

# Information Item



## Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities

Dear SARM Members,

SARM wants to provide an update on the emergency registration of strychnine for Richardson's ground squirrel control and what it means for rural municipalities across Saskatchewan. Currently, under the Emergency Use Registration that has now been approved, the eligible area in Saskatchewan has been limited to regions with the highest Saskatchewan Crop Insurance indemnities for ground squirrel damage over the last three years, while avoiding areas with an abundance of documented species at risk.

SARM has heard clearly from farmers, ranchers, and RMs that this initial eligible area does not fully reflect where ground squirrel pressure is being felt. As a result, on April 1, the province sent a formal request to PMRA to expand the eligible areas in Saskatchewan, so they better align with regions experiencing significant Richardson's ground squirrel populations.

We recognize that, even with an expanded map, not all areas of the province with ground squirrel issues will have access to strychnine under this Emergency Use Registration. In those RMs, the province has committed to continue to support Richardson's ground squirrel management through:

- Extension and education efforts
- The Gopher Control Program, which helps offset the cost of registered alternatives to strychnine
- Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation programs

All pesticide regulatory decisions, including emergency use registrations, rest with Health Canada's PMRA. Saskatchewan and SARM are hopeful that the information gathered through this Emergency Use Registration will demonstrate that strychnine can be used in a way that mitigates risks to non-target species and may support long-term access to this pest control tool.

At this time, there are no stocks of strychnine available for distribution in Canada. The registrant is expected to require approximately six to eight weeks to import the active ingredient, manufacture the 2% liquid strychnine concentrate, and distribute product across Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Once logistics are finalized with the distributor, details on the provincial stewardship program and the required user training will be shared through SARM and your local RM.

Strychnine will only be available through this stewardship program, and all users will be required to complete mandatory training on species-at-risk protection, strychnine use restrictions, and pesticide safety. The program includes:

- In-burrow application with mandatory covering of treated burrows to reduce access by non-target species
- Carcass monitoring and collection (daily for the first week, then weekly for three additional weeks), with carcasses disposed of by burial or incineration
- Screening for species at risk, with high-risk areas avoided unless appropriate mitigation measures can be demonstrated
- Comprehensive record-keeping, including sales, use, and monitoring, along with field and records audits to ensure compliance

SARM continues to advocate for broader access where justified by producer need, while supporting safeguards that protect species at risk and other non-target wildlife. We will keep members informed as PMRA considers Saskatchewan's request to expand the eligible area and as product availability and training details are finalized.

If you have questions in the meantime, please contact:

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