



**Saskatchewan Beekeepers
Development Commission**

STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2025

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Introduction:

Background:

The beekeeping Industry has a long-distinguished history in the province of Saskatchewan. The migration of honeybees into Saskatchewan coincides with the coming of the first settlers from Eastern Canada and the United States.

The current Saskatchewan Beekeepers Development Commission emerged from the joining of The Saskatchewan Beekeepers Association, founded in 1923, and the Saskatchewan Beekeepers Development Commission formed in 2006. With the formation of one Board in 2017, the end goal was to present one, strong, unified voice in the promotion of the Beekeeping Industry in Saskatchewan.

The Board of the SBDC is dedicated to promoting the beekeeping industry and honey bee health with integrity and leadership. It is a legally constituted authority, responsible to its members and the government for the prudent oversight of the industry in Saskatchewan. The Board is responsible for the long-term planning and the articulation of the organization mission.

The Board is composed of six elected directors who offer their time and services to this organization at no fee.

Organization Profile:

Vision:

The Saskatchewan Beekeepers Development Commission vision is:

“To become leaders and Innovators in the Beekeeping Industry in Canada”

Mission:

In line with this vision the Saskatchewan Beekeepers Development Commission has adopted the following mission:

To achieve excellence in the areas of bee health, productivity and sustainability for all beekeepers in the province of Saskatchewan through education, communication, advocacy, and research.

Values:

- **The SBDC will be an energetic, enlightened and innovated agency that embraces new ideas**
- **The SBDC will have a cogent relationship with our membership and government**
- **The SBDC will encourage peace and harmony within our membership**
- **The SBDC will be an independent body that always acts with integrity and in the best overall interest of the Commission**
- **The SBDC will be a valuable asset to the beekeepers of Saskatchewan**
- **The SBDC will operate with fiscal responsibility and accountability to our membership and government**

Members and Stake Holders:

Members of the SBDC are registered Saskatchewan beekeepers in good-standing with the Commission who have not requested a refund.

- Commercial Beekeepers over 100 hives (mandatory membership)
- Sideliners with under 100 hives (voluntary membership)
- Hobbyist Beekeepers (voluntary membership)

Partnerships:

The SBDC works in partnership with the two provincial bee clubs to promote bee health and the development of the honey bee industry in Saskatchewan.

- Regina District Bee Club
- Saskatoon Bee Club

Emerging Developments/Current Challenges:

- Marketing bees provincially and nationally.
- Marketing bee products into the national and global market.
- Educating beekeepers in regards to current issues in bee health.
- Working with new and hobbyist beekeepers to ensure accurate, relevant and up-to-date information is available for their use.
- Funding research that will support the health of bees provincially, nationally and globally
- Providing a unified voice to lobby on behalf of all beekeepers.
- Promoting bee yard identification on Driftwatch/Field Watch to minimize pesticide kills due to pesticide application at bee yard sites both by aerial and ground pesticide applicators

Core Business:

- Advocating for all beekeepers in the Province.
- Partnering with government – especially Agriculture Research Branch for research in Honey Bee Health
- Providing education for members, government, and the general public in regards to honeybees and their importance to the economy and the role they play as a pollinator
- Building a strong relationship with members/stakeholders and partners
- Offering a network centre that provides resources and services

Key Strategic Action Area:

The Strategic Plan has identified four key strategic areas in which the Commission must be proactive in order to make progress towards the vision and fulfill its mission and Core Business/ Overarching Goals

1. Education/Communication
2. Advocacy
3. Advertising and Promotion (Increase profile of Honey Bees and Honey Products)
4. Research

Details on the specific plans in each of these areas are included in the following pages.

Strategy 1 – Education/Communication

Background:

Education has always been a concern for beekeepers. Knowing what's happening in the industry in regards to production, research and developing issues allows beekeepers to modify how they operate in order to meet the emerging issues and trends in our industry. Beekeeping is an industry that is continuously evolving and everything we can do to help our members care for their bees will benefit the industry as a whole.

Call to Action:

1. Continue to work with Provincial Apiculturist, provincial bee clubs and SBDC Technology Adaptation Team (TAT) to organize and administer up to three Beginner Beekeeping Courses, an Integrated Pest Management course and a bi-annual Queen Breeding course when demand and instructor availability allow the course to be feasible, to promote current best practices in bee management and bee health.
2. Continue to organize the Annual Convention and AGM to promote and safeguard the beekeeping and pollination industry in Saskatchewan and to provide members with the opportunity to network with other stakeholders in the industry.
3. Publish a newsletter reporting on the SBDC Technical Adaptation Team's research projects as well as practical implications of these projects. Highlight what's new in the industry and put the spotlight on events and developments by beekeepers in their operations at a grassroots level.
4. Promote grassroots sharing of ideas as a way for beekeepers to learn from each other's successes and from each other's mistakes.
5. Maintain a website with links to the Canadian Honey Council, and other associations relevant to beekeeping in Saskatchewan. Providing direction for members to obtain web base best practices literature and industry news.
6. Continue to host business meetings to focus on core business, and to hear from our members to set priorities for the next year.
7. Keep the membership informed on research developments.
8. Participate in Webinars presented by Health Canada's Regulatory Agency and report findings to members through newsletters and mass emails

Ongoing

Strategy 2 - Advocacy:

Background:

Although the Saskatchewan Beekeepers Development Commission has been proactive there is always more than can be done. In order to carry out our vision and to obtain our objectives, the Commission sees both the provincial and the federal government as a critical component to the future success of our industry. With the short season of beekeeping it is difficult for beekeepers to offer full time employment and maintain qualified workers in our industry. Access to a reliable work force is a challenge. Many commercial beekeepers have found that Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW) have enabled them to meet this challenge due to the requirement for seasonal labour. There is continuing frustration, however, with the ever-changing requirements for the program – annual changes to the application process for accessing TFW in Canada, little continuity among case workers and for some, a general lack of knowledge of the Ag-Stream portion of the TFWP. Changes are made to the program in the middle of the application process. Generally, there is a distrust amongst beekeepers in the fairness of the LMIA application process and in the recent announcement of unannounced audits that are being applied randomly to Agriculture employers of TFW. Access to a secure, knowledgeable, seasonal labour force is the biggest constraint to increasing the number of hives operated in Saskatchewan.

Another challenge is how to get the real story of beekeeping out to the public.

Call to Action:

1. Continue to have a seat on the Canadian Honey Council to continue to promote and unify the beekeeping and pollinating industry.
2. Maintain a TFW director portfolio on the board whose focus is to stay abreast of all things to do with the TFWP and SAWP and to communicate that information to the membership.
3. Maintain a TFW member-at-large on the TFW committee with CHC.
4. Maintain memberships with APAS who provide a unified voice to government on behalf of all Agricultural producers in Saskatchewan. Continue to support those associations relevant to the Saskatchewan beekeeping industry who have helped our organization with lobbying government for the need for continuity in our temporary foreign workers for the success of the agricultural industry in Saskatchewan,
5. Maintain membership with Farm and Food Care Saskatchewan who work to assist their members with ways that they can get the real story about farming, and in our case, beekeeping, out to the public.
6. Continue to communicate to the various arms of government regulators in the delivery of services such as the Temporary Foreign Workers Program
7. Continue to work with national organizations (e.g. Canadian Honey Council) to lobby for more testing on imported honey.

8. Forge partnerships with the Saskatchewan Veterinary Medical Association and the Provincial Apiculturists to ensure protocols are in place and beekeepers have access to antibiotic to treat disease when necessary.
9. Continue to be a catalyst for the next generation of advocates to promote beekeeping in the province of Saskatchewan.

Ongoing

Strategy 3 – Advertising & Promotion

Background:

As in all industries there is a need to raise the profile and awareness of the beekeeping industry. There is great work being done by the Commission and by Saskatchewan beekeepers. We need to deliver that message to our membership, general public and stakeholders.

Call to Action:

1. Maintain a 'Member's in Good Standing' list via. a producer's list on the SBDC website for public inquires. This will show the public where they can purchase bees and bee products from local beekeepers.
2. Develop a comprehensive web site dedicated to promoting the beekeeping industry and continue to make our website more user friendly with smart phones and other mobile devices.
3. Continue to brand our honey and bee products as the best in the world.
4. Develop resource material for distribution to outreach events like Ag. In the Classroom, Agribition, and GardenScapes.
5. Work to promote Saskatchewan Beekeepers at world events and encourage Saskatchewan Beekeepers to enter global competitions showcasing Saskatchewan honey as the best in the world
6. Promote Driftwatch /Field Watch which is a volunteer mapping tool to encourage communication between beekeepers, pesticide applicators and specialty crop growers. Encouraging more use of this app to eliminate pesticide drift in bee yards and other specialty crops.

Ongoing

Strategy 4 – Research

Background:

Honey bees are critical players in the agricultural industry for food production as they account for the vast majority of insect pollination. Over the past number of years SBDC has been active in securing funding for research.

Honey bee health and hive sustainability is of critical importance to Beekeepers in Saskatchewan. The varroa mite, an ecto-parasite mite of honeybees, and the viruses that it vectors are thought to be the major cause of honey bee colony loss around the world. With varroa mite resistance to some synthetic miticide treatments due to their extensive use, the need is more prevalent now than ever for further research into the control of this mite. Research into the control of the other factors that can affect the health of honeybees such as AFB and Nosema is also required. We need to support research into the best practices for the control of Nosema, the provision of good nutrition in the hive, and the use of feed supplements including prebiotic and probiotic supplements. Initial research has shown these may mitigate the negative effects of Nosema as well as the negative effects of pesticides, both those applied in the hive for the control of the varroa mite and those brought into the hive from the environment (general agriculture use).

Call to Action:

1. Support primary research projects investigating best practice in Beekeeping on the Canadian Prairies, especially those projects relevant to the Saskatchewan beekeeping industry.
2. Continue to apply for research funding opportunities under the auspices of our membership
3. Develop a process for members to apply for funding for grassroots research projects by beekeepers in their own operation
4. Support research projects in other Provinces that will support best practices in beekeeping that will in turn benefit the Saskatchewan Beekeeping industry.
5. Work towards the development of a Pollinator Chair position to be based at the University of Saskatchewan Western College of Veterinary Medicine. Solicit funding from interested parties and develop a financial plan to fund a portion of the position in conjunction with other parties.

On Going

Conclusion:

The Board of Directors is committed to the sustainability of the Beekeeping Industry in Saskatchewan and the promotion of good fellowship and cooperation among beekeepers.

Looking forward, The SBDC best strategy is to establish a strategic plan to lead beekeepers into an optimistic future. We believe we have accomplished this within this document.

TEAMWORK

“Together we can achieve the extraordinary”