

ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS OF THE SASKATCHEWAN INSTITUTE OF AGOLOGISTS



The purpose of the following guideline is to clarify the intent of the code of ethics and the understanding of the nature of the professional obligations that arise out of this document. Throughout, it is recognized that membership is a right granted by the public to agrologists to practise agrology in such a way that the public interest is served. It is also understood that, just as the agrologist has an obligation to conduct business in an ethical and competent manner, colleagues and the Institute share the moral responsibility of protecting other agrologists and the field of agrology against any unfounded and unjust criticisms.

Code of Ethics

The profession of agrology demands integrity, competence and objectivity in the conduct of its members while fulfilling their professional responsibilities to the public, the employer or client, the profession and other agrologists.

Code of Practice

Professional Obligations to the Public

Practise only in those fields where agrologists' training, ability and experience make them professionally qualified.

The public has given a right to professionals with the trust and expectation that those activities are undertaken with competence.

Agrologists will not make misleading statements regarding their qualifications.

Agrologists will actively pursue professional development in order to remain competent in their field of expertise. Agrologists will make referrals to, seek advice from, and enter into partnerships with other professionals in situations which require expertise that extends beyond their

competence.

Express a professional opinion only when it is founded on adequate knowledge and experience, and where agrologists have an understanding of the situation and context against which this opinion is being offered.

Agrologists must clearly distinguish among facts, assumptions and opinions in their preparation of reports and professional statements. Professional opinions should be clearly stated, and should include clear indications of the constraints within which opinion holds and the relevant qualifying circumstances, facts and assumptions.

Agrologists should exercise care to ensure their conduct, cannot, in any way, be seen to support or make possible any unethical or illegal purposes. In the extreme, this caution might cause agrologists to refrain from association with enterprises or individuals whose objectives and probity are subject to question.

Agrologist who act as expert witnesses and provide opinion evidence for the purpose litigation should not take a partisan

position. Agrologists must provide evidence as impartial experts, and must not do so as advocates of their client or employer. While acting as expert witnesses, the role of agrologists is to assist the judge/jury/panel with technical matters beyond the expertise of the adjudicators.

Advocate and practise good stewardship of agricultural resources based on sound scientific principles.

Stewardship requires making complex choices based on a variety of relevant but not necessarily compatible factors. Good stewards must consider, but not necessarily be limited to, monetary matters, social values, the rational application of sound science, the lessons of valid experience, the impacts on the economic health of the community at large, and the impacts on future generations. Because of the position of public trust, the duty of agrologists is to uphold professional principles above and beyond the demands of employment.

Conflict may arise between an agrologist's duty to uphold professional principals and their duty to serve the needs of an employer or a client. Agrologists must distinguish between the role they play as agrologist and the role management plays. Managers have prerogatives and privileges for making decisions based on a wider range of constraints than those that might be appropriate for agrologists. Agrologists must not confuse the role of providing others with information upon which to base a decision, with the role of being responsible for making the decision itself.

If agrologists believe there is a serious conflict between the requirements of employment and their professional principles, they should inform and/or consult appropriate person about the conflict. Agrologists may seek advice and support for their position from the Institute.

Extend public knowledge of agriculture and to promote truthful and accurate statements on sustainable agricultural systems and environmental matters.

Agrologists should strive to develop appropriate involvement with schools, agencies and organizations in so far as such outreach activities can help ensure the dissemination and discovery of sound and appropriate agricultural environment knowledge. Agrologists should attempt to correct misleading or erroneous statements on agricultural matters whenever

and wherever such statements are encountered.

Have proper regard for the safety of others in all work.

Agrologists must understand their obligation for promoting safety. Agrologists should consider the impact of their professional duties upon the health of the environment, industrial safety, the health of the consumer, construction safety, and the general operational safety of completed projects. Agrologists must demonstrate concern for the immediate and long-term, direct effects of agricultural practices on the safety of workers by being aware of and evaluating risks.

The public expects and demands a safe supply of food, not only for current but also for future generations. Agrologists must balance the claims of producers and the consuming public against the potentially competing claims for safety of the environment, and the interests of individuals and businesses affected by their proximity to agricultural operations.

Responsibility to the Client or Employer

Act conscientiously and diligently in providing professional services.

Agrologists should endeavour to put service above gain and excellence above quantity. If agrologists become aware of errors or omissions in their work, they must report the same to their client or employer and immediately work to remedy such errors or omissions.

Except as required by law, to maintain the confidentiality of client and employer information unless given the explicit consent of the client or employer.

Agrologists should consider all information received from a client or employer as confidential unless such information is in the public domain. Information obtained during, and specific to, a professional contract situation is confidential and must not be disclosed to others or used by agrologists outside that contracted situation without the consent of the client or employer.

However, technical expertise gained by agrologists through work may be used in subsequent projects without consent from other parties.

Obtain a clear understanding of the clients or employer's objectives.

Agrologists must clearly understand the objectives of the client or employer. Agrologists must make inquiries regarding such objectives to ensure that professional services are provided in the context of complete and accurate information. It is recommended that all oral communication that is material to the delivery of professional services be confirmed in writing.

Inform the client or employer of any action planned or undertaken by the client or employer that agrologists believe is detrimental to good stewardship or in breach of known laws or regulations.

It is the duty of agrologists to advise a client or employer of the consequence of questionable actions, and inform the client or employer of the facts that lead them to believe that the action is detrimental to good stewardship.

Refuse any assignment that creates a conflict of interest.

A conflict of interest exists where the duties and loyalty owed by agrologists to one party are, or are likely to become, hostile to the duties or loyalty owed to another party.

Agrologists should not accept assignments in which they have a personal or business interest unless that interest is disclosed and approved by the client or employer.

Where agrologists are in a position of providing professional services to more than one party with different interests in the same or related matter, agrologists must explain the significance of acting for more than one party to each of the affected client or employers and obtain the written consent of the parties to continue working for more than one party. If any of the parties fail to give consent, agrologists must then determine whether it is possible to act on behalf of a subset of parties without conflict. If acting only on behalf of some of the parties cannot eliminate conflict, agrologists should advise all the parties that they cannot continue to act for any of them in the matter that generates the conflict of interest.

Agrologists must also advise the parties that no information received from one in connection with the common matter can be treated as confidential so far as any of the other

parties are concerned.

Decline compensation from more than one employer or client for the same work, without consent of all.

Agrologists need to distinguish between the data or product which becomes the property of the client, and the process or technical experience which remains the property of agrologists.

Responsibility to the Profession

Inspire confidence in agrology by maintaining high standards in conduct and work.

Agrologists must keep in mind that the work of an agrologist is continuously open for public scrutiny and it is the responsibility of each individual to build and maintain a positive image of the field and the profession. Not only must agrologists perform their duties of employment to a high level of excellence, but the conduct of each agrologist must also be of high standard.

Support activities for the advancement of the profession.

Agrologists have an obligation to participate in the activities of the Provincial Institute. These include meetings, elections, holding office, mentoring, as their situations and opportunities allow. Agrologists need to be constantly aware they are professionals and should, by their conduct, provide a positive image of agrology. As agrologists, they must also be prepared to personally promote agrology in personal contacts and communication, and to participate in specific promotional initiatives organized by the professional organization.

Where agrologists believe, another individual may be guilty of infamous or unprofessional conduct, negligence, or breach of the Agrologists Act, 1994, or bylaws:

- i) to raise the matter with that individual, and*
- ii) if not resolved or if otherwise deemed necessary, to inform the Registrar of the Provincial Institute of Agrologists in writing.*

Agrologists should ensure that the facts and understanding of the misconduct are correct. Consultation with a colleague or Registrar is encouraged if it may help clarify the issue.

Agrologists should make every effort to raise and resolve the issue in a candid and professional manner. Agrologists should note that, if done courteously and politely, only in exceptional circumstances is it inappropriate to raise such a matter with the other agrologist.

State clearly on whose behalf professional statements or opinions are made.

Professional opinions or statements prepared by agrologists are for specific situations and sets of circumstances. The content of a professional opinion should include the context in which they are made.

Sign and seal only those plans, reports and other documents for which agrologists are professionally responsible and which were prepared by them or under their direction.

Agrologists who affix their seal and/or signature assume responsibility for, and an understanding of, all documents. Agrologists must have exercised sufficient control and association with documents in order to sign and seal them based on personal knowledge. Agrologists will not associate with documents, reports or statements that misrepresent, distort or omit material facts. Agrologists should familiarize themselves with information that detail the procedures and protocols associated with the use and practice sealing professional works.

Professional Responsibility to Other Agrologists

Abstain from undignified or misleading public communication with or about agrologists.

Respect, courtesy, honesty and good faith should characterize conduct between agrologists. Direct and honest criticism between agrologists. Direct and honest criticism between professionals is acceptable and professional

debate is encouraged when characterized by fairness and propriety.

Agrologists should be courteous when criticizing the work of other agrologists, and be as careful with colleagues' reputations as with their own.

Agrologists will not make statements or representation on behalf of the Institute without prior authorization.

Give credit for professional work to whom credit is due.

Agrologists should always acknowledge the work and contributions of others when directly using their works, in whole or in part. Agrologists should clearly understand and appreciate that the unpaid use of marketable processes and technologies developed by another agrologist could jeopardize the other's livelihood.

Agrologists will follow the rules and law of copyright. Agrologists will secure releases for any data, process (es) and publications (s) obtained from written or electronic sources.

Share knowledge and experience with other agrologists.

Agrologists have a duty to new agrologists and to the future of the Institute to be available as mentors. Agrologists should offer and seek out constructive, professional discussion and debates with colleagues in order to maintain a vibrant and progressive profession.

The Saskatchewan Institute of Agrologists is an organization of university trained professionals that protects the public by ensuring its members are qualified and competent to provide knowledge and advice on agriculture and related areas.



Saskatchewan Institute of Agrologists

#29 - 1501 8th St. East
Saskatoon SK S7H 5J6

Phone: 306.242.2606
Fax: 306.955.5561
E-mail: info@sia.sk.ca
Website: www.sia.sk.ca