

A Lament for the Countryside

We seem to have been assailed by the erratic ways of nature ...

Rural people feel at one with the land. When it is healthy and productive, they feel contentment. When the land suffers, as the Prairies have this year, that pain touches everyone.

Looking back on the summer that might have been, we remember late snows and excessive rains. Fields, roads and communities were flooded. There was little opportunity to cultivate and seed. Nor was there any heat to warm the land and enable growth. Many crops that survived have been pelted with hail. Now we watch for early frost.

Hay that had to be cut wouldn't cure. Bailing was repeatedly delayed.

What about the harvest, the wet spots, the lack of drying weather, the changes that keep knocking us out of step?

Is this an economic question both for the agricultural producer and those who provide him with services? Of course! Is this a question of survival for those who've already hung in as long as they can? Of course!

Creator God, we turn to you in our times of despair and helplessness. You know our plight even before we dare to give voice to what is in our hearts.

You are witness to our sleepless nights and the rehearsed presentations we plan to give to potential financiers. You witness the ways in which our hopes and dreams turn sour, and grief overtakes us.

The promise is that you will help us to look at life in new ways and find glimmers of hope in the darkest places. But our skepticism overtakes us.

It helps most when we can give voice to our doubts by talking with you, with our families and with our advisors. It is true that each one sees life through a different lens. Together we can more easily hold the vision and look forward to each new day.

May our declaration about "Next Year Country" be a statement of faith, and may we pray for wisdom and courage.

(written by Joyce Sasse, 2010)