

Timeline to Stable Levy Funding

The Stable Funding Initiative Committee of the Peace River Forage Seed Association (PRFSA) would like to provide you the following information regarding the timeline of events leading to this initiative, and progress to date.

1982: The Peace River Branch of the Alberta Alfalfa Seed Producers Association was organized. This organization was one of key roots of the present PRFSA. It put on annual production seminars at Fairview College and did a number of Farming for the Future projects, produced newsletters and initiated a chalkboard survey.

1986: The BC Grain Producers Association was formed, including a Fine Seeds Committee to deal with forage seed related issues. This committee was another of the key roots of the present PRFSA.

1990's: An early attempt at an Alberta forage seed levy initiative failed. This may have been one of the factors leading to the collapse of the Alberta Forage Seed Association.

1991: Producers from BC Peace Region begin working with government representatives to establish a levy on all grain, oilseed, and forage seed producers in the Peace River Region. Plebiscite vote for all producers was organized and the levy was passed. Efforts to establish a forage seed levy rate in BC were opposed by 2 major seed trade companies based in the Lower Mainland. Also 80% of forage seed grown in BC was processed in Alberta where BC legislation could not be reinforced. So the levy rate for forage seed was set at 0%, until these issues could be resolved.

1994: Survey of Alberta producers indicates support for a forage seed association. Survey done of BC growers indicates support for establishing a forage seed association. Rate for forage seed left at 0% for the time being.

1995: Peace Region Forage Seed Association established to bring producers, seed trade companies, researchers and extensionists together from Alberta and British Columbia.

1996: Ken Steinwand, Owner/Manager of Peace Valley Seeds, Rycroft, organized first meeting of all seed trade companies in Peace Region.

1996 - 2000: Tremendous increase in membership in PRFSA, including the strong support of seed trade companies.

1997: Fine Seeds Committee of BC Grain Producers Association and Peace Branch of Alberta Alfalfa Seed Association fold and put their support into PRFSA.

1998: Don Pedersen (Grower, Dawson Creek) and Ken Nickel (BCMAFF, FSJ) visited all seed trade companies operating in Peace Region, to discuss ways of securing stable funding including a levy. The seed trade was not interested in establishing a levy. They had concerns about their individual costs of administering a levy.

1999: Seed trade met in Grande Prairie and agreed to fund research work at Beaverlodge.

1999-2001: Seed Trade Consortium was formed and \$28,500 per year was collected from companies and committed to research projects at Beaverlodge Research Farm.

1999 - present: Producer Research Fund established for producers to voluntarily write cheques to fund research projects identified by producers. From the beginning, there was strong support of this initiative from BC producers (e.g. 77% of \$7,755 received in 2002 was from BC growers).

January 2002: Industry planning meetings in Fairview involved 25 producers, seed trade companies, researchers and extensionists. Needs and strategies were identified for the industry. A clear priority emerged for stable funding to continue research and extension activities to compliment the growing turf and forage seed industry needs.

February 2002: At a meeting of all seed trade companies in Peace Region, there was agreement to commit \$15,000 to research projects for one more year. There was also agreement that to sustain and

stabilize money for research and extension of forage seed activities, and to continue to develop the industry, a levy on forage seed was needed.

March 2002: In two well attended annual general meetings, there was a clear majority of members in support of the Board of Directors' motion to pursue the establishment of a levy on forage seed grown in the Peace Region.

April 2002: Seed trade reps (3) and producers (3) agreed to work on establishing a levy on turf and forage seed grown in the Alberta and BC Peace Region. The Stable Funding Committee was formed.

December 2002: Edward Hadland, Grower, Baldonnel and Raymond Walker, Manager of Moore Seed Processors, Debolt of the Stable Funding Committee met with the BC Peace River Grain Industry Development Council to request their help in activating the existing levy on forage seed in BC Peace Region.

January 2003: Discussion paper "Five Year Strategic Plan for Forage Seed Industry in Peace Region of Alberta and British Columbia including Stable Funding Initiative" sent to legislative representatives from both AAFRD and BCMAFF as an update on the current situation. The Stable Funding Committee initiated a dialog with Mike Pearson, Alberta Agricultural Products Marketing Council, AAFRD, Edmonton to work through the requirements for legislating a levy on forage seed in Alberta. They simultaneously began discussions with Ken Corraini, Manager of Program Partnerships Unit and Tony Kluge, Manager Industry Organizations with BCMAFF, to discuss requirements to activate the existing levy legislation and reset the rate from 0%.

Submitted by the:

Peace Region Forage Seed Association Stable Funding Committee

Box 141

Farmington, BC

V0C 1N0

Phone: (250) 789-9885

Fax: (250) 789-6884

Email: sburton@pris.bc.ca