



Response on Agricultural Irrigation Pond Use

Attribution: Ron Maynard, President of the PEI Federation of Agriculture.

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Recently there have been concerns expressed in various publications about the use of holding ponds as a means of supplemental irrigation for Island crops. We believe they are a part of a more holistic and strategic approach to the issue.

Over the last several months and year prior, the Federation of Agriculture has been requesting to work with the provincial government and our watershed partners to create a Supplemental Irrigation Strategy for Island food production. We remain committed to creating this strategy, but in its absence, we see the stress this lack of action has caused for our Island farming community.

Given the limited options available to the industry, PEI farmers have moved to constructing agricultural irrigation ponds out of fear of another year of drought. Some farmers suffered significant losses over the last few years of dry weather, and when faced with continued uncertainty, they made a choice.

It is important to note that irrigation ponds are expensive. With today's changing weather patterns, we need to holistically address the viability of food production on PEI. The farming community needs a comprehensive strategy that includes these ponds as we move forward.

We are proposing a robust strategic approach that has an effective monitoring system and clear regulations for food production that also protects the resource into the future. We would see this strategy as including other regulations around soil health and crop varieties, for example.

We greatly appreciate Minister Myers quick action upon taking his post to approve the research study and his understanding of the issues facing the industry right now.

Going forward we hope to continue to work together to create a Supplemental Irrigation Strategy for food production. It is ultimately what is needed to move forward together and protect the Island's water while also ensuring the continued sustainability of the farming community.

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About the PEI Federation of Agriculture:

The PEI Federation of Agriculture is the province's largest general farm organization in the province, representing more than 85 percent of Island farmers. The Federation exists to help improve the sustainability of Island farms and farm families, providing programming, education and public policy recommendations.

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