Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities
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For Immediate Release March 4, 2020

SARM unhappy with PMRA decision to pull strychnine

The Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) is appalled to learn that the Pesticide Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) has made final decision to cancel the approved use of strychnine to control Richardson Ground Squirrels (RGS). The PMRA's decision is based on anecdotal assumptions, not recent research. In 2019, the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture (SMA) completed a study on the use of strychnine. This study indicated that despite a large number of non-target species present, death from strychnine was limited to only four deer mice.

"With such a small proven environmental impact PMRA should be using SMA's research to support the continued use of strychnine, not to discontinue it" expressed President Ray Orb. "We plan to meet with Minister Marit and decision makers in Ottawa" said Orb "SARM will take all steps needed to have the decision overturned or at minimum have our producers compensated for any crop damage due to gophers."

PMRA's plan is to phase out the product over the next three years, making the product unavailable after March 4, 2021 and fully banned for use March 4, 2023. There is currently no alternative to control RGS.

In 1992 to 2001, 2% liquid strychnine wasn't available causing RGS populations to explode resulting in millions of dollars in losses to producers. In the years it has been made available populations have declined. Dry years with no effective method of control will result in devastating losses.

"I hope the Province can appeal or at least delay the decision" said Orb, "Our producers don't need to be enduring anymore hardships."

SARM stands up for rural Saskatchewan and will continue to act in the collective best interest of rural municipalities.

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