

## **Annual Ditch Mowing Program & Hay Salvage Opportunity**

The Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure reminds farmers and ranchers that hay in provincial highway ditches is once again available to salvage for free.

Hay in these ditches, known as the highway right-of-way, may be cut and baled at any time prior to July 8 by the adjacent landowner. After July 8 any person may salvage the hay without the permission of the nearby landowner provided salvage operations haven't started.

This salvage opportunity is to give farmers and ranchers the option to use this hay for free to complement their existing agricultural operations. Please keep in mind the safety of motorists travelling nearby your hay salvage operation, if you're taking advantage of this annual option.

Hay must be cut at a uniform height leaving a neat appearance. Bales of hay must be located at least eight metres from the shoulder of the highway. All bales must be removed by Aug. 8. Bales that aren't removed by Aug. 8 or are left in a location deemed to be hazardous to motorists may be removed by the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure.

The Ministry is also once again planning an early mowing program between June 7 and July 15 along heavily-travelled roads. Ministry contractors will mow a four-metre-wide strip adjacent to the highway shoulders on Highways 1, 7, 11, 16 and 39, along with portions of Highways 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10 and 55. During this time frame, also known as Stage 1, mowing may also be completed at some highway intersections and near interchanges, railway crossings and tourism facilities.

The annual mowing program improves aesthetics for tourists visiting our province, helps control brush and weeds and helps maintain sight distances on curves and at intersections. This annual mowing also has benefits to the highway system in the winter by optimizing snow storage in the ditches and by helping to reduce drifting on the road surface.

Between July 15 and the fall, known as Stage 2, Ministry contractors will conduct regular ditch mowing. They will mow the entire width along all four-lane highways. All other highways will get a four-metre-wide strip adjacent to the highway shoulders mowed. Additional mowing may be conducted near interchanges, railway crossings, tourism facilities, approaches and as required for visibility and for control of weeds and brush.

Hay salvage opportunities and the progress of contracted mowers are dependent upon weather and ditch conditions.

If you need more information, please call Shauna Lehmann, Acting Senior Preservation and Operations Engineer, at 306-933-7603 or email her at [Shauna.Lehmann@gov.sk.ca](mailto:Shauna.Lehmann@gov.sk.ca).

### **Key Dates**

**June 7 to July 15 (Stage 1):** Four-metre-wide width mowed adjacent to highway shoulders by Ministry contractors occurs only along heavily-travelled highways with some additional mowing as required.

**July 8 (key hay salvage date):** Before this date, a landowner or lessee nearest to a highway ditch has the first option to cut or bale the hay. After this date, anyone may cut and bale the hay or grass in a highway ditch without getting the permission of the nearby landowner, provided salvage operations haven't started already.

**Between July 15 and the fall (Stage 2):** After this date, Ministry contractors will begin mowing the entire width of ditches along all four-lane highways, while all other highways will get a four-metre cut adjacent to the highway shoulder. Some additional mowing may also occur.