is not known with certainty. Statistics Canada indicates 70,000 acres as the total BC and 140,000 acres as the total AB forage seed industry in 2002.

6. pamphlets, posters at events/outlets:

Why? To increase awareness of levy details and contact people to give PRFSA feedback

What was done:

- 200 distributed at 2 major agriculture shows that both BC and AB farmers attend, ie. Grande Prairie Agriculture Trade Show & Smoky River Agriculture Trade Show
- 200 distributed at annual seminars in Fort St. John and Fairview
- at BCMAFF, AAFRD, and seed processing outlets where BC and AB seed is processed or sold
- part of ongoing commitment to inform as many growers as possible

Indications of support committee members and directors report only a few conversations for clarification or questions about timing of start up of levy collection

In summary, over 1550 growers have been contacted using 6 different methods of communication. A clear majority of producers have shown their support in several ways and are directing PRFSA to “get on with it”. A small minority of Alberta producers were against the levy and a few Alberta growers have some fine tuning concerns that the Stable Funding Committee are currently addressing with regards to tiered verses one levy rate, year end and % of funds to be spent on administration. All 1550 growers will continue to be updated of any changed details of the proposed levy by a number of methods.

Producers in both provinces recognize that this is a **refundable** levy, so ultimately they have the last say. If they are unhappy with the collection or use of levy funds, they recognize that they can apply for a full or partial refund.