



# Cowessess First Nation

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Agriculture in the Classroom AGM

April 21, 2022

Chief Cadmus Delorme

# Cowessess First Nation Lands

- Home Reserve Lands of 28,000 acres;
  - 17,000 acres of agricultural land
  - Indian Act Section 28(2) Permits - The Minister may by permit in writing authorize any person for a period not exceeding one year, or with the consent of the council of the band for any longer period, to occupy or use a reserve to reside or otherwise exercise rights on a reserve
- Treaty Land Entitlement has added total 60,000 acres to status land for Lands Department to oversee: (1) Agriculture 27,533, (2) Grazing/Hay 31,170, (3) Un-leased 2,697;
  - All permits have current due process Section 28(2) verification;
  - Rental fee provided to the band;
  - Treaty land Entitlement current land in Fee Simple Land total acres (1) 23,474 cultivated acres (2) 2,834 Agriculture (3) 13,148 grazing/hay

# Cowessess First Nation People

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- Home Reserve
  - 910 community members
  - 3,300 citizens living throughout Canada and beyond
- Cowessess First Nation heritage is Saulteaux, Cree, Nakota, Metis

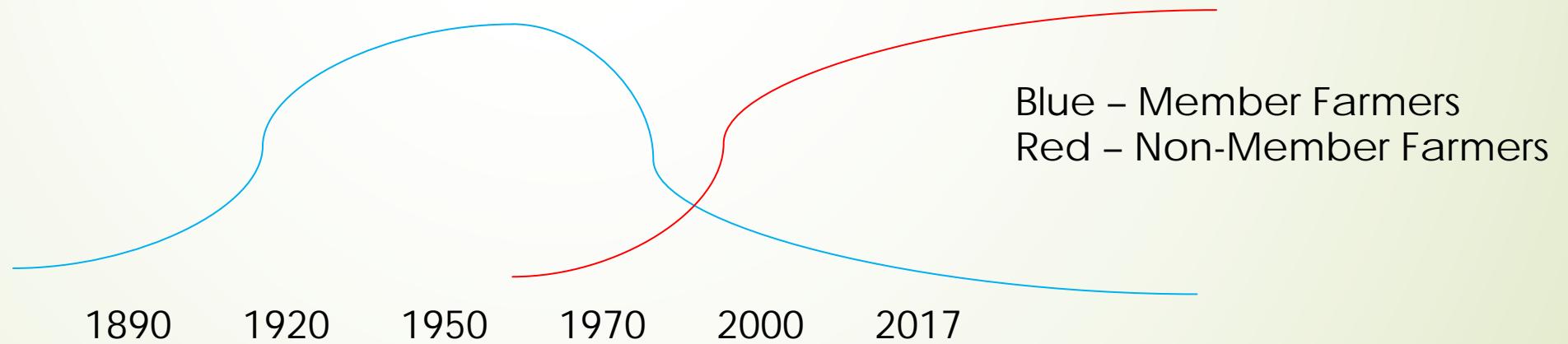


# Inherent Rights, Treaty Rights, and Jurisdiction

- ▶ The Inherent Right to self-determination and self-sustaining is a driver of Cowessess First Nation; economic self-sustainability
- ▶ Fulfilling the Treaty Rights to agriculture; pimāchowin
- ▶ United Nations Declaration on Rights of Indigenous People Article 23: Right to Development affirm Cowessess and Canada's obligation to continue Nation to Nation;
- ▶ Truth and Reconciliation Call to Action #92: Economic participation

# History of Farming on Cowessess

- ▶ Four generations of farming;
- ▶ Blue line shows the peak of Cowessess;
- ▶ Agriculture was always a challenge with Government regulating success and Cowessess members through generations succeeded then drifted away from farming.



# Cowessess First Nation after Treaty Four

- ▶ In 1874-1880 Chief Kwiwizance (Cowessess) and tribe broke ground in Cypress Hills which lead to lied to move
- ▶ 1882 Chief Kwiwizance and tribe moved to present day Cowessess with Louie O'Soup and remainder of followers to settle
- ▶ 1882-1905 Cowessess First Nation excelled in agriculture; winning competitions and breaking ground
- ▶ 1907 a illegal land surrender hindered growth
- ▶ Moving forward policies hindered the growth of Cowessess in agriculture

# What Happened

- ▶ Agriculture on First Nation reserves are generally thought to have failed because the First Nation people lacked either an interest in farming or aptitude for it
- ▶ Truth is First Nation people were anxious to farm and expended considerable effort on cultivation
- ▶ Government policies, more than anything else, acted to undermine success
- ▶ Repeated requests for assistance from First Nation, Canadian government provided very little help between and what they provided proved useless
- ▶ First Nation farmers were determined to create an economy based on agriculture and to become independent of government regulations and the need for assistance

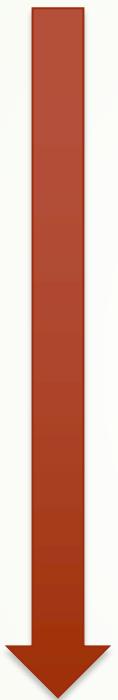
# What Happened

- Officials in Ottawa, however attributed setbacks not to economic conditions but to the First Nation character and traditions, which government claimed made the First Nation unsuited to agriculture
- In the decade following 1885 government policies made farming virtually impossible for the First Nation
- First Nation were expected to subsist on one or two acres and were denied access to any improvements in technology
- After the turn of the century, the government encouraged land surrenders in order to make good agriculture land available to non-First Nation people
- This destroyed any chance of First Nation had of making agriculture a stable economic base

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# 1876 Indian Act



Government  
of Canada

Indian Agent

Chief &  
Council

Citizens

# Moving Forward

- Cowessess First Nation is in the cattle and grain industry
- Cowessess Nation wants to be a major player Nationally and Internationally

**REBUILDING OUR ECONOMICS  
AND PRESERVING OUR LAND**

Proposal for a Farm Plan, Cowessess First Nation

**Abstract**

Cowessess First Nation has a vision for agriculture on reserve that will become the community driver to employment and business. The Business will aim to break down barriers for our people and bring the community together for generations to come.

Cowessess First Nation, Chief Cadmus Delorme  
Box 100, Cowessess, SK S0G 5L0

**COWESSESS FIRST NATION**

Business Plan for:  
**Grain Farming  
Operation**

February 21, 2019

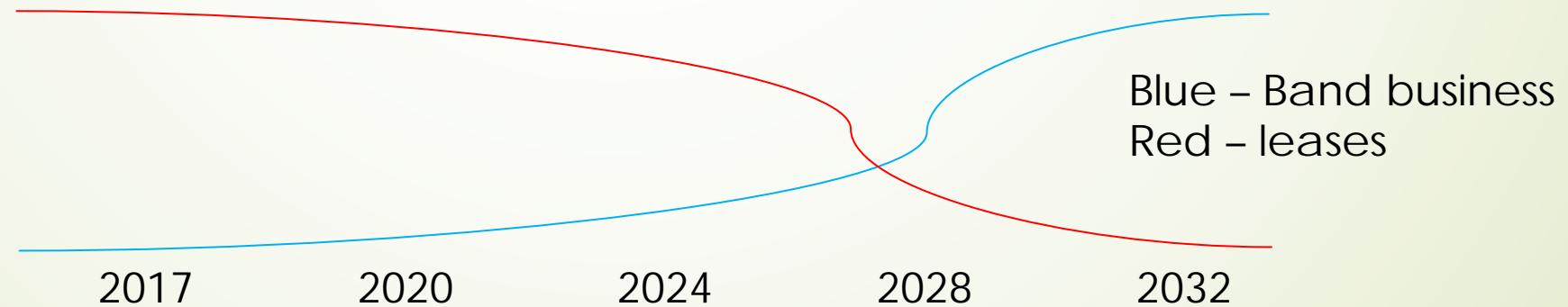
**OCHAPOWACE FIRST NATION &  
COWESSESS FIRST NATION**

First Nation Farm Supply Business  
Business Plan – **FINAL**

Prepared By **MNP**

# Economic Opportunity with Lands

- ▶ 2019-2020 – farm 500 acres;
- ▶ 2020-2024 – farm up to 5,000 acres;
- ▶ 2024-2028 – continue purchasing farm machinery and begin bushel negotiations with buyers; assess selling byproducts
- ▶ 2028+ create factories to take raw material into finished product;
- ▶ Cowessess Nation can retain full economic participation with land.



# Cowessess Custom Lands Act

## Laws and Jurisdiction

1. Centralize through Lands Department;
2. Ratify Lands Act;
3. Incorporate Lands Department to run as a business.

- Exercising Cowessess' Nation's Inherent right is to retain control of land, including the power to regulate and the exercise of eminent domain.

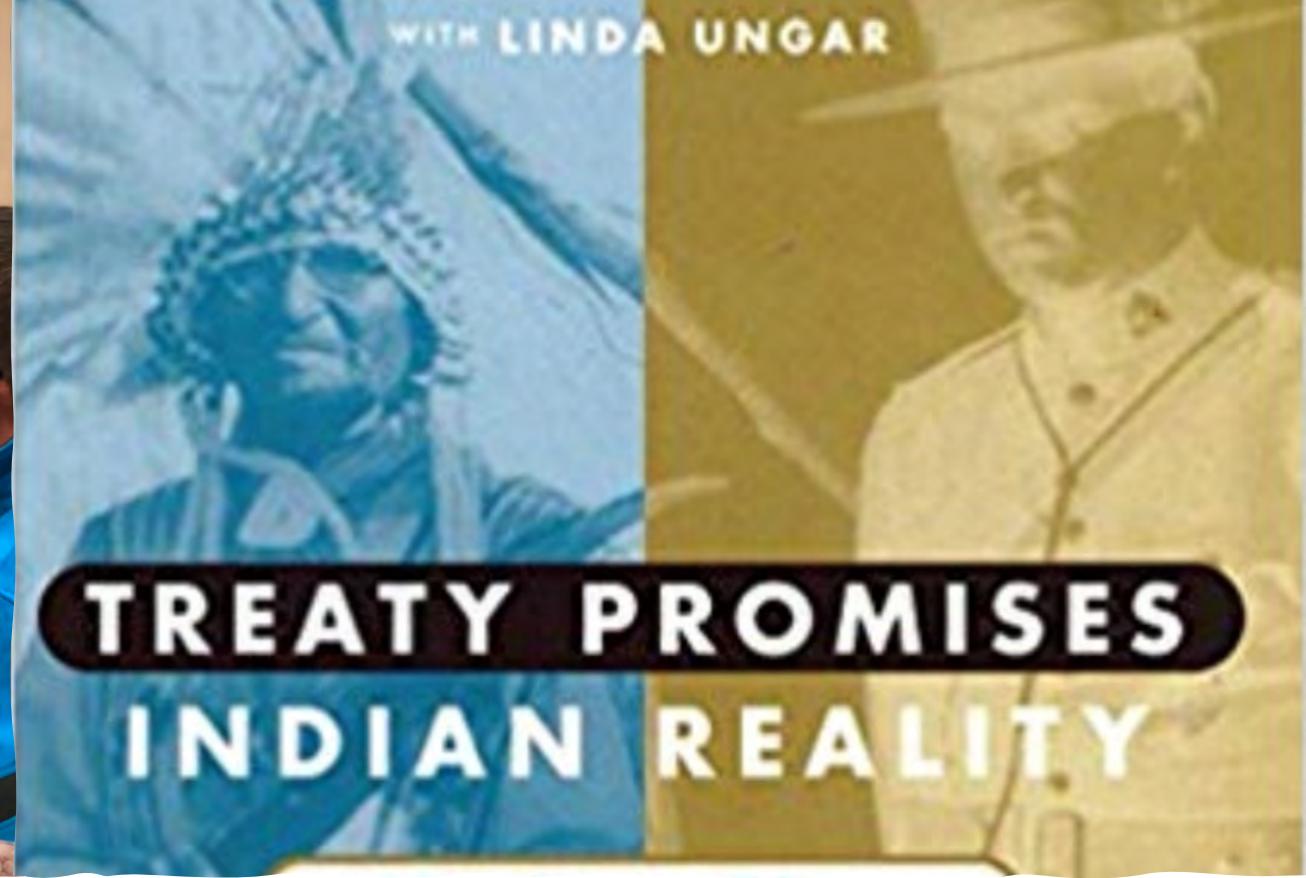
# Cowessess First Nation Custom Lands Act

- ▶ Once the land act is ratified, Cowessess Nation would no longer be subject to the land-management provisions of the Indian Act;
- ▶ Allow Cowessess Nation to develop land law that addresses the following:
  - ▶ The use and occupancy of First Nation land, including licences, leases, and allotments;
  - ▶ Transfer of land interests and the revenues from natural resources obtained from reserve land;
  - ▶ Requirements for accountability to Cowessess members for land management and money derived from reserve land;
  - ▶ Community consultation processes for the development of rules respecting matrimonial property issues, use, occupancy and possession of Cowessess land and the division of interests in Cowessess land;
  - ▶ Conflict of interest in the management of Cowessess land;
  - ▶ Establishment of a forum for the resolution of disputes in relation to interests;
  - ▶ Granting or expropriating interests.

# Opportunities and Challenges

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- ▶ Today it is about inequality and help the the Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative Grant
- ▶ Capacity building; agriculture is not a 8am to 4:30pm job
- ▶ The current system was not build with First Nation involvement and major overhaul is needed to adjust
  - ▶ Indian Act is not business friendly
  - ▶ Access to capital on reserve
  - ▶ Programs and policies have minimal First Nation voice at the table
- ▶ What markets are available: goats, poultry, buffalo
- ▶ Transport to markets nationally and internally
- ▶ Partnership with Ducks Unlimited to assure Stewardship to Land and Animals



# Treaty Promises – Harold Lerat

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Cowessess First Nation 4-C Farms Grain