



SASKATCHEWAN ASSOCIATION OF RURAL MUNICIPALITIES

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Attention all RM Administrators and Councils:

Re: Managing and Preventing Clubroot in Your RM

SARM has been following the issue of clubroot as it develops in our province and the following information is intended to assist Rural Municipalities (RM) in the management of this disease.

Clubroot is a serious disease of cruciferous plants such as canola that can cause devastating yield losses. It is a soil borne disease that is easily transferred via contaminated soil residing on equipment, seed, etc. and there are limited options for controlling this disease. Clubroot was recently confirmed in October 2011 to be present in two different locations in north central Saskatchewan.

In 2009, a resolution regarding clubroot was passed at the SARM Midterm Convention asking that SARM lobby the province to have clubroot named a pest under *The Pest Control Act* in Saskatchewan and to have government develop a provincial clubroot management plan with best practices for the prevention and management of clubroot.

Since that resolution SARM is now a member of the Saskatchewan Clubroot Initiative (SCI) and as such is working with Saskatchewan Agriculture, SaskCanola, and other concerned stakeholders to try and provide helpful resources to municipalities and the general public about the disease, its implications and management.

Because of the long lasting economic implications and limited control options for clubroot, it was declared a pest under *The Pest Control Act* in Saskatchewan in 2009 and the SCI developed the Saskatchewan Clubroot Management Plan. This plan contains the following list of best practices regarding preventing and managing clubroot:

1. Crop Rotations: Plant susceptible crops, including clubroot resistant canola varieties, no more than once every four years.
2. Scout crops regularly and carefully.
 - Identify suspicious above-ground symptoms including wilting, stunting, yellowing and premature ripening of canola or other susceptible crops.
 - Field entrances and approaches are likely to be contaminated with clubroot spores first. Therefore, symptoms will often appear there first.
 - Confirm cause of above-ground symptoms by checking the roots for galls.

3. If clubroot is suspected, inform the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture by contacting the Agriculture Knowledge Centre (1-866-457-2377) or your local Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture regional office.
4. If clubroot is confirmed to be present then please contact the Agriculture Knowledge Centre and the RM Office so they can assist you in developing/implementing an effective clubroot management plan.
5. Practice good sanitation by restricting movement of potentially contaminated soil to non-contaminated regions.
 - a. For Saskatchewan producers, this means restricting entry into their fields of vehicles, field machinery or oil rig equipment with earth tag from infested regions unless it has been properly sanitized.
 - b. Ask questions about where the equipment is from and what sanitation measures have been used before the equipment left the infested area, dealer or auction site.
6. Clubroot spores may survive livestock digestion. Avoid use of straw, hay, greenfeed, silage and manure from infested or suspect areas.

Everyone in Saskatchewan should be encouraged to use these best practices because *The Pest Control Act* in Saskatchewan states that **every person** shall take measures to destroy clubroot or any crop, vegetation, vegetable, or other matter that may contain clubroot in order to control and prevent the spread of clubroot on any land or premises owned, occupied or controlled by that person.

Clubroot is a concern for RMs because under the *Act* it is required that municipalities; by way of a municipally appointed officer enforce the *Act*.

The following is a list of some of the abilities a municipality is given under the *Act*:

- To appoint a municipal officer(s) to enforce the *Act* within the municipality.
- Appointed officer(s) can then undertake clubroot field inspections to monitor for clubroot.
- The municipality can pass bylaws with respect to prevention and management of clubroot.
- Where an officer is of the opinion that an order ought to be issued, instead of immediately issuing an order, he shall confer with that person regarding the most satisfactory treatment from the standpoint of that person as well as the community, and may enter into a written agreement listing any arrangements made.
- Failing such an agreement the appointed officer can issue an official order to any person to destroy, control and prevent the spread of clubroot. The order needs to identify the location the order should be carried out and it should describe the methods, timelines and materials that are required to comply with the order.
- If the person fails to meet with the terms of the order then the appointed officer may take the steps necessary to carry out the work outlined in the order.
- The RM then has the ability to recoup its costs for the work done by adding it to the taxes on the land or parcel where the work was completed.

SARM wants to encourage all RMs to **please read the entire Pest Control Act** so they have a thorough understanding of their existing powers before proceeding with any of the points listed above.

SARMs' legal, planning and policy staff have reviewed the *Act* and want to make sure that RMs understand that prior to passing bylaws regarding clubroot that they make sure they understand the powers already afforded to them via the *Act*.

After you have reviewed the *Act* you will notice that the *Act* itself give municipalities the right to appoint an officer, to create orders to destroy, control and prevent clubroot and to implement measures to undertake the work and recoup the associated costs if orders are not adhered to.

SARM staff realised that one thing missing in the *Act* is the requirement of a landowner/occupant to notify the RM if clubroot is found on his/her land. SARM has drafted a sample bylaw for RMs to consider implementing that would impose this requirement on the landowners/occupants in the municipality.

SARM has also drafted a sample Municipal Clubroot Policy that RMs may want to consider adopting. It takes into account the recommendations in the Saskatchewan Clubroot Management Plan and will help guide your council on the steps they should take when managing clubroot. Also attached you will find a sample letter to ratepayers that RMs should consider utilizing to inform landowners/occupants of their responsibilities under the *Act* and the RM's policy and bylaw.

The Saskatchewan Clubroot Initiative is learning from Alberta's experience. In Alberta, clubroot is a regulated pest under *Alberta's Agricultural Pests Act* and via the *Act* it is the responsibility of the Alberta Counties to work with local land owners/occupants to prevent, manage and control clubroot.

Over the last 8 years various Alberta counties have enacted bylaws requiring control measures within their municipalities including things like crop rotations and equipment sanitation procedures. These bylaws were made with good intentions but what has happened is that these bylaws often differ from municipality to municipality and are not based on current science. This has resulted in situations where:

- A farmer that farms land in 2 counties is following different crop rotations and washing procedures because each county bylaw has different requirements.
- Oil equipment passing through 4 different counties is adhering to different equipment cleaning procedures that are required by each county.

In Saskatchewan we are working to avoid such inconsistencies by encouraging RMs to instead ensure that any bylaws they implement refer to the best practices outlined in the Saskatchewan Clubroot Management Plan which is attached to this letter and the most updated version can be found at www.agr.gov.sk.ca.

For more information on clubroot, best management practices, etc. please visit www.clubroot.ca or www.agr.gov.sk.ca and see attached poster and brochure. For more information on draft bylaws and policies see SARM's website at www.sarm.ca/publications/guides_manuals or contact our office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Marit". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D" and a trailing flourish.

David Marit
President