



## MFGA Chair Larry Wegner Speaking Notes

### MFGA Aquanty Phase 2: AAFC Funding Announcement

June 15, 2021

- It is with great pride and pleasure that on behalf of Manitoba Forage and Grassland Association that I am able to provide our very sincere MFGA thank you to The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and to you MP Terry Duguid, Parliamentary Secretary to the the Minister of Environment and Climate Change (Canada Water Agency) for today's announcement over \$1.1M in AgriRisk funding for a MFGA project that will provide a new forecasting tool to help Manitoba farmers better manage extreme weather events.
- The Manitoba Forage and Grassland Association (MFGA) has supported and provided strategic direction to the forage and livestock industry in Manitoba for more than 30 years.
- MFGA is led by a producer-led board and dedicated staff that work together to provide important knowledge from the industry and government levels to the farm-gates of MFGA's engaged producer network.
- Over time, forage and livestock based producers have adapted to new and creative management practices to benefit their herd and crops through maximizing soil health, improving water infiltration, enhancing carbon sequestration and supporting biodiversity.
- Manitoba is a forage and grassland powerhouse. MFGA has championed grasslands and wetlands as the best intact lands for cattle, biodiversity and ecological services such as air and water quality and flood and drought mitigation. As well, seeding forages and sod seeding legumes to rejuvenate stands minimizes soil erosion, adds nitrogen to the soil and helps control weeds, disease and insects by interrupting their life cycle.
- As producers, our job is to do the best we can with the moisture we have and make sure when it does rain that we can make the best use of it. The golden rule for all of us should be:
- **Do not let any precipitation run away on you, catch it and hold it on your land.**

- That may sound like some crazy ambitious thought, but it is not. There are producers out there who have deliberately planned for these dry times and are doing fine by proactively monitoring their soil and plants.
- Additionally, there are programs that are aimed at producers exactly for these times and it is up to all of us to make use of these to programs to the best interests and best fit with our farms.
- However, without a doubt, as producers the biggest thing we can help our own farms with is by being proactive not reactive. Over time, we have developed some proactive checks and balances that have helped us buffer these challenging climatic times
- And that is where this forecasting tool will come in handy for us. So that we know what is in the streams, soils and groundwater during times of climatic extremes to help our planning immediately and into the future.
- As MFGA embarks on this exciting project, we will be holding a series of focus groups and producer engagements to help us frame this technology in ways that appeal to producers.
- With more on that front and to do a deeper dive on the forecasting tool, I would like to introduce Duncan Morrison, MFGA Executive Director...