

April 10, 2020

To all ag societies;

Many of us are concerned what COVID-19 will mean to ag society's events in 2020.

The MAAS Board met by conference call and discussed this issue. Deciding to cancel or reschedule event(s) is a difficult undertaking, and very individual to each event and ag society. We hope the following information is helpful to you in navigating this unprecedented situation.

- **The Public Health Act states effective April 1:** “public gatherings are limited to no more than 10 people at any indoor or outdoor place or premises” The information currently available is that this directive is in place until April 30th, however it is possible that this date will be extended.
- **Consult with your Insurance Provider:** Questions to your insurance provider might include; do you have cancellation coverage; does it include ‘force majeure’ – that is an occurrence beyond reasonable control? Has your coverage changed as a result of Covid-19? How far in advance you need to decide to take advantage of any clauses in your policy and if you do cancel are you eligible for any rebates or reductions on the fees your insurance provider charges as a result of lowered risk(no event/no insurance risk)?
- **Review Service Contracts:** This would be with any service providers (and in some cases your ag society is the service provider); including promotions, fair books, entertainers, midways, other organizations, facilities etc. Is there a time frame outlined within the contract by which you need to cancel? Have conversations; make sure you understand any changes to their procedures and keep them informed about any changes to yours.
- **Check with other organizations:** Identify other organizations you are working with for your events – Light Horse Association, Harness Racing Association, MGRA, rodeo associations, 4-H, organizations with displays, etc. Keep up to date and informed with your partner organizations, decisions to cancel or postpone may be influenced by or involve conversations with other groups.

There are many ways that Ag Societies can be a healing force in their communities; we bring community together at our events and will continue to do so when the time is right.

Ag Societies are important to their communities; socially and economically, and it is very important that we capture the effects of all canceled events and activities related to Ag Societies. The Canadian Association of Fairs and Exhibitions(CAFE) conducted a survey of ag societies and fairs across Canada and 22 of Manitoba's ag societies participated. Thank you to those who took the time to respond. It

was reported by the 22 ag societies that over 55 events have been affected to the end of June; resulting in a revenue loss estimated at nearly 4 million dollars.

This has a huge impact on our communities' economies; MAAS is committed to making sure municipal, provincial and federal politicians understand the important role of an ag society in their community. This awareness of an ag society's role is important for future support, funding and growth.

To do this we will need the support and participation of Ag Societies in providing MAAS with gathering and sharing of data and participation in local, municipal, and federal advocacy.

Sincerely,

Dawn Morin
MAAS President