

GREENHOUSE PRODUCTION

Teresa & Arnold Brewster



Teresa and Arnold Brewster are still relatively new to the greenhouse business having opened Brewster's Greenhouse in 2002. The Brewsters were grain farmers before retiring to open up a 9,000 square foot cucumber and tomato operation about 25 kilometres south of Prince Albert.

The Brewsters are always looking for ways to improve their operation and received positive feedback after completing a Saskatchewan Environmental

Farm Plan (EFP). Glen Sweetman, a greenhouse and nursery crops specialist with the provincial government, told them about the EFP program.

"When you start off with something like this you don't really know what you should or shouldn't be doing," Teresa says. "It reaffirmed the things we were doing were right."

What is the Environmental Farm Plan (EFP)?

The EFP is designed as an awareness and educational tool and is not a regulatory program. It is a completely voluntary and confidential program. Producers that are participating in the program are doing so because they are interested in understanding and addressing environmental issues in agriculture.

The EFP's five-step process helps producers understand their current environmental risks and how these risks may affect their farming operation now and in the future. In Saskatchewan the EFP is delivered by the Provincial Council of Agricultural Development and Diversification Boards (PCAB). The Brewsters' attended a workshop where trained professionals introduce the concepts behind the EFP and worked with them to assess the soil and site characteristics of their operation. They then used a workbook to review all aspects of their operations in order to identify potential risks and solutions. Once the workbook was completed, the Brewsters' attended a second workshop where they finalized their action plan, with the help of facilitators, and determined the steps required to manage any identified risks and prioritize action items.

A peer review committee, made up of producers who have already have endorsed Environmental Farm Action Plans, reviews the completed action plans. Once the Peer Review Committee feels that a plan is adequate, they endorse it. The producer then receives a Certificate of Endorsement from PCAB acknowledging their efforts in the development of an EFP. After the peer review committee has endorsed the plan, producers can begin implementation and are eligible to apply for financial assistance under the Canada-Saskatchewan Farm Stewardship Program (CSFSP).

Saskatchewan Environmental Farm Plan Testimonials

continued

The Brewsters saved time and money with the plan

"This (program) told you which way to go so you weren't wasting a lot of time, money and effort on things that were going to be of no value to you in a couple of years," Teresa says.

For the Brewsters, the EFP showed them that they were already employing environmentally safe practices.

"They talked about water sources and shelter belts," Teresa says. "Most of that we had in place already, but it told us we were on the right track. It reaffirmed the things we were doing and what we were planning to do."

The EFP also helped the Brewsters with specific problems, like how to store fertilizer in an environmentally safe way. "We have a certain amount on hand and have it in a wooden structure," Teresa says. "The building should be on a cement pad and the side walls should be cement up to a certain height. If the fertilizer spilled out, it would be on cement and easier and safer to look after," says Teresa, adding that the EFP helped increase the awareness of other environmental risks around the farm.



ENVIRONMENTAL FARM PLAN

EFP

Sustainable Futures

Provincial Council of Agriculture Development and Diversification Boards for Saskatchewan Inc. (PCAB) is an independent non-profit organization representing grassroots agriculture in Saskatchewan. We work closely with industry and government to ensure timely and effective delivery of agriculture programs in the province. PCAB is committed to working with both government and industry to ensure a cooperative, efficient approach to agricultural program delivery.

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