



## PROPOSAL TO ACTIVATE SLEEPING ACRES

- WID Reality Check
  - Irrigation Cap of 95,000 acres
  - Water License of 158,400 acft
  - 75,000 acre core irrigators
  - 20,000 acres of intermittent or non-irrigators
  - These are the “sleeping acres”



## PROPOSAL TO ACTIVATE SLEEPING ACRES

- Outside Pressures

- Water for Life policy seeks 30% more irrigation productivity and/or 30% less water used
- Alberta Agriculture wants greater production of food
- Use it or lose it?
- These “sleeping acres” are a tough sell



# PROPOSAL TO ACTIVATE SLEEPING ACRES

- Internal WID Pressures
  - There is a demand for new irrigation acres
  - Acre transfers are slow to respond
  - Sleeping Acres don't appear to want to change...why?
    - *“Might need it one day....”*
    - *“Goes with the land value....”*
    - *“Might never get it back....”*
    - *“Water for stock mostly”*





## PROPOSAL TO ACTIVATE SLEEPING ACRES

- Considerations

- Irrigation delivery system is less than perfect, but we are working on it.
- Provincial settlement money will accelerate rehabilitation.
- We are building in the capacity to service the full 95,000 acres
- Need to bring the unused acres to productivity



## PROPOSAL TO ACTIVATE SLEEPING ACRES

- How do we do that?

- Offer to contract 5,000 acres currently “sleeping” into a WID operated pool.
- Offer will be zero irrigation rates for 10 years if the owner agrees not to request irrigation service for same 10 years.
- The water rights stay with the land, no change
- Stock water agreements will be offered at no charge for those with cattle on the original lands



## PROPOSAL TO ACTIVATE SLEEPING ACRES

- Why do we do that?
  - Irrigation Cap of 95,000 acres will not change
  - 5,000 Annual Agreement Acres will be put on the WID market at say \$19.25/acre
  - This will be a new contract of 10 years length
  - The AA irrigation acres will be targeted to infill selected irrigation zones to maximize efficiency (pipelines)





## PROPOSAL TO ACTIVATE SLEEPING ACRES

- Logic

- 10 years to get equipment investment back
- 5,000 acres will generate extra \$2.2m/yr at the farm gate, \$8.8m/yr to the provincial economy.....with the same water
- Sleeping acres may find that a Stockwater Agreement was all that they needed.
- More acres transfers on the market



## PROPOSAL TO ACTIVATE SLEEPING ACRES

- Logic

- Revenue neutral to WID
- Risk to WID small
- Creates supply to meet the demand
- Targets best land for productivity and best irrigation efficiency





## PROPOSAL TO ACTIVATE SLEEPING ACRES

- At the end of 10 years?
  - Everything could go back to the way it was
- or
- The whole program could be renewed
- Plebiscite to increase the Irrigation Cap by 5,000 acres
- New & permanent internal irrigation acre transfers become available



## PROPOSAL TO ACTIVATE SLEEPING ACRES

Would anyone be tempted?

5,400 select acres were invited

933 acres were offered to program

All were taken up (7 pivots)

Next year we will try again