

Manitoba News Release

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EXPEDITED PROCESS INSTITUTED TO SPEED UP EXCESS-MOISTURE INSURANCE PAYMENTS FOR PRODUCERS IMPACTED BY HEAVY RAINS: PREMIER

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Coverage of Water Testing for Flood-affected Residents To be Extended to All Flooded Areas

The province has confirmed the Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation (MASC) is mobilizing staff and resources to the areas hardest hit by rain to ensure producers who have lost crops due to overland flooding have access to excess-moisture insurance as quickly as possible, Premier Greg Selinger announced today as he met with agricultural producers in the Interlake area.

"Farmers can't wait when they face the kinds of conditions that have swept across so much of the province," Selinger said. "We have made excess-moisture insurance claims our highest priority to ensure producers will receive their payments before the end of July."

Existing programs will provide significant support to the sector, the premier said. AgriInsurance provides payments to producers experiencing significant yield loss this growing season, while AgriStability provides significant support to assist with reductions in market income.

AgriInsurance, AgriStability and AgriRecovery have provided over \$62 million in assistance to producers in the Interlake in the last two years.

"The province will continue to ensure that producers hit hard by consecutive years of excess moisture receive the support they need," said Selinger. "We are also committed to working with the federal government to examine additional programs to address the current situation and will ensure producers who have been hit for the last two or three years in a row are being dealt with in those discussions."

In 2009, \$20.6 million was paid out in insurance due to excess moisture. This year, it is anticipated the program will likely exceed this amount.

Manitoba was the first province in Canada to introduce the first provincewide, all-inclusive Excess Moisture Insurance program in 2000.

The premier also announced the province will extend its coverage of the cost of water testing in flood-affected areas.

"We are urging residents to test their well water as soon as possible as a precaution, due to record rains," said Selinger.

The Province of Manitoba will pay all the costs of the precautionary tests, which should start after flooding has subsided. The province normally subsidizes well-water testing but, under the current circumstances, the well owner's share is being waived for an extended time until July 31 for all flooded areas.

Water samples should be marked 2010 Flood and sent to Maxxam Analytics, Unit D, 675 Berry St., Winnipeg, MB R3H 1A7. More information is also available at 204-772-7276 or 1-800-665-8566 (toll free).

For further details on water testing, contact the local Manitoba Water Stewardship or Manitoba Conservation office, the Manitoba Office of Drinking Water at 204-945-5762 or 1-888-315-9257 (toll-free) or Health Links-Info Santé at 204-788-8200.

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