

**SSCA seeks legal opinion on carbon trading project**

The Saskatchewan Soil Conservation Association (SSCA) has obtained legal advice on the risks and liabilities to those farmers who sign a contract with C-Green Aggregators to “sell” their stored soil carbon. The legal opinion of Melfort lawyer, Mel Annand, is available through the SSCA website [www.ssca.ca](http://www.ssca.ca).

Blair McClinton, Executive Manager of the SSCA indicated that the SSCA sought legal advice once it became evident that farmers had many questions about the opportunity to receive some payment for their good farming practices. “C-Green Aggregators is offering to pay farmers who direct seed for the carbon stored in their soils between 2003 and 2006. While the money looks good, farmers are concerned about the long-term risks and liabilities they may incur by signing such a contract,” said McClinton. “The farmers have been turning to the SSCA to answer their questions and that is when we sought a legal opinion,” he said.

“Mr. Annand’s opinion should help answer many farmers’ questions about liability associated with this particular contract. This opinion also raises several questions farmers may want to clarify with the aggregator. Farmers may also wish to have their own lawyer look over the contract for a second opinion. However, farmers will need to keep in mind that contracts for future years will have other considerations,” McClinton said.

Laura Reiter, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President of the SSCA and a farmer near Radisson, is pleased that farmers are exercising caution before signing a legal document. “For several years, the SSCA has been telling farmers to read the fine print before they sign anything relating to their stored soil carbon. It is important to understand what you are signing. We’re pleased that our message has been heeded.”

Direct seeding (seeding into the previous crop’s standing stubble), is one of the many Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs) that enables agricultural crops to remove carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), a greenhouse gas, from the atmosphere and store it in the soil.

The SSCA is a producer organization established in 1987. Its Board of Directors has been working for several years on the soil carbon issue. Along with other soil conservation groups across Canada, the SSCA has been seeking fair and equitable rules and compensation for farmers who wish to trade their stored soil carbon.

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