

Participation in Strychnine Vendor Program

Purpose

This briefing note provides Council with information on the Provincial Strychnine Vendor program for control of Richardson's Ground Squirrel.

Background

Strychnine is approved under an Emergency Use Registration (EUR) until November 1, 2027, for control of Richardson's Ground Squirrel (RGS) in designated areas experiencing significant infestations. Parkland County is an approved area.

Distribution is limited to municipalities with a Pesticide Vendor Registration. Parkland County holds this registration and has previously distributed the product.

The optimal spring application window (mid-March to mid-April) has passed. Product availability would align with late summer 2026 or spring 2027 use.

Provincial direction identifies strychnine as part of an integrated pest management approach, intended for use when other control methods are being implemented but are not effective.

Program Management

Participation requires Parkland County to act as the vendor and program administrator.

- Program administration and compliance
- Verify producer eligibility and completion of mandatory training.
- Collect and maintain required documentation (training certificates, declarations of eligibility, monitoring and evaluation forms).
- Maintain records and support provincial reporting requirements.
- Training has been completed by the Agricultural Fieldman for Parkland County.

Product management

- Secure storage and controlled distribution of hazardous products.
- Parkland County has an existing secured chemical storage facility.
- Track distributed product and reconcile with reported use.
- Support audits and inspections by Provincial or Federal regulators.
- Assist in allocation decisions during periods of limited supply.

Financial Implications

- Product cost is \$440 per case containing 24 x 250 ml bottles.
- Application rate is 1 bottle per kg of grain, with one bottle treating approximately 1 acre

- Product to be sold for \$20/bottle. No refunds will be issued; however, unused product must be returned by November 2027.

The County must receive and manage return of unused product. Final disposal managed by the Province or product manufacturer.

Risks and Considerations

- Strychnine is highly toxic to humans and animals with no antidote.
- Use requires monitoring and mitigation to reduce impacts on non-target wildlife, including species at risk.

Regulatory

Non-compliance or misuse may result in:

- Removal from the program.
- Financial penalties under applicable legislation.

Reputational

Use of strychnine is associated with wildlife and environmental concerns. The municipality would be responsible for administering and enforcing program requirements.

Stakeholder/Public Impact

Public Response

Municipal social media post:

7 shares, 1 “like”; 2 “sad” reactions; 8 “angry” reactions

One email was received expressing opposition to the program.

Producer Interest

23 producers have expressed interest.

The Agricultural Fieldman has held initial discussions with some producers regarding participation requirements and the need for additional management practices.

Slightly more opposition than support for the 2025 resolution requesting emergency use of Strychnine by attendees of the 2025 Producer Dinner.

Alternative Access

If Parkland County does not participate, producers may not have access to the product, as they are required to purchase it through their home municipality. Alternatively, producers whose home is within another municipality could still apply it to land in Parkland.