

Welcome to the Spring/Summer 2016 issue of the *PREP Update* newsletter; sharing valuable information, contacts and current happenings with RMs and PCOs regarding information relevant to rat control in our province. Twice a year, Spring/Summer and Fall/Winter, the *PREP Update* will be circulated to all RMs and PCOs. PREP asks that RMs share this information with your PCOs to ensure they don't miss out and are PREP Updated!

PREP is working and headed in the right direction!

Through the previous six years, since SARM has taken on the administration of the PREP, trends have emerged indicating the importance of this program. PREP has proven to be a necessary component in the fight for a rat free Saskatchewan.

A dedicated and passionate Board of Directors leads the way in ensuring an effective and efficient program continues each year. Communication is the key to positive improvements and the PREP Board and administration strive to encourage, share and direct information and resources at every level available. This is evident by the increase in the number of RMs choosing to participate each year. 288 RMS (or 97%) worked with this program & it's resources in 2015.

The dedication of PCOs and RMs is evident by the increased site inspection numbers along with decreased infestation levels and it speaks to the success of the PREP. Communication and consistency in shared knowledge has proven a key component in the effectiveness of this program. The first year SARM began administering PREP, infestations reported at a provincial level were 7.13% and 2015 has seen a dramatic drop in that rate to an all-time low of 3.17%.

Importance of Contracts between RMs and PCOs

As with any job/position, it is important to have a contract between parties laying out the guidelines and expectations of any job. This is no different when hiring a Pest Control Officer. PREP has available sample PCO Employment Contracts on their website at <http://prep.sarm.ca/rat-control-resources>. When an RM appoints an individual as a PCO, to act on their behalf when enforcing *The Pest Control Act*, a contract in place between the RM and the PCO serves to clarify duties, expectations and remuneration for all parties involved.

Building Positive Working Relationships

PREP is dedicated to work with RM Councils and PCOs as they deal with many different kinds of people in many different situations in the course of their rat control day. It is important to develop positive working relationships whether it's with councils, PCO's, landowners, or the general public.

Under the *Saskatchewan Pest Control Act*, a PCO is authorized to access any lands in the course of his/her duties, however, be conscientious of practicing professionalism and managing good public relations. Common sense and cool heads will always prevail in any situation you face. You never know the situation someone may be facing the day you come in contact with them. So always be respectful and you'll be respected in return.

WHO IS THIS STRANGER coming into my yard?

Identify yourself! Did you know the SARM Trading Services has available magnetic Pest Control Officer signs that PCOs can easily put on their vehicle doors when acting on behalf of the RM? For a minimal cost, the RM or PCO can order these signs from Amanda Kozak, Trading Services Manager, at akozak@sarm.ca. Pest Control Officers who are identified before stepping out of the vehicle are more likely to have the cooperation of the landowner making their visit a more productive and safe one.

2016 PREP Statement of Compliance – Claim Deadline December 31, 2016

In 2016-17, the Provincial Rat Eradication Program (PREP) once again has received funding to \$1.4 million for this program year. Program forms and guidelines are available on the PREP website at prep.sarm.ca and claim deadline for this program year is **December 31, 2016**.

In order for an RM to be eligible for the PREP grant the following minimum level of service must be provided:

- An RM must have a Pest Control Officer (PCO) with a valid Pesticide Applicator's License.
- **Each site within an RM where agriculture produce is (or was) stored or where livestock or poultry are housed (or have been housed) must be inspected by the licensed PCO at least once a year. This includes both occupied and abandoned sites.**
- The RM must provide reports as required by SARM, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Federal Government under *Growing Forward 2*.

Ensure your RM is compliant and able to receive funding by following the Program Guidelines which include the requirements for eligibility, lists **eligible expenses** to be claimed, along with the resources PREP makes available to RMs each year.

HELP WANTED! *Are you an RM looking for a PCO? A PCO looking for an RM to work with?*

PREP would like to assist RMs and PCOs by providing a forum for them to connect. Are you an RM looking for a PCO to fill a vacant position or maybe to fill a future position through your PCO succession plan? Are you a PCO currently seeking employment or wanting to add to the number of RMs you currently service?

Contact PREP and we will add this information to our PREP Home website page, <http://prep.sarm.ca>. Simply contact Annette Ellert at aellert@sarm.ca to provide the information you are seeking along with your contact information and wait for the calls to come pouring in!

A note from Grant Peeling, PCO Provincial Coordinator...

SPCOA Convention Celebrated 25th Anniversary of that Organization!

This convention marked the 25th Anniversary of the SPCOA. It was very well attended and that makes all of the effort to set it up worthwhile. The introduction of electronic voting devices (clickers) this year gave the organization and PREP an instant and definitive idea of what PCOs wanted to see addressed at future SPCOA Conventions as well as PREP PCO Winter Workshops.

In 2017, the SPCOA Convention will be moving to Saskatoon. Watch for those dates and the location to be confirmed. PREP is working on the dates and locations for the January 2017 PCO Workshops and we will let everyone know as soon as those are secured.

As a Reminder... *PREP can help! If because of illness or other circumstances your PCO cannot complete the required work within your RM, call me - Grant Peeling, Provincial Coordinator at (306) 631-7141. PREP PCO Supervisors (one in each SARM division) are available to assist and train a newly licenced PCO. The PREP Provincial Coordinator along with the six Regional PCO Supervisors are ready and able to provide mentorship and hands-on support in dealing with rat control issues.*

Take care and I hope everyone has a safe and enjoyable year!

Q: What are the signs of a rat infestation?

A: To identify a rat infestation, look for:

- ✓ Burrows found under foundations, scrap piles or garbage, which are kept free of loose dirt, cobwebs, and dust, located within 100 feet of food and water sources.
- ✓ Well-beaten trails or 'rat runs' between nests and food and water sources.
- ✓ Oily smudge marks along walls and uprights such as the main joists of roofing beams or the sides of waste bags.
- ✓ Rat droppings or 'scats' are capsule shaped (with blunted ends) approx. 20 mm in diameter.
- ✓ Signs of gnawing around doors, windows, cracks, knot holes, exposed edges of boards, and concrete.
- ✓ Rat tracks, which are unique from other rodents. The front imprint is four-toed while the back print is five-toed.

Q: How can we prevent the spread of rats?

A: It's easier to prevent a rat infestation than clear one up. Here's what you can do:

- ✓ 1) Eliminate rat attractions. Clean up yard sites of harbourage, rubbish, and debris. Minimize food and water sources such as garbage and garden waste. Cut grass around buildings.
- ✓ 2) Prevention baiting. Set up permanent bait stations and check them regularly. Poison, trap and fumigate existing rat populations. Consult your local PCO for support and proper baiting techniques.
- ✓ 3) Rat proofing. Make sure windows, doors and other openings are tightly fitted, reducing gaps to less than ½ inch. Make birdfeeders and pet food inaccessible for rats.
- ✓ 4) Report rat infestations to your Municipality or local PCO.

PCO's receive assistance from PREP Supervisors

Should the RM or PCO find they are unable to complete the requirements of PREP guidelines, don't hesitate to contact Grant Peeling, PCO Provincial Coordinator, as PREP can assist with the necessary resources to ensure your RM is in compliance.

If you require assistance please contact the PCO Supervisor located in your SARM Division:

Division 1: Henry Fieseler- 306-743-7875

Division 2: Ryan Budd- 306-631-7350

Division 3: Stewart Biech- 306-778-0715

Division 4: Dennis Friend- 306-528-4320

Division 5: Neil Mooney- 306-934-4782

Division 6: George Dresser- 306-228-3184

PCO Provincial Coordinator, Grant Peeling – 306-631-7141

2016 PREP Board Members

The PREP Board is made up of elected RM officials who set program parameters and deal with issues that arise with rural municipalities, ADD Boards, government, and others. They focus on developing effective policies and procedures to eradicate rats in Saskatchewan.

Division 1: Teresa Walker 306-435-7224 teresa.walker@sasktel.net

Division 2: Ray Beck (Chair) 306-436-7405 norlandcreek@sasktel.net

Division 3: Bill Owens 306-962-7462 bill259@sasktel.net

Division 4: Kelvin Holowaty 306-269-7766 kelvin.h@sasktel.net

Division 5: John Serhienko 306-497-4008 dustydog@xplornet.com

Division 6: Gerald Gerlinsky 306-843-2902 sw13acres@gmail.com

SPCOA: Grant Peeling 306-631-7141 gpeeling@sasktel.net

Ministry of Agriculture: Richard Wilkins 306-787-5207 richard.wilkins@gov.sk.ca

SARM Board of Directors: Carmen Sterling 306-861-1097 sarm.sterling@sasktel.net

RAT Fact: Rats are a very clean animal; they spend several hours per day grooming themselves.

Working together toward the goal of a rat free Saskatchewan