

Safe Drinking Water Foundation and Prairie Water

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SAFE DRINKING WATER FOUNDATION (CANADA)

The Saskatchewan Government formed a working group to address water issues in 1994 and in 1998 they produced a booklet for public input. This booklet contains the following statement:

Safe water is a life requirement of all people; everyone should have access to safe quality drinking water

Most people around the world will agree with that statement. Few, however, have the resources, including scientific, political as well as financial support, to effectively address it. Even when we know that human health effects are considerable (more than 5 million people die each year from diseases related to poor sanitation and drinking polluted water) it is often simpler to do little as the entire spectrum of poor quality water raises a multitude of financial, technical and practical issues. These issues span all levels of government and they find their way into the lives of everyone. While most will agree with the above statement, it is the actions taken that will determine whether we will be able to even come close to being able to say "this water is safe".

During the summer of 1997 five scientists from four countries discussed the issue of safe drinking water for rural areas of the world and came up with an approach to deal with it. We formed the **Safe Drinking Water Foundation (Canada)**. Hans Peterson (WaterResearch Corp.) is the Executive Director, Richard Robarts (Environment Canada) is the President, Tom Preston (Scottish Universities Research Centre) is Vice-President with Sasha Zhulidov (Centre for Preparation and Implementation of International Projects on Technical Assistance, Russia) and Michio Kumagai (Lake Biwa Research Institute, Japan) being directors. These five board members have published more than 400 peer reviewed scientific articles on water. **Safe Drinking Water Foundation's**

(SDWF) mission is to address safe drinking water issues from a scientific perspective. **SDWF's** goal is to work with people and agencies that share the goal of producing safe and palatable water.

The **Safe Drinking Water Foundation** is a charity with the primary purpose of finding treatment and preventative solutions to make surface and ground water safe for human consumption in rural areas around the world. In Canada the major challenge is to provide rural users on the prairie with solutions to produce safe drinking water from excessively poor source waters. These poor source waters are a result of extensive agricultural activities, large deposits of glacial tills and sedimentation from an ancient inland sea and a semi-arid climate. Money received by **SDWF** (tax-refundable receipts will be issued) will go to supporting innovative R&D that makes the production of safe drinking water possible in the most cost-effective way.

The need for a safe drinking water foundation arises from the following facts:

- Most source waters used for drinking water purposes in the world are not safe to use without treatment. A large quantity of this water is consumed without treatment or with inadequate treatment. This results in human illness that can be the major disease factor for individuals, small communities and in some cases countries. Production of safe drinking water and sanitation could reduce the amount of illness and death by as much as 75%, depending on the disease.
- Poor quality water also restricts industrial development further hampering progress towards safe drinking water. Most efforts in the drinking water field have been dedicated to large water treatment

systems serving town and cities with few resources placed on small systems despite the fact that these systems dominate rural areas around the world.

In a step to address these gaps, the Purpose of the **Safe Drinking Water Foundation** has been established:

- To make sustainable water treatment technologies available for rural water users around the world
- To fund targeted R&D on safe drinking water treatment technologies for rural water users around the world
- To promote public education programs on safe drinking water treatment technologies for rural water users around the world
- To share the results of innovative world-wide applied R&D on safe drinking water treatment technologies for small systems

In support of these activities the **Safe Drinking Water Foundation** will:

- Produce an Internet Home Page
 - Produce a Safe Drinking Water Newsletter
 - Produce a Safe Drinking Water Journal
 - Produce safe drinking water extension material including books/cd-roms/videos
 - Work with agencies and corporations around the world
- The **Safe Drinking Water**

Foundation's headquarters are located at the National Hydrology Research Centre of Environment Canada in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada. Correspondence can be addressed to: Safe Drinking Water Foundation (Canada)

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