

Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership

Competitive. Innovative. Resilient.

Gopher Control Program

Program Guidelines

2024-2025

Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM)



PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

The purpose of the Gopher Control Program is to provide financial assistance to rural municipalities (RMs) and First Nations, south of the Northern Administrative District, to control ground squirrels (Richardson's, Franklin's, thirteen-lined and the Northern pocket gopher) populations, referred to as gophers in their respective jurisdictions.

BACKGROUND

Gophers, being herbivores, eat forage grasses, forage legumes, cereal crops, pulse crops, canola and native grasses. When they occur in great numbers, agricultural producers can accrue significant financial losses as well as physical injury to livestock. Monitoring population levels and proactively managing pest numbers on an annual basis can prevent the build-up of gopher populations and avoid economic losses associated with high population levels.

Early spring is the best time for control because gophers emerge from their winter burrows in search of food.

The objective is to develop a long-term, sustainable management system that includes registered control products and uses non-chemical means to keep infestations below economic threshold levels.

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION AND BUDGET

SARM is administering the Gopher Control Program on behalf of the province. The program is designed to achieve maximum results and accountability, while keeping administrative requirements for RMs and First Nations to a minimum. Funding for the program is provided by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture and the Government of Canada under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP) in the amount of \$750,000 for this program year (April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025).

PROGRAM OUTLINE

The program will provide a cost-shared payment to RMs, First Nations and producers that are active in their gopher control efforts and who follow the minimum level of service determined by the 2024-25 Gopher Control Program.

Program funding will be prorated among all eligible claimants to a maximum of 50 per cent paid for pest control product registered for use on gophers and up to \$125 per raptor platform; but not exceeding 50 per cent of total expenses reported for the claim.

- The program will rebate:
 - Up to 50 per cent of registered gopher control product expenses (less any taxes with verified invoices);
 - As part of a non-chemical means to increase predation in the vicinity of gopher infestations, the use of raptor platforms and nest boxes are eligible for:
 - Raptor platform materials installed this program year at 50 per cent of eligible cost (less any taxes with verified invoices) to a maximum rebate of a \$125.

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

The following minimum level of service is required to be considered for the Gopher Control Program rebate:

- Copies of invoices for all expenses claimed must be included. Taxes (GST and PST) are not eligible for a rebate.
- Claims for registered gopher control products used, and raptor platforms and nest boxes when purchased/installed in the program year are eligible (January 1, 2024, to July 31, 2024).

All claims must be provided to the RM or First Nation office, where the Administrator or Land Manager will complete the "Part 4 RM or First Nation Certification" and forward completed claims to SARM. Eligible rebate payments for applicants will flow back through the RM or First Nation office they were claimed through.

Raptor platforms and nest boxes used near gopher colonies offer a cost-effective, long-term, sustainable management approach to increase predation where suitable nesting sites may be limited in the vicinity of gopher infestations.

- RMs, First Nations or producers claiming for the purchase of materials for each raptor platform and nest box installed in the program year, must include validating invoices with the claim form.
- Legal land descriptions or GPS coordinates to three digits must be provided for:
 - Agricultural locations where each raptor platform and nest box being claimed for is installed.

SUBMIT TO SARM BY JULY 31, 2024

2024-25 Gopher Control Program Claim Form

Stakeholders claiming through their RM or First Nation office must complete and sign claim forms and submit to their RM or First Nation office prior to the above deadline. Invoices for each registered gopher control product and/or raptor platform and nest box must accompany each claim form.

RMs and First Nations submit claim form and supporting documents by the above deadline by email to Annette Ellert, Agriculture Program Administrator at aellert@sarm.ca.

- **Note:** PST and GST are not eligible for rebate on any expense listed below
 - Invoices to verify purchase of a registered gopher control product used in 2024.
 - Invoices for the purchase of materials for each raptor platform installed prior to the claim deadline.

Rebates will be determined once all claims are received by SARM following the claim deadline. If the deadline to submit a claim form falls on a statutory holiday or weekend, the deadline would move to the next business day.

No other government grant, rebate, assistance program or payment can be received by the RM, First Nations, or producers with relation to the expenditures subject to this program. Verification of fulfillment of program requirements may be requested, random audits may be conducted and information on specific reporting measures may also be requested.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE

- **Plant Health Technical Advisors**

The Plant Health Technical Advisors provide direct support, education, training to rural municipalities, and their municipally appointed officers, as well as First Nations on how best to manage agricultural crop pests as per *The Plant Health Act* and prohibited and noxious weeds as per *The Weed Control Act*.

If you require assistance or more information on the Gopher Control Program, please contact the Plant Health Technical Advisors in your SARM Division:

- Division 1: Yemi Adeyemo, AAg, 639-470-6394, PHNdivision1@sarm.ca
 - Division 2: Joanne Kwasnicki, PAg, 306-541-8437, PHNdivision2@sarm.ca
 - Division 3: Betty Johnson, AAg 306-315-3925, PHNdivision3@sarm.ca
 - Division 4: Katey Makohoniuk, TechAg, 306-594-7683, PHNdivision4@sarm.ca
 - Division 5: Chelsea Neuberger, AAg, 306-380-4526, PHNdivision5@sarm.ca
 - Division 6: Colleen Fennig, PAg, 306-946-9895, PHNdivision6@sarm.ca
- **Visit the [SARM website](#) to download:**
 - Program Guidelines
 - Claim Form
 - **More information**
 - For registered gopher control product options, please visit [Registered Gopher Control Products](#), or contact James Tansey, Provincial Specialist, Insect/Vertebrate Pest Management at 306-787-4669 or james.tansey@gov.sk.ca.
 - SARM website at www.sarm.ca or contact Annette Ellert, Agriculture Program Administrator, at 306-761-3744 or email at aellert@sarm.ca.
 - For information about [Control of Richardson's Ground Squirrel](#).

As part of the Sustainable CAP funding agreement, all records, information, databases, audit and evaluation reports and other documents relating to this program must be retained by the RM, First Nations, or Applicants until March 31, 2034.