
**Manitoba Forage and Grassland Association
Report from the Chair
Dave Koslowsky, MFGA Chair
February 3, 2017
MFGA Annual General Meeting, Brandon MB**

Greetings and Welcome all,

As we reflect on the year passed with Manitoba Forage and Grassland Association, one cannot help but feel a sense of pride and accomplishment with our increasing footprint and solid reputation via our MFGA partnerships and project delivery.

Our 2016 MFGA highlights include:

MFGA continues to build a strong relationship via dialogues with Manitoba's Agriculture Minister Hon. Ralph Eichler. The fact Minister Eichler is present at our AGM today is a testament to our work and the Minister's vision and openness to working with us as Manitoba Agriculture works toward their department's mandate. We had the privilege of meeting with the Minister in person at the legislative building in August after attending the Minister's Agricultural Consultation in June. We also have crossed paths informally with Minister Eichler and his key staff at numerous events and our dialogue is always positive on MFGA's role and our organization's abilities being in alignment with his department's goals. We eagerly look forward to further dialogues in 2017 and continuing to gain the Minister's support and confidence in our MFGA work.

MFGA executive also met with Hon. Cathy Cox, Minister of Sustainable Development and department leaders earlier this January, which was very informative and productive as we continue to showcase the role of grasses and forages on healthy agricultural landscapes. We also have had some informal talks with Hon. Cliff Cullen, Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade and have brought him up to speed on MFGA. As well, our leaders of the MFGA Aquanty Project have also provided project information and background to Hon. Blaine Pedersen, Minister of Infrastructure and his department leaders.

Federally, the majority of our government interactions are around the MFGA Aquanty Project to construct a HydroGeoSphere model of the Assiniboine River Basin to model the effects of flood and drought impacts on agricultural lands. The MFGA Aquanty model will encompass the Assiniboine, Qu'Appelle and Souris sub-basins, as well as a more detailed drill down on the Birdtail Watershed located in the upper reaches of the Assiniboine sub-basin. Of special interest to MFGA supporters is that in addition to the completion of the model, the role of forages and grasses in times of flood and drought will be the second objective of the model. The project was announced by Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Lawrence MacAulay in June of 2016 with the excellent support of Minister Eichler of Manitoba Agriculture and is on schedule for completion March 2018.



As an organization trending upward, we need good governance and updated bylaws. This past fall, we applied for a Growing Forward grant to hire consultant Wendy Bulloch of *BUILDING UP* to help lead our bylaws review and governance structure to ensure that MFGA can be as successful and effective as possible via a strategic work plan and clear understanding of the roles and succession plan for our board members.

In November, MFGA was the host of the CFGA conference, including taking a busload of delegates to the Manitoba Beef and Forage Initiatives research farm near Brandon. We are also working hard on being part of the Made-in-Manitoba discussion around carbon – we have put a MFGA carbon team together and will be looking to our board to solidify our position and tact on this issue—with more to come in the spring.

In conclusion, we had a good year with much success and growth on many fronts. And, I feel very confident that we all can be looking forward to what MFGA will do in the next year and beyond.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave Koslowsky", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Dave Koslowsky
MFGA Chair