

Best Practice

Long Term Control of the Richardson Ground Squirrel

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THE PRACTICE

One of the main issues facing the RM of Mankota is the over population of the Richardson ground squirrel. The over population of the squirrel has been making agricultural land in the region unproductive.

THE PROCESS

The administrator had extensive talks with ratepayers and learned that many different products have been used to try and control the squirrel population over the years. Increasing frustration led the administrator to lobby the provincial government for the re-implementation of 2% strychnine, which had a previous track record of success. The RM is also working in conjunction with a biologist consultant to determine which products could prove effective.

The RM and biologist continued to do testing for other methods to control the squirrel population. At the annual SARM convention, the RM of Mankota put forth a proposal which called upon RMs to voluntarily contribute \$500 for the support of an ongoing research project to control the squirrel population.

THE RESULTS

The proposal resulted in \$380,000 in funding from the provincial Ministry of Agriculture for the support of an ongoing research project to control the squirrel population. Another \$380,000 was received in the second year of the project from the federal government.

The benefit of this research to the RM will be the revitalization of the affected land to a productive state.

LESSONS LEARNED

The RM of Mankota learned that, through effective lobbying efforts, anything is possible. Producers in the region were temporarily allowed to use a previously banned substance while a thorough research project was conducted to address the challenges created by the over population of the squirrel.