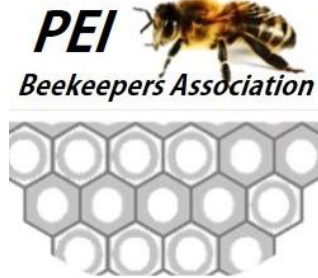


Water Act Regulations

Standing Committee of Natural Resources and Environmental
Sustainability



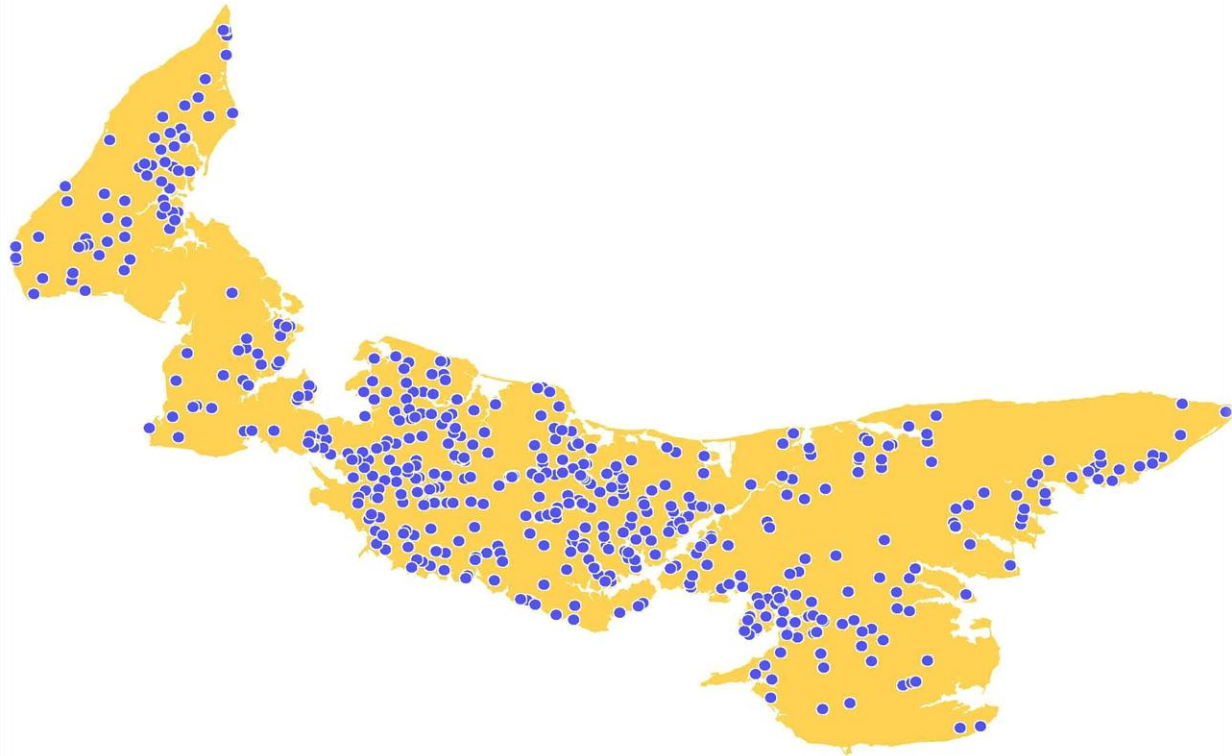
Chicken Farmers of PEI

**PEI Fruit Tree Growers
Association**



PEI Fur Breeders Association





Economic Impact



- Largest individual sector in the Island's economy
- Agriculture sector contributed over \$500 million to Provincial GDP in 2018.
 - Multiplier Effect 6-7: Machinery, vehicles, supplies, etc.
- \$3 billion industry in \$7 billion economy
- In 2018, Island farmers employed approximately 4900 Islanders and spent over \$70 million in wages

How We Use Water

- Drinking water for livestock
- Water for plants
 - Main source – rainfall
 - Limited irrigation
- Wash lines – potatoes, fruits, vegetables
- Bio-security measures – Washing, sanitizing
- Crop protection (fruits, cranberries)
- Fertigation



Agriculture is growing and raising living organisms

How We Value Water



- **PEIFA and PEI Watershed Alliance have created:**
- **PEI Agri-Watershed Partnership**
 - Mitigate (eliminate) fish kills and run off events
 - Keep soil on the fields
 - Develop Industry Standard that will increase sustainability measures and serve as basis for “Due Diligence”
- Industry Standard in draft phase
 - Consultations with growing community were cancelled due to COVID-19
 - A survey went to agriculture community in March – 130 responses
 - Analysis ongoing

Water Act Overall View



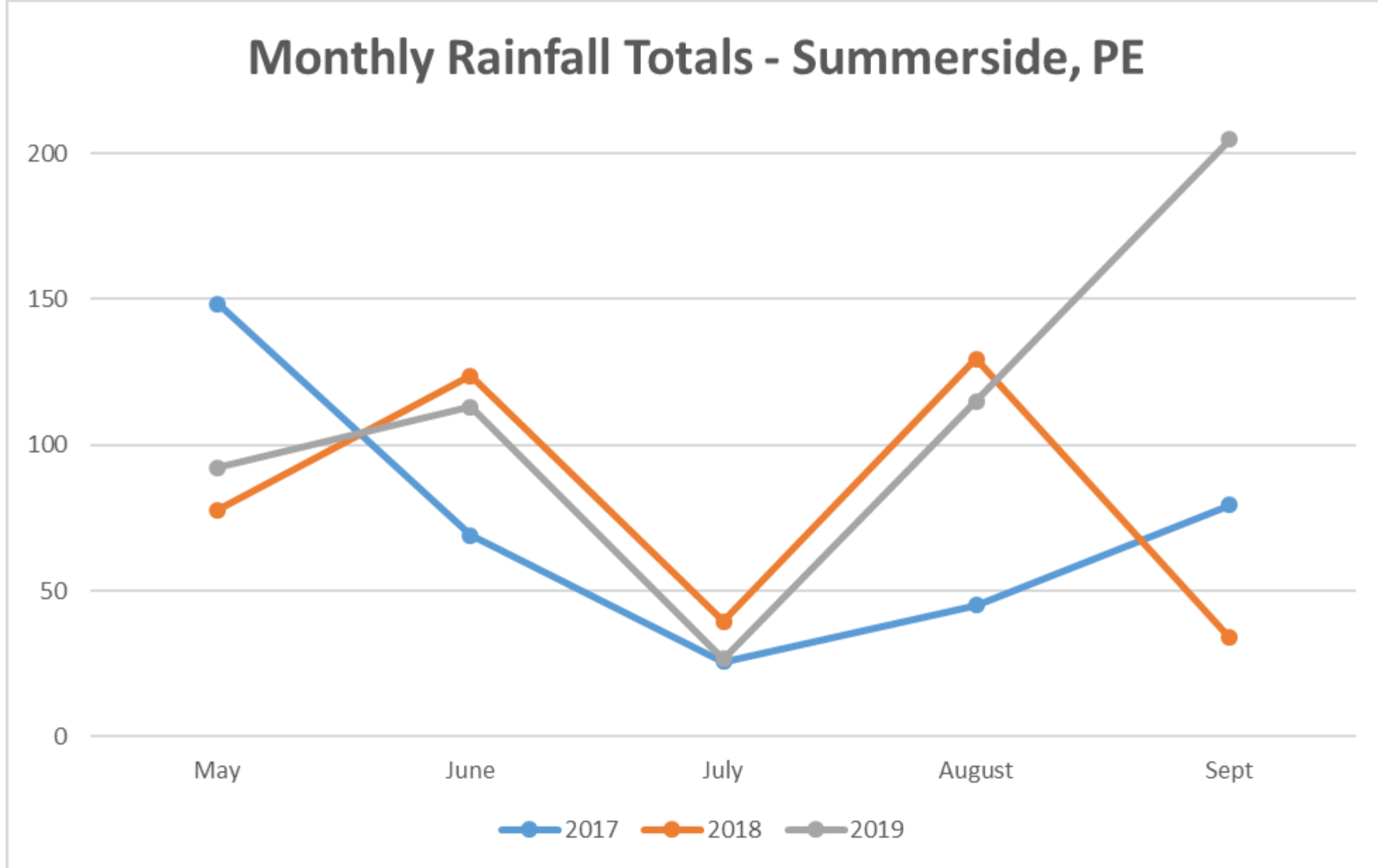
- **PEIFA supports the Water Act**
 - **Safe and adequate water supply for future generations is paramount**
 - **Water monitoring is important**
 - **Adequate level of controls**
- **Continued access to adequate water supply for agriculture and food production**
- **We are prepared to work with Government going forward on a some requested revisions to the regulations**
 - **Want it to work for everyone**
 - **Singling out one industry amounts to discrimination**

Future Water Needs

- **Supplemental Irrigation**

- During the growing season, some crops producers wish the ability to irrigate when needed
- Changing climate has produced significant periods of drought in recent years.
- Benefits include:
 - Increased marketable yield per acre / improvement in product quality
 - Increased efficiency of fertilizers

Monthly Rainfall Totals - Summerside, PE



Summers have often be drier in recent years at a critical time for many crops. Without access to supplemental irrigation, vegetable crops particularly suffer reduced yields/quality.

Supplemental Irrigation



- Currently, the PEI Department of Environment and Climate Change estimates that PEI uses **1.5% of our annual groundwater recharge for all uses.**
- **Agricultural irrigation accounts for only 2.2% of total groundwater extraction.**
- Source: https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/groundwater_usage_summary.pdf

Supplemental Irrigation

- When crops are under water stress, they slow down/shut down growth. This limits yield, makes plants more susceptible to diseases/pests, and can effect crop quality.
- Sufficient soil moisture enables more efficient use of fertilizer. Farmers are more able to match fertility application to the needs of the crop as plants with sufficient moisture are more able to uptake nutrients. For example, this can limit nitrogen left over at the end of the growing season, **reducing the risk of nitrate leaching.**

Federation Position



Whereas the Department of Environment has reviewed all available scientific data and determined that there is adequate water available for long term sustainability;

Be it resolved that the PEI Federation of Agriculture request the Department of Environment remove the moratorium on new wells for supplemental agricultural irrigation **provided that the scientific data shows that it will not negatively impact the environment and that the PEI Water Extraction Policy provides the adequate controls for the siting and operation of any new wells.**

UPEI Proposal



- UPEI represents an independent body
 - Led by Research Chair of Canadian Rivers Institute
 - Credible and reliable research by independent body
- Four farms, four watershed groups proposed to participate
- Science based proposal that will inform the Government and the public on what irrigation looks like on PEI

UPEI Proposal



- Research project would investigate the impact of new, modern high capacity wells on local groundwater flows as well as agronomic impact of supplemental irrigation.
- Commitment to open data, full transparency. This includes monitoring water usage rates and local stream monitoring.

Science-Based Decisions



- Government has made it clear that they support science based decision making
- The Opposition – both parties have also made that clear
- PEIFA shares this goal. An important concept when dealing with a resource as important to all Islanders as water.

Science-Based Decisions



- Access and allocation should be made using the science based methodologies developed by independent experts
- PEIFA prepared to help in anyway they can to further the study of water to ensure all Islanders are given equitable access
- Approve the UPEI Proposal

• **Water Withdrawal Permit – Section 7**

- Expand this section
- Public database
- Show who is drawing down water and by how much
- Show the contrast between the farming community and others

Specific Regulation Amendments



- **Holding Ponds – Section 5, paragraph 7**
 - The ponds were constructed legally
 - Great capital investment of the operation
- Proper monitoring solves this problem
- If this regulation remains, it must grandfather the existing ponds
- If not – the Government needs to consider compensation

Summary



- **The Water Act needs to work for all industries**
 - **Agriculture is being singled out- amounts to discrimination**
 - **Enshrining the moratorium is not necessary**
- **Science-based decision making needs to be paramount**
 - **If belief that science is inadequate – amend the regulations to allow for the research**
 - **UPEI prepared to move forward – APPROVE THIS PROJECT**
- **We are a willing and eager to work with you and the Department to ensure the sustainability of PEI farms and farm families**



PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND
FEDERATION OF
AGRICULTURE

