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# News Release

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For immediate release

## GOVERNMENTS EXPAND ELIGIBILITY FOR MANITOBA FORAGE RESTORATION AND FEED ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

**WINNIPEG, Manitoba, May 15, 2009** – The Governments of Canada and Manitoba are delivering aid to farmers affected by flooding in 2008 who were previously ineligible. Federal Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz and Manitoba Agriculture Minister Rosann Wowchuk today announced the expansion of the Manitoba Forage Restoration and Feed Assistance Program.

“The Government of Canada will always work with farmers to change programs and make sure they deliver for the producers who need it,” said Minister Ritz. “Expanding eligibility to include these areas shows our programs are flexible and can respond to the needs of producers in flooded areas of the province.”

“Flood waters don’t follow municipal boundaries so it is essential this program adapts to the current situation and is available on a fair and equitable basis to the livestock producers affected,” said Minister Wowchuk. “Extending this assistance will ensure those who need the help will be able to obtain feed for their livestock and to re-establish feed crops.”

The Manitoba Forage Restoration and Feed Assistance Program, originally announced in March 2009, has been expanded to include producers experiencing similar feed shortages in the Rural Municipalities (RMs) of St. Andrews, Rockwood, Woodlands, Ocher River, Ste. Rose, Glenella, McCreary, Lakeview and Dauphin.

“The Harper Government is working shoulder-to-shoulder with the producers in my riding who are working hard to rebuild their farms,” said James Bezan, Member of Parliament for Selkirk-Interlake. “Farmers asked us to expand eligibility and this Government delivered to make sure farmers are getting the support they need.”

“Just as Manitoba producers must continually shift their methods of operation to cope with the unforeseen challenges of nature, government assistance like the Forage Restoration and Feed Assistance Program must also be flexible in their response,” said Tom Nevakshonoff, Member of the Legislative Assembly for the Interlake in Manitoba.

As a result of flooding in the Interlake and Westlake areas of Manitoba, hay, forage and pasture fields were drowned out, making it difficult for producers to harvest enough feed for their livestock to carry them through the winter and will require producers to re-establish feed crops.

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Assistance is delivered through two components:

- Up to \$40 per acre will be available through Manitoba Forage Restoration Assistance Program (MFRAP) to help producers re-establish forage crops, forage seed fields and pasture affected by flooding.
- Up to \$70 per head for breeding herds of cattle and other livestock to help address the cost of purchasing feed is available through the Manitoba Livestock Feed Assistance Program (MLFAP).

The program provides assistance to help farmers with feed costs and restoring forage fields damaged due to flooding last fall and is cost-shared by the federal and provincial governments on a 60/40 basis.

Producers in these RM's may also qualify for partial tax deferrals, allowing them to defer up to 90 per cent of income from the sale of breeding livestock for one year as they replenish breeding stock in the following year.

Funding under the Manitoba Forage Restoration and Feed Assistance Program has been made available under AgriRecovery, which allows governments to respond quickly when disaster strikes a region and existing programs cannot fully address the situation.

Information on how to apply is available through the Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation (MASC) and on the provincial web site.

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For more information, media may contact:

**Media Relations**

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada  
Ottawa, Ontario  
**613-759-7972**  
**1-866-345-7972**

**Meagan Murdoch**

Press Secretary  
The Office of the Honourable Gerry Ritz  
**613-759-1059**

**Jodee Zamrykut**

Press Secretary  
The Office of the Honourable Rosann Wowchuk  
**204-945-1494**