

**Smoky Lake County Agricultural Service Board Meeting  
A G E N D A**

**for Tuesday, March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024** at 1:00 P.M. to be held virtually:

Telus Business Connect Video Meeting link:

<https://video.businessconnect.telus.com/join/210709714>

Meeting ID: 210709714

and/or physically in County Council Chambers, 4612 McDougall Drive, Smoky Lake.

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**1. Meeting:**

1.1 Call to Order.

**2. Agenda:**

Acceptance of Agenda:  
as presented or  
subject to additions or deletions.

**3. Minutes:**

3.1 Adopt minutes of **February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024** – Agricultural Service Board Meeting. ©  
**Recommendation:** Motion to Adopt.

**4. Request for Decision:**

**5. Issues for Information:**

5.1 ASB Chairman’s Report. ©

5.2 Agricultural Service Board Grant Reporting Overview. ©

**6. Correspondence:**

6.1 Letter received from Corinna Williams, Agricultural Service Board Chair, Northern Sunrise County received February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024 RE: 2024 Proposed Changes to Weed Control Regulation. ©  
**Recommendation:** File for Information.

6.2 ASB Connector, January 2024 Addition.  
**Recommendation:** File for Information

6.3 A Guide for Declaring Municipal Agricultural Disasters in Alberta.  
**Recommendation:** File for Information

**7. Delegation(s):**

**8. Executive Session:**

**9. Date and time of Next Meeting(s):  
Adjournment**



Minutes of Smoky Lake County's **Agricultural Service Board Regular Meeting** held on Monday, **February 12, 2024**, at 1:02 P.M. held in Smoky Lake County Council Chambers and virtually online through Electronic Communication Technology.

The meeting was called to Order by the Chairperson, Dan Gawalko, in the presence of the following persons:

<u>Title</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>ATTENDANCE</u> <u>Mon. Feb. 12, 2024</u>
Committee Member	Dan Gawalko	Present in Chambers
Committee Member	Jered Serben	Present in Chambers
Alt. Committee Member	Dominique Cere	Absent
Alt. Committee Member	Lorne Halisky	Absent
Producer-at-Large Member	Tori Ponich	Present in Chambers
Producer-at-Large Member	Curtis Boychuk	Absent
Producer-at-Large Member	Tamara Flondra	Present in Chambers
Alt. Producer-at-Large Member	Kurt Melnyk	Present in Chambers
Alt. Producer-at-Large Member	Brett Rurka	Absent
County Interim CAO	Lydia Cielin	Present in Chambers
Ag. Fieldman	Carleigh Danyluk	Present in Chambers
Assistant Ag. Fieldman	Amanda Khin	Absent
County Executive Services/R.S.	Patti Priest	Present in Chambers

\*\*\*\*\*

No Members of the Media were Present.

5 Members of the Public were Present in Council Chambers.

6 Members of the Public were Present virtually, online.

Delegation: Alyssa Krawchuk, Executive Director, Lakeland Agricultural Research Association (LARA), was present in Chambers.

**2. Agenda:**

ASB22-24: Flondra That Smoky Lake County's Agricultural Service Board Meeting Agenda for Monday, February 12, 2024, be adopted as amended:

**Addition to the Agenda:**

1. Email from Plot2Farm program, dated February 9, 2024 – Re: Field Scale Trials with Lakeland Agricultural Research Association (LARA) and Alberta Grains.

Carried Unanimously.

**3. Minutes:**

ASB23-24: Ponich That the Minutes of Smoky Lake County's Agricultural Service Board Meeting held on Tuesday, December 12, 2023, be adopted as presented.

Carried.

**7. Delegation:**

**Lakeland Agricultural Research Association (LARA)**

Present before the Smoky Lake County's Agricultural Service Board from 1:03 p.m. to 1:58 p.m., was Alyssa Krawchuk, Executive Director, Lakeland Agricultural Research Association (LARA), to provide the following slide presentation:



WHO IS LARA?

SMOKY LAKE COUNTY METRICS  
(CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE 2021)

FUNDING

NINE YEARS OF RESEARCH AND  
EXTENSION

ESTIMATED ECONOMIC IMPACT  
(2018-2023)



## OUTLINE

*Vision: to be a leader in applied research and extension in Alberta*

*Mission: to conduct innovative, unbiased applied research and extension, supporting sustainable agriculture.*

*Unbiased = showing no prejudice for or against something; impartial.*  
*Applied = practical solutions*

- non-profit agricultural research and extension organization incorporated in 1991
  - producer driven
- MD of Bonnyville, County of St. Paul, Lac La Biche County and Smoky Lake County
- Make Alberta's agricultural producers profitable and sustainable through applied research, demonstration and extension in the areas of forages, livestock, annual crops, specialty crops, environmental conservation and regenerative agriculture.

## WHO IS LARA?



## KEY PROGRAMS

**FORAGE AND LIVESTOCK**

Decreases producers cost of production while increasing their value of production.

**CROP AND PEST MANAGEMENT**

Assist producers in making the best agronomic decisions on their operations through variety selection, input management and beneficial management practices.

**ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION**

Combine sustainable farming practices with profitability to ensure your family farm will be there for generations to come.

**WELL SITUATED, HIGHLY TRAINED STAFF**

36 combined years of experience in agricultural research and extension

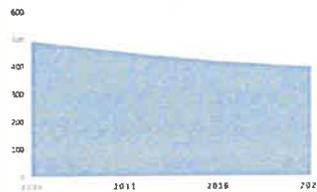


**SMOKY LAKE COUNTY**

- 398 farms
- 1000 acre average farm size
- Over 400,000 acres of land in agricultural use

SOURCE: CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE 2021

- Executive Director  
Alyssa Krawchuk, B.Sc. Agriculture, P.Ag, 10+ years of experience
- Research Scientist  
Dr. Angelica Ouellette, PhD Agriculture, M.Sc. Environmental Science, 8+ years of experience
- Research Agrologist  
Lance Ouellette, M.Sc. Environmental Science, EFP Technician, 8+ years of experience
- Cropping Agrologist  
Marnie Farzand, M.Sc. Plant Science, 2+ years of experience
- Research Technician  
Dustin Roth, Dipl. Ag Business, EFP Technician, 8+ years of experience



19.6% decline in number of farms 2006-2021

THE FUNDS RECEIVED FROM SMOKY LAKE COUNTY ARE USED TO LEVERAGE DOLLARS RECEIVED FROM PROVINCIAL, FEDERAL AND INDUSTRY GRANTS.

2024 BUDGET = \$918,250.00  
COUNTY FUNDS: \$55,000.00

- LEVERAGED GRANTS
- 80% GRANT
  - 20% MATCHING

FUNDS ALLOW FOR ALL COUNTY AGRICULTURE PRODUCERS TO BE MEMBERS OF LARA AT NO CHARGE TO THE PRODUCER



## NINE YEARS OF RESEARCH AND EXTENSION

- 3,085 SMALL PLOTS (AVERAGE OF 342 PER YEAR)
- 34 EVENTS HOSTED (AVERAGE 5 PER YEAR OVER 7 YEARS)
- 34 WEBINARS HOSTED (AVERAGE OF 11 PER YEAR OVER 3 YEARS)
- ASSISTED 406 PRODUCERS ONE-ON-ONE
- 47 ENVIRONMENTAL FARMS PLANS COMPLETED
- AVERAGE 40 FEED TESTS SUBMITTED/YEAR



### LOCAL RESEARCH, PROVINCIAL IMPACT

#### Regional Variety Trials and Regional Silage Trials (RVVT)

Producers can experience a 15% increase in production, which can be an increase in \$25/acre by selecting the variety best suited to their environment.

Alberta Regional Variety Advisory Committee (ARVAC)



#### Regenerative Alberta Living Labs (RALL)

The Regenerative Alberta Living Lab is an ongoing collaboration between farmers, ranchers, and soil scientists throughout the province of Alberta. We use on-farm and soil mapping technology to accurately assess soil health created by producer innovations. This information will allow farmers and ranchers to build resilience and productivity thereby enhancing their bottom line.



#### Alberta Pasture Grass Sampling Project

Mineral content of pasture can change dramatically throughout the grazing season leading to mineral deficiencies that may result in reduced production for producers.

This research aims to provide recommendations for supplementation of each mineral for different regions across the province, for early, mid, and late grazing seasons.

#### Assessment of ESN on the Productivity and Grain Quality of Spring Wheat and Barley in Alberta

Does the inclusion of ESN in a spring wheat and spring barley fertility program pay?

Supported by research conducted at the University of Alberta indicating there is no significant economic benefit for this region.

## NATIONAL, PROVINCIAL AND REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS



#### AGRICULTURE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION COUNCIL OF ALBERTA (ARECA)

- LAKELAND COLLEGE
- LIVESTOCK OENTEC (UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA)
- ALBERTA BEEF PRODUCERS
- ALBERTA GRAINS
- ALBERTA PULSE GROWERS COMMISSION
- RESULTS DRIVEN AGRICULTURE RESEARCH (RDAR)

#### BEEF CATTLE RESEARCH COUNCIL (BCRC)

- APPLIED RESEARCH ASSOCIATIONS (ARA)
- FORAGE ASSOCIATIONS (FA)
- LAKELAND INDUSTRY AND COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
- MOOSE LAKE WATERSHED SOCIETY
- LAC LA BICHE WATERSHED COMMITTEE



#### IN-PERSON EVENTS

Hands-on learning opportunities from local and international speakers:

- 5 per year
- Including:
  - Farm Transition with Elaine Froese
  - Stockmanship with Curt Pate
  - Grazing Management with Jim Gerrish

#### WEBINARS

Online seminars that allows participants from anywhere in the world to come together in a virtual classroom.

- 11 per year
- Including:
  - Gabe Brown from Understanding Ag
  - Dallas Mount with Ranching for Profit



#### ENVIRONMENTAL FARM PLANS

A whole-farm self-assessment tool to identify potential environmental risks on your farm.

- 47 completed
- Average of 5 per year

Required for most producer funding opportunities.

#### LARA WATERSHED RESILIENCY AND RESTORATION PROGRAM (WRRP)

Lakeland Agricultural Research Association received a grant to improve watershed resiliency and restore priority areas within LARA's operational borders.

Stream crossings, riparian fencing, riparian health assessments, offsite watering systems.

- \$103,000.00 (2018-2022)



## ESTIMATED ECONOMIC IMPACT

### ASSUMPTIONS

- Average pasture acreage/farm = 800 acres
- Average number of cattle = 150 head
- Practice change from participant at workshops = 30%
- Practice change from one-on-one consultations = 50%
- Practice change from newsletters = 1%
- Assume \$0.50/head savings by grazing instead of feeding
- Assume 25 additional grazing days by producers practicing change on their operation



BCRC, ASP, Alberta Government, Canadian Census of Agriculture



### ESTIMATED ECONOMIC IMPACT ON CATTLE PRODUCERS

828 producers at workshops/webinars x 0.5 = 248 producers practicing change  
270 producers one-on-one x 0.5 = 135 producers practicing change  
21,600 newsletters x 0.01 = 216 producer practicing change

(25 days x 150 head x \$0.50/head x 383 producers) + (25 days x 50 head x \$0.50/head x 216 producers) = \$853,125.00

## ESTIMATED ECONOMIC IMPACT

### ASSUMPTIONS

- Average acres/farm = 800
- Practice change on 1/3 of acres = 267 acres
- Practice change from participant at workshop/webinar = 30%
- Practice change from one-on-one consultation = 50%
- Practice change from newsletter = 1%
- Assume that improved sustainable agronomic practices lead to savings of \$20/acre



Alberta Government, Provincial Crop Commissions and the Canadian Census of Agriculture



### ESTIMATED ECONOMIC IMPACT ON CROP PRODUCERS

626 producers at workshops/webinars x 0.3 = 188 producers practicing change  
135 producers one-on-one x 0.5 = 68 producers practicing change  
21,600 newsletters x 0.01 = 216 producers practicing change

472 producers x 267 acres x \$20/acre = \$2,520,480.00

# THANK YOU. QUESTIONS?



780-826-7260

DIRECTOR@LARAONLINE.CA



WWW.LARAONLINE.CA



BOX 7068 BGNBYVILLE ALBERTA T9N 2H4



#### 4. Request for Decision:

#### Lakeland Agricultural Research Association (LARA) – Producer Membership Funding

ASB24-24: Serben

That Smoky Lake County's Agricultural Service Board **recommends:** that Smoky Lake County provides a municipal contribution in the amount of \$55,000.00 towards the Lakeland Agricultural Research Association (LARA) Year-2024 Operating Budget, and enters into an agreement to allow Smoky Lake County producers access to LARA's Year-2024 environmental and extension programming; **and** request all relevant detailed historical information from LARA in respect to the number of LARA events held in Smoky Lake County and the number of Smoky Lake County producers who were in attendance; **and** have the Smoky Lake County Agricultural Fieldman bring forward options for providing environmental and extension programming specific to Smoky Lake County Producers in Year-2025, for consideration in October 2024.

Carried.

#### 5. Issues for Information:

Nil.

**6. Correspondence:**

**Connect for Food Symposium “a thriving food industry local and beyond”**

ASB25-24: Flondra That the save-the-date poster received by Smoky Lake County's Agricultural Service Board, from Perry Phillips, Co-founder, Connect for Food, through an email dated January 26, 2024, to the Agricultural Fieldman, in respect to the Symposium: “a thriving food industry local and beyond”, held in partnership with Community Futures, scheduled for April 15, 2024, at a location to be announced, be filed for information.

Carried.

**Addition to the Agenda:**

**Plot2Farm Program - Field Scale Trials with LARA and Alberta Grains**

ASB26-24: Melnyk That the email correspondence received by Smoky Lake County's Agricultural Service Board, from the Plot2Farm program, through an email dated February 9, 2024, to the Agricultural Fieldman, in respect to the Plot2Farm Program opportunity for Field Scale Trials with Lakeland Agricultural Research Association (LARA) and Alberta Grains, be filed for information.

Carried.

**7. Delegation:**

**Lakeland Agricultural Research Association (LARA) - Delegation**

ASB27-24: Flondra That Smoky Lake County's Agricultural Service Board acknowledge receipt of the presentation provided by the February 12, 2024, Delegation: Alyssa Krawchuk, Executive Director, Lakeland Agricultural Research Association (LARA).

Carried.

**8. Executive Session:**

No Executive Session.

**9. Date and time of Next Meeting:**

**Next Agricultural Service Board Meeting**

The next Smoky Lake County **Agricultural Service Board Meeting** has been previously scheduled for **Tuesday, March 5, 2024, at 1:00 p.m.**, to be held virtually, through Electronic Communication Technology as per Bylaw 1376-20 **and/or** physically in County Council Chambers.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

ASB28-24: Gawalko That Smoky Lake County's Agricultural Service Board Meeting of February 12, 2024, be adjourned, time 2:05 p.m.

Carried.

\_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIRPERSON

S E A L

\_\_\_\_\_  
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

## Research Program Report (November-December)

First off, I want to thank each staff member (Alyssa, Charlene, and Dustin) for their help and support since I joined LARA. It's been a pleasure working with a dedicated and hardworking team.

We are very excited to share that all cereal and silage regional variety trials grown at Fort Kent, St. Paul and Smoky Lake are passed by ARVAC this year. The RVT coordinator 'Sheri Strydhorst' is very impressed with our performance and looks forward to participating with us again in 2024. We have started compiling results for LARA annual report 2023 after her approval. Moreover, we got a very good response for our 'Finding Fairness in Farm Transition' Event. Seventy people attended that event at the Agriplex in Smoky Lake. Unfortunately, we did not see the expected number of attendees at our 'Young Farmers Social' event on November 30, 2023. But we are hoping for a big crowd at farmer appreciation night on February 09, 2024.

Alyssa and I have submitted a few research proposals to RDAR for research grants. We are positive to get some funding through RDAR to carry out these projects in 2024. Furthermore, I attended 'Global Crop Production Virtual Conference' hosted by Farming Smarter on Dec 13, 2023. It was a great chance to hear speakers from different countries focused on advances in agriculture practice, technology, and issues. I am highly grateful to LARA for providing me with this professional development opportunity to keep my skills and knowledge up to date.

Lastly, I want to thank each board member for their continued support to LARA. It is because of your contributions LARA has successful trials and events every year.

I wish everyone a very happy holiday season.

Momna Farzand

Cropping Agrologist

December 14, 2023

## **Research Program Report (December-January)**

First off, I want to thank each board member for their continued help and support to LARA. It's been a pleasure working with you all.

We are excited to have Angelica and Lance in our team! With their experience from NPARA, we believe they will bring a great insight into LARA projects. Currently, they both are very busy in writing proposals for SCAP funding. Lance will discuss some new ideas and provide more details during the meeting.

Alyssa and I have been busy in planning events and compiling the annual report. We have arranged a series of very informative workshops/webinars to keep our local producers up to date with the best crop and livestock management tips. Furthermore, LARA annual report 2023 is in the final stage of completion and will be made publicly available in the beginning of March.

We are getting lots of phone calls about the RALP funding program. Several producers are now looking to get P.Ag. services from LARA. Unfortunately, the proposals (Intercropping Pea/Canola and silage barley mixtures) that LARA submitted to RDAR were not funded. So, we have decided to submit another proposal (The effect of organic amendments on silage barley yield and quality) under the same program. Hopefully, our team will be able to secure some fundings for 2024 research projects.

Lastly, I want to thank Alyssa, Charlene, Angelica, and Lance for their hard work over the past month. A huge thank you to all board members for approving a Holiday bonus. It was a thoughtful gift at an expense time of year.

Wishing you all a wonderful year ahead!

Momna Farzand

Cropping Agrologist

February 02, 2024

# Agricultural Service Board Grant Reporting Overview

The following is an overview of the report that is sent to Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation outlining the outcomes of our programs in 2023.

## AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARD ACT

- Smoky Lake County changed its Agricultural Service Board structure from an all-Council member Board to a mixed Board comprised of Council members and Producers-at-Large.
- Smoky Lake County hosted the 2023 Northeast Regional Agricultural Service Board Conference held at Metis Crossing on October 20, 2023.

## AGRICULTURAL PEST ACT

- 2 Agricultural Pest Inspectors appointed
- 87 canola fields inspected for Clubroot - 4 Positive
- 4 fields inspected for Virulent Blackleg in canola
- 3 Bertha Armyworm trap locations monitored throughout the County for AB Ag
- 18 Townships surveyed for Grasshoppers on behalf of AB Ag
- 2 fields sampled for Fusarium Head Blight in wheat
- 3 new water stabilizers (Gizmos) installed
- 3 Gizmos repaired/upgraded
- 9 1080 toxicant pills distributed as a last resort for coyote predation during calving
- 194 Problem beavers removed.
- 66 Beaver dams removed to protect County infrastructure
- **\*Internal purposes only\*** 49 problem muskrats removed
- Landowners can participate in Beaver Tail Bounty Program and Northern Pocket Gopher Tail Bounty Program
  - 351 Pocket Gopher tails brought in
  - 87 beaver tails brought in
- 0 Rat calls investigated
- 3 Wild Boar sighting calls received and responded to

## **WEED CONTROL ACT**

- 2 seasonal Weed Inspectors appointed
- 657 weed awareness letters sent for noxious weeds on private land
- 1 Weed Notice issued with 24 locations to Alberta Transportation
- 0 Weed Enforcements
- 50% of Municipal right-of-way's were sprayed for control of noxious weeds and corner brush for sightlines in the West half of the County
- 2 locations received a combination of spraying and hand picking for Prohibited Noxious Hoary Alyssum
- Leafy Spurge biocontrol location was monitored after beetle release in 2022 and successful establishment occurred
- Weed awareness "WANTED" posters hung at all County truck fills and bulletin boards in all of the towns, villages and hamlets
- Noxious weed awareness "centerpieces" displayed at Farmers Appreciation BBQ
- Lake lot hand picking and weed awareness campaign with AISC fact sheets prior to July long weekend
- All County roads received 1 'shoulder' mowing pass early in the season and a second mowing pass to the 'property line' in the Fall. 3,036 total mowing miles in 2023
- Sat on the Weed Regulatory Advisory Committee with the Province and other stakeholders to complete risk assessments for current regulated weeds

## **SOIL CONSERVATION ACT**

- 2 Soil Conservation Inspectors appointed
- 0 Soil Conservation letters issued
- Monitoring for different types of soil erosion occurs throughout growing season
- Shelterbelts and best practices promoted at County events

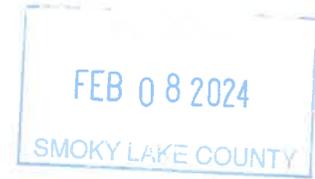
## **ENVIRONMENTAL EXTENSION AND OUTREACH**

- 2 EFP's completed
- 175 producers attended 25 extension events put on by LARA
- 1 LARA trial plot location in the County
- Ag Department info booth at our Farmers Appreciation BBQ and LARA Annual General Meeting highlighting County programs, weed & pest awareness, shelterbelt info, Environmental Farm Plan info, beaver management techniques and Wild Boar "Squeal on Pigs" Campaign
- Attended Lakeland College Career Fair on behalf of the AAAF as an opportunity to educate students on the AAAF & ASB's, weed & pest awareness, and an opportunity to recruit seasonal staff
- Sat on the Grazing School for Women planning committee
- Delivered the Classroom Agriculture Program to the Grade 4 students at schools within Smoky Lake County
- Completed Brodyk Lake Erosion Prevention Project to satisfy Alberta Environment and maintain the County's Recreation Lease that allows public access to the lake



February 7, 2024

The Honourable RJ Sigurdson  
Minister of Agriculture & Irrigation  
Executive Branch 131 Legislature Building  
10800 – 97 Ave, Edmonton, AB  
T5K 2B6



To the Honourable Minister RJ Sigurdson:

**RE: 2024 Proposed Changes to Weed Control Regulation**

Thank you for your time with us at the Alberta Agriculture Service Board Conference in Lethbridge. It was a pleasure to meet you and Amber Edgerton to discuss important topics about the future of agriculture in our province. Your leadership instills hope in our industry, and we envision significant progress under your guidance. Thank you for your dedication to advancing the prospects of agriculture.

The Northern Sunrise County Agricultural Service Board (ASB) would like to express our concern regarding a lack of consultation and transparency throughout the process of the pre-engagement review of the Weed Control Regulation (WCR) and voice our opposition to some of the proposed changes to this regulation.

We appreciate that steps were made to involve municipalities in the pre-engagement review process; however, this has been a frustrating experience from our perspective. To our knowledge, northern Alberta was only engaged through a digital survey sent to the Association of Alberta Agricultural Fieldmen (AAAF) on September 14, 2022. We understand that there were meetings to consult with Agricultural Fieldmen from across the province to systematically evaluate the weeds under review, however, our conversations with Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation (AGI) and other Fieldmen revealed that only representatives from the County of Newell (South) and Red Deer County (Central) were in attendance, resulting in poor representation for the North (the North East, North West, and Peace regions). Alberta Environment and Protected Areas, Alberta Transportation, and First Nations Groups were among other stakeholders involved in these meetings.

On November 23, 2023, the proposed changes to the WCR were discussed at the AAAF & AGI Policy Meeting, which raised several concerns. AGI further elaborated on the process and presented the Risk Assessment Tool (RAT) developed by Alberta Environment and Parks over a decade ago, which was used to conduct the review. However, it was noted that the tool is outdated and unevenly rated for environmental concerns, leading to inconsistent usage throughout the review process. In some cases, the evaluation was done through group discussion and subjective judgements.





We feel our voice was underrepresented in this pre-engagement review and in recognition of this, we would like to outline our concerns with the proposed changes:

### **1. Red Tape Creation**

With the rollout of the proposed changes to the WCR, AGI highlights that “Municipalities can still elevate a weed’s status. You can build a case for weeds of concern to stay on the noxious weed list so please review with your ASB.” However, our concern here is the addition of red tape by requiring that municipalities create bylaws to prohibit select weeds that threaten their municipality. Not only does this add to the legislative obligations for municipal government, but it also creates a confusing and difficult climate for producers to navigate if they farm in multiple municipalities.

### **2. Regional Concerns being reflected Provincially**

To ensure that the *Weed Control Act* (WCA) and Regulation is effective in protecting agriculture, the environment, and the economy, it is important to prioritize the needs and concerns of the province as a whole. While regional concerns are important, they should not outweigh the larger goals of the legislation. We appreciate that some regulated weeds have become difficult to control in some regions across the province, however in other regions these same weeds are not common, so the populations are eradicable. It’s critical to consider both perspectives, highlighting the importance of representation from all regions in the consultation process for proposed changes to the legislation.

### **3. Cost Savings**

We recognize that financial restraints within municipalities and departments can make weed control efforts difficult. However, having legislation that aims to protect agriculture and the environment and prevent barriers to trade, being influenced by cost saving motivations, would be a major detriment to the progress made with this regulation.

### **4. Aquatic Weeds and the Fisheries Act**

The removal of aquatic plant species from the WCA and regulation is very likely to disrupt successful coordinated efforts. The Fisheries (Alberta) Act (FAA) currently covers some of the species posed for removal (Eurasian Water Milfoil, Flowering Rush, Himalayan Balsam, Pale Yellow Iris, and Purple Loosestrife), but operational differences between the FAA and the WCA could affect enforcement and response. The WCA offers streamlined response actions, whereas FAA response actions must go through the minister under a Ministerial Order, delaying response and leaving expenses unrecouped. The WCA is also more familiar to the public and has stronger prohibitions and inspection powers. Without backing by the WCA, these aquatic invasive species will end up spreading into some of the most ecologically sensitive ecosystems as they are stifled by bureaucracy and limited resources with the FAA.





We appreciate the efforts that have been made to keep the legislation current. We hope to enhance communication channels and work together more seamlessly to produce an enabling, efficient, and effective tool for the agricultural industry of Alberta. Thank you for your time on this subject and devotion to the Agriculture Service Boards of Alberta.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Corinna Williams".

Corinna Williams, Chairperson  
Agricultural Service Board  
Northern Sunrise County

CC:

Alberta Agricultural Service Boards  
Association of Alberta Agricultural Fieldmen  
Dan Williams MLA Peace River  
Gayah Sieusahai, Pest Regulatory Officer, Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation  
Kerriane Koehler-Munro, ASB Manager, Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation  
Northern Sunrise County Council  
Paul McLauchlin, President, Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA)





## ASB Connector

ASBs are key to Alberta's robust pest surveillance network that helps Albertans maintain market access by mitigating the risk of agricultural pest threats. This in turn enables the industry to provide assurance to trading partners and continue to produce high-value crops and livestock. The 69 ASBs in Alberta help nearly 60,000 farmers and ranchers protect the over 50 million acres they farm.

### January 2024

[View as webpage](#)

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## ASB Regional Liaison Program

Your virtual regional liaison is part of a special team of liaisons who will provide you with monthly updates on both policy initiatives and programs. They are your virtual conduit between your ASB and Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation.

REGION	LIAISON	ALTERNATE
PEACE	Gayah Sieusahai	Dan Benson
NORTHWEST	Trevor Wallace	Shawn Elgert
NORTHEAST	Dillis Pelletier	Hannah McKenzie
CENTRAL	Kellie Jackson	
SOUTH	Alan Efetha	Joe Harrington



*From left to right: Sebastian Dutrisac, Linda Hunt, Amber Edgerton (Ministerial Assistant), AGI Minister RJ Sigurdson, Brenda Knight, Dustin Vossler, Corinna Williams, Walter Preugschas*

### Roles, responsibilities and membership of the ASB Provincial Committee

The Agricultural Service Board (ASB) Provincial Committee was formed in 2005 by the ASB Provincial Resolutions Committee to meet with the Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation (AGI) on an annual basis to review the responses to the resolutions brought forward at the ASB Provincial Conference and discuss other matters of concern to ASBs.

The purpose of the ASB Provincial Committee is to achieve a collective voice for Agricultural Service Boards across Alberta that would facilitate and represent both the diversity and commonalities of ASBs.

[Learn more about the ASB Provincial Committee](#)

[Meet the members of the ASB Provincial Committee](#)



### Agricultural drought assistance

Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation RJ Sigurdson recently issued a statement on how the government is preparing to assist agricultural producers.

Minister Sigurdson says the long-term vision includes expanding and improving the province's irrigation system; but in the meantime, the province has established a drought command team, which is working on a drought emergency plan.

The government has held meetings with communities, farmers, ranchers, businesses and others to prepare for potential ongoing drought conditions and will be continuing this in the days to come.

[Read Minister Sigurdson's statement](#)

[Information for municipalities](#)

[Drought proofing farm water supplies](#)

[Farming in dry conditions](#)



### Transportation and Economic Corridors Vegetation Control Plan 2023

Municipalities have faced issues with both quantity and timing of weed control conducted on Alberta Transportation's land, placing the surrounding agricultural community and environmentally sensitive areas at risk.

Alberta Transportation's Vegetation Control Plan 2023 outlines priorities, current considerations, the annual proposed mowing plan, the annual proposed chemical application plan and a communication plan with municipalities.

[Read the Vegetation Control Plan](#)

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## Seed cleaning facility licensing update

The videos, forms and guidelines were approved in late fall 2023 with links on both the Alberta Seed Processors Association (ASPA) and Alberta Association of Agricultural Fieldmen (AAAF) member websites.

While the videos are still only posted on these sites, the links to the forms, guidelines and license template are now available [here](#).

Feedback from ASPA and AAAF on potential changes to the forms and guidelines is being collected and will be used to make improvements. Please contact Kellie Jackson at [kellie.jackson@gov.ab.ca](mailto:kellie.jackson@gov.ab.ca) if you have any input or questions.



## Update on the Regulated Weed Review

In 2021, Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation initiated a pre-engagement review of the listed weeds in the Weed Control Regulation. The Alberta Association of Agricultural Fieldman (AAAF) and other Government of Alberta departments were involved in this review.

The AAAF Pest Committee selected a representative fieldman from each region of the province (Peace, North East, North West, Central and South) for this initial review. A broader stakeholder engagement is planned for spring 2024.

If you have any questions on the review process you can contact a member of the Pest Committee or Gayah Sieusahai, Pest Regulatory Officer at 780-903-1753 or [gayah.sieusahai@gov.ab.ca](mailto:gayah.sieusahai@gov.ab.ca).



## ASB Grant Program renewal

The current 5-year grant cycle will conclude at the end of 2024. We will be seeking input from ag fieldmen and ASBs on the ASB program as well as potential changes to the application and reporting that will help to clarify the requirements and better align the connections between the grant application/agreement, reporting and field visits.

Your input will be collected through a survey that is expected to open in February. This information will be used to update the grant application, grant program terms and conditions, reporting process and requirements. It will also help us to prepare to better support outreach on legislation for ASBs and fieldmen.

These documents will then go through our internal review and approval processes with applications targeted to be sent out for completion by early fall 2024.

The new grant period will begin in 2025.



### Ensuring legislation stays current and relevant

The Government of Alberta is committed to ensuring legislation stays current and relevant. On occasion, Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation has an opportunity to suggest some minor administrative changes to modernize the legislation to both the *Weed Control Act* and the *Agricultural Pests Act*. The following are administrative updates:

- For the *Weed Control Act* “days” is now “business days”(S. 24) to exclude weekends and holidays as per the definition in the *Municipal Government Act*.
- For the *Agricultural Pests Act*, “double registered mail” was updated to “registered mail,” (S. 2) and “Business days” replaced “days.” (S. 14 and 15). The last update was to section 14 (5) that now states “A local authority shall annually appoint a committee ...,” it formerly stated “beginning of a calendar year.” This change aligns with the *Weed Control Act*.

If you have any further questions, feel free to contact Gayah Sieusahai, Pest Regulatory Officer at [gayah.sieusahai@gov.ab.ca](mailto:gayah.sieusahai@gov.ab.ca) or call 780-903-1753.

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## Insect survey maps

Note the following are not forecasts. They are a summary of the pest situation in Alberta in 2023.



## Pea leaf weevil

The annual pea leaf weevil survey was completed in late May and early June 2023. It is based on damage ratings in 215 fields from 56 municipalities.

The highest damage ratings were found from Sedgewick to Athabasca and east to the Saskatchewan border. There were also a few hot spots in southern Alberta, but nothing like what was seen in previous years.

Pea leaf weevil map

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## Wheat midge

The 2023 wheat midge survey results showed generally a low population of wheat midge throughout the province with the exception of a few fields in the Camrose-Edmonton region.

Although a number of factors influence the overwintering survival of the midge, the survey and map provide a general picture of existing densities and the potential for infestation in 2024.

Wheat midge map

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## Wheat stem sawfly

The wheat stem sawfly survey is an after-harvest survey completed in the fall of 2023. The population map is based on 87 fields in 20 municipalities across southern Alberta.

The continuing dry conditions of the 2023 growing season are aiding the growth of sawfly population in area, and in population. The cutting damage percentage in the areas known for sawfly increased, while cutting damage is being seen in areas where sawfly has not been an issue for many years. Overall, sawfly is a real risk in 2024.

Wheat stem sawfly map

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## Bertha armyworm

In 2023, a network was made up of 283 sites of pheromone-baited traps monitored for bertha armyworm across Alberta. These traps help to determine the density and distribution of moths.

While it is difficult to accurately predict the 2024 bertha armyworm populations based on the 2023 moth catch, it appears there is no threat from bertha armyworm in 2024. It will be critical to have good coverage of pheromone traps in 2024 to signal an early warning of potential problems during the growing season.

### Bertha armyworm map

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## Grasshopper

The 2023 grasshopper survey map is based on adult grasshopper counts conducted in August 2023 by the agricultural fieldmen of Alberta.

The survey reports grasshopper counts from very severe to none across the Peace region. In the south and eastern border regions of Alberta, grasshopper numbers have been increasing since 2021, both in area and numbers. In 2023, grasshopper numbers increased in the same areas that had high numbers in 2022. There is potential for outbreaks in the southern region and along the eastern border region in 2024. If you had grasshopper issues in 2023, expect the same in 2024.

### Grasshopper map

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## Cabbage seedpod weevil

The 2023 cabbage seedpod weevil survey covered the canola growing areas of southern and central Alberta. 222 fields in 50 municipalities were sampled in late June to early July when canola was at 20% to 25% flower.

The survey found cabbage seedpod weevil below economic levels in southern Alberta with the exception of a couple of hotspots.

Weevils were also found in Ponoka County, but counts were well below threshold. In the past, weevils at economic threshold levels have been seen as far north as a line between Red Deer and Consort.

Agriculture Canada at Beaverlodge conducts the canola survey in the Peace River region where as of yet no cabbage seedpod weevils have been found.

Cabbage seedpod weevil

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## What's new from Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation



### Expanding 2023 livestock drought recovery support

The 2023 Canada-Alberta Drought Livestock Assistance initiative is expanding eligibility to 23 new regions and extending the application deadline.

Livestock producers in eligible regions who altered their usual grazing practices due to drought conditions for more than 21 days this season can apply for financial support to cover losses incurred to manage and maintain female breeding animals such as cattle, bison, horses, elk, sheep, goats, alpacas, yak, musk ox, deer, water buffalo and llamas. A minimum of 15 animals per type of livestock are required to qualify.

Funding for the new regions opens January 29. Applicants in this intake may receive payments of up to \$150 per head. The application deadline is **February 22** and extraordinary costs can be incurred until March 31. This expansion also gives producers who were already eligible another opportunity to apply.

Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC) continues to administer the initiative. Livestock producers can get more information and apply by visiting AFSC's [website](#).

Learn more about AgriRecovery



## Investing in natural drought and flood protection

The province is investing \$3.5 million to help make the province more naturally drought resilient, to prevent floods and improve water quality.

The money will fund 8 projects in communities across the province through the Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program. These projects will help restore riverbanks and watersheds, stabilize stream banks and improve natural drainage, supporting communities affected by recent droughts and floods.

[Learn more](#)



## Alberta Climate Information Service

A surprising number of wildfires occur in the winter, particularly across parts of southern Alberta that may remain snow free and dry for weeks on end. The lack of snow cover can leave brown, dry grass exposed and ready to ignite. Sparks from controlled fires like burn barrels or other agricultural burning can inadvertently cause winter wildfires. Heavy chinook winds can spread fires rapidly.

This winter season has seen weather swing from record breaking warm and dry conditions to extreme cold and significant snowfall. Understanding the fire risks associated with this weather can be challenging.

The Alberta Climate Information Service, desktop and phone friendly, publishes [maps](#) daily to help make decisions across Alberta's white zone. Both Fine Fuel Moisture Content (FFMC) and Initial Spread Index (ISI) are available to identify the fire potential and monitor conditions in the white zone. This service also has the ability to display information from multiple stations using an array of climate related parameters at once in one convenient view using the [weather station data viewer](#).

The FFMC is a rating of the moisture content of grass, crops and other fine fuels that is an indication of the ignition potential. It is based on temperature, relative humidity, wind speed and 24-hour precipitation. A day of wind can have a significant effect on the FFMC rating. The ISI is a rating that identifies the rate the fire will

spread in its early stages using both the FFMC and wind speed.

Bookmark [ACIS](#) and visit it to help inform your spring burning permit decisions and decisions around fire bans and restrictions.

Learn how to get a fire permit and when permits are required



### Increasing capacity for veterinary medicine

To increase the number of veterinarians across Alberta, the province is investing an additional \$10 million, for a total of \$68.5 million, to support the construction of the new Veterinary Learning Commons building at the University of Calgary's Spy Hill Campus.

Read more



### 2023 Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture Tracking Survey report

The 2023 Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture Tracking Survey (ESATS) report is now available. You can also watch a recorded Sustainability Series webinar featuring an overview provided by Kynetec Canada. While the report provides in-depth information and insights, the webinar presents 2 data stories on adoption of 4-R Nutrient Management Principles and use of beneficial management practices to sequester carbon and reduce agriculture emissions.

See the poster for more information and a link to the website



## Building up agricultural societies

Agricultural societies play a significant role in the social life of Alberta towns, villages and rural communities. The province is helping agricultural societies make major facility repairs and upgrades that will improve the quality of life for rural communities.

The 2023 Agricultural Societies Infrastructure Revitalization Program is granting \$2.5 million to 34 ag societies to update existing facilities like community halls, arenas and rodeo grounds. Modern buildings and amenities encourage community involvement and growth.

[Read more](#)



## Helping Albertans recover from June flooding

Up to \$68 million is available in disaster recovery funding to help Edson, Whitecourt, Yellowhead County and Woodlands County recover from June flooding.

Homeowners, small business owners, tenants, landlords, not-for-profit institutions or agricultural operations within the Town of Edson, Town of Whitecourt, Yellowhead County and Woodlands County have until **February 26, 2024**, to submit their Disaster Recovery Program applications.

[Learn more about eligibility requirements](#)

## What's in the news



### Avian Influenza update

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency reports there were 133 cases of Avian Influenza across the country in 2023, including 10 in the month of December. Of those 133 cases, 20 were in Alberta.



## Updated Approvals Policy for confined feeding operations

The Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB) has released an updated Approvals Policy for confined feeding operations in Alberta. The 2018 policy was updated to improve transparency and clarity regarding *Agricultural Operation Practices Act (AOPA)* requirements and their interpretation, reflect current practices and incorporate feedback that was received.

The updated [Operational Policy 2016-7: Approvals](#) incorporates:

- input from the Policy Advisory Group representing Alberta's 4 major livestock sectors (beef, dairy, pork and poultry), the Intensive Livestock Working Group, municipalities and the non-government environmental sector
- feedback from stakeholders, including AOPA permit applicants
- feedback from NRCB approval officers
- guidance provided in decisions by the Board of the NRCB
- updates to reflect current practices.

The policy is available on the NRCB [website](#).



## Order your 2024 Blue Book

The Blue Book is a longstanding and trusted resource for Alberta farmers and agronomists, providing current pesticide application information. With over 700 pages of valuable crop protection information, spraying guidelines and farm safety, The Blue Book is an essential tool for your farming operation. The Blue Book publication is collaboratively produced by 3 of Alberta's crop commissions – Alberta Canola, Alberta Grains and Alberta Pulse Growers.

[Order now](#)



### Submitting a final report for OFCAF

Have you been approved for OFCAF (On-Farm Climate Action Fund) funding and awaiting reimbursement?

Results Driven Agriculture Research (RDAR) has developed a tutorial on how to submit your Final Report so you can be reimbursed as soon as possible.

[Watch the video](#)



### Do More Ag Community Fund for Mental Health

Applications for the 5th year of the Community Fund are open until **February 15, 2024**.

The Fund was created to provide agriculture communities across Canada with access to mental health education and literacy at no cost.

[Learn more and apply](#)



### Mountain pine beetle population in steep decline

The mountain pine beetle is the most destructive pine insect pest in Alberta. However, cold winters paired with Alberta's aggressive control program have led to striking progress in preserving the health and resilience of the province's forests. Mountain pine beetle populations in Alberta have declined 98% since their peak in 2019.

[Learn more](#)



## Nominations open for Alberta's highest honour

Albertans are encouraged to nominate remarkable community members, leaders and innovators for membership in the Alberta Order of Excellence.

The Order is the province's highest honour and recognizes citizens who have made significant and lasting contributions to their communities. Nominations are accepted year-round but must be received by **February 15** to be considered for investiture this year.

[Nominate a deserving Albertan today](#)

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## What's new from partners



### Enhancing mental health supports for farmers and ranchers

Farm life can be extremely demanding, with unpredictable challenges that affect the mental health and well-being of everyone in the family. The Agricultural Research and Extension Council of Alberta is receiving \$388,500 to generate awareness and expand mental health research and supports available to farmers through AgKnow.

[Learn more](#)

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### Grow the future of mental health in Alberta

Mental health initiatives for farmers are rolling out across Canada. Input is vital to creating solutions tailored specifically to the needs of Albertan farmers. Share your experiences to directly influence policies, procedures and programs aimed at improving farmers' mental health within your community.

[Learn more and participate in the survey](#)



## Apply for a Watershed Stewardship Grant

If your organization has a project in mind to enhance, protect or restore Alberta's valued water resources, consider applying for a Watershed Stewardship Grant. Stewardship and synergy groups, naturalist organizations, First Nations and Métis communities, recreational and community associations, and other non-profits can apply.

The application deadline is **February 16, 2024**.

[Learn more and apply](#)



## How is the agriculture industry managing plastic waste?

Like other industries in Canada, in agriculture, there are some inorganic waste products that are used in the production of food. This includes agricultural product containers for products, bags for grain and livestock feed, twine on bales and other materials. Barry Friesen, executive director of Cleanfarms Canada, which provides solutions to some of these challenges, discusses how agriculture is working to improve sustainable practices on the farm.

[Listen to the Canadian Food Focus Podcast](#)

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## What's new from the federal government



## Agricultural Water Survey, 2022

The Agricultural Water Survey gathered information on irrigation water use, irrigation methods and practices, and sources and quality of water used for agricultural purposes on Canadian farms during the 2022 growing season.

According to the survey, Canadian farmers used 23% more water to irrigate their crops in 2022 compared with 2 years earlier, mostly due to drier conditions in Canada. Most of the irrigated water was used for field or forage crops. Alberta accounts for almost three-quarters of irrigated land in the country, at 549,934 hectares.

[Learn more](#)

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## Upcoming events



### AISC Annual Conference

Get the latest on invasive species technology, research and management with a variety of sessions at the Alberta Invasive Species Council (AISC) Conference and AGM in Olds on March 20 and 21.

[Learn more](#)

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### Pesticide Applicator Credit Workshop

AISC is hosting the Pesticide Applicator Credit Workshop the day before its annual conference. AISC has applied for 4 pesticide applicator re-certification credits from the following categories: environment, application technology, human health and safety, and regulations.

[Learn more and register for the March 19 workshop](#)



## Working Well Workshops

These free workshops are hosted by local municipalities and community-based organizations and presented by the Working Well Program with technical expertise provided by staff from Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation, Alberta Environment and Protected Areas, Alberta Health Services and licensed water well drillers.

[Learn more](#)



## Pesticide Applicator Workshop

March 21 is an opportunity to pick up Pesticide Applicator and CCA credits from home or the office at Farming Smarter's Pesticide Applicator Workshop. Listen to the latest updates in best management practices for pesticide application from industry leaders. Learn about new equipment and hear updates about legislation and regulations.

Collect up to 6 CEUs in this one-day virtual workshop.

[Register for the March 21 training](#)

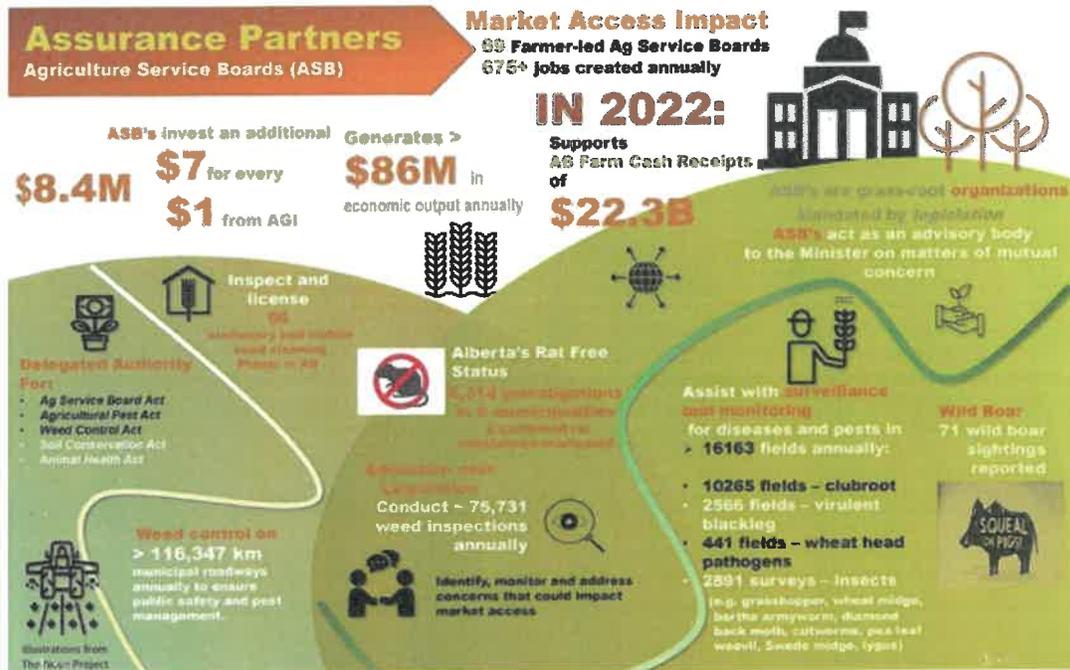


## Follow Alberta Agriculture on social media

Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation is on Instagram as [@AlbertaAgriculture](#). Follow along to stay informed on the latest updates from the ministry and see highlights from rural communities across Alberta.

We can also be found on [X](#), [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#).

# Agriculture Service Board Program



[Overview](#)

[Resources](#)

[ASB Grant Program](#)

[Agricultural Service Boards website](#)

Follow Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation



**Agriculture Service Boards Program**

**Kerrienne Koehler-Munro, ASB Program Manager**

**phone: 780-938-4149**

**email: [kerrienne.koehler-munro@gov.ab.ca](mailto:kerrienne.koehler-munro@gov.ab.ca)**

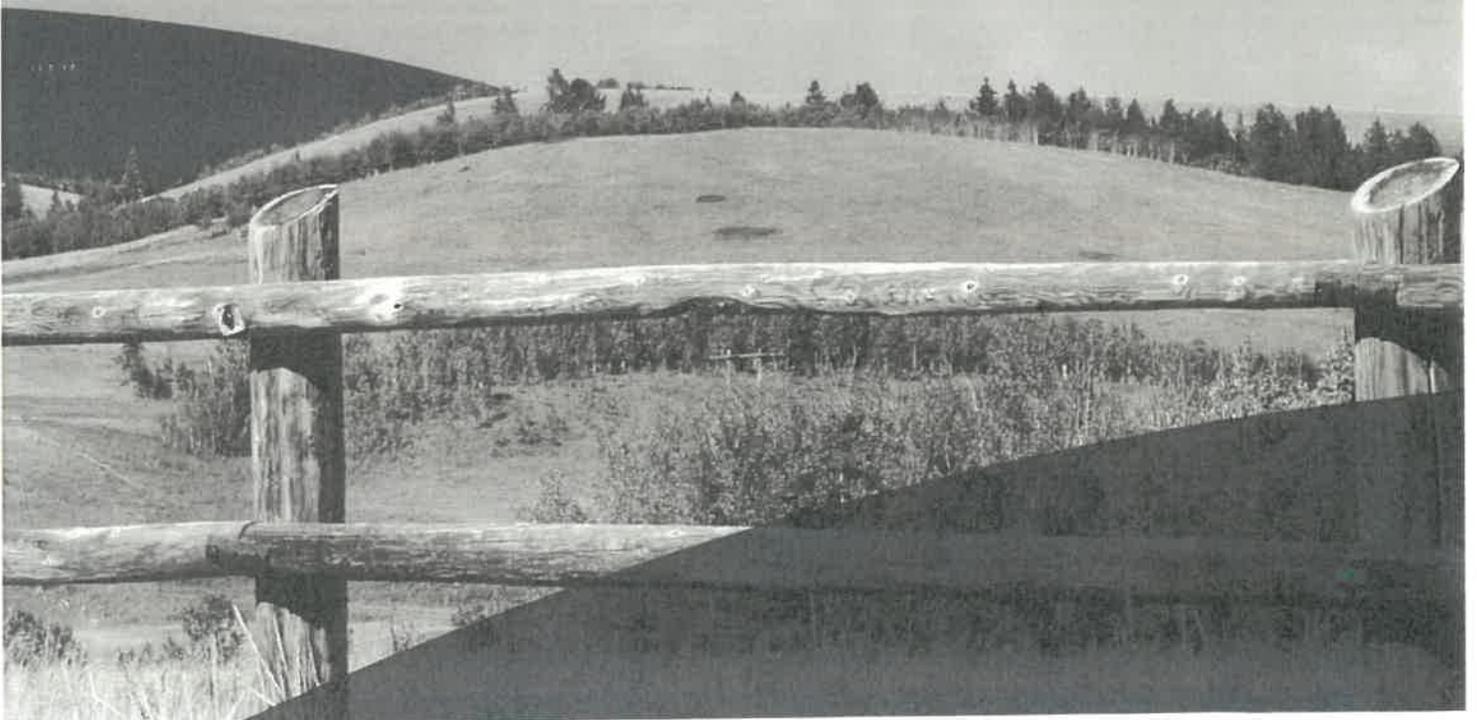
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**RMA**  
RURAL MUNICIPALITIES  
of ALBERTA

# A Guide for Declaring Municipal Agricultural Disasters in Alberta

Prepared by the Rural  
Municipalities of Alberta



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## About This Guide

Steps used towards declaring a municipal agricultural disaster can bring awareness to a developing situation, inform residents, industry and provincial and federal governments and enable collaboration with impacted producer groups.

This guide is intended to be used as a tool to enable municipalities to use informed decision making process prior to making a formal declaration of agricultural disaster as conditions evolve. **Municipal declarations do not automatically trigger access to increased funding programs, provincially or federally.**

A number of elements drove the creation of this guide, including:

- Past drought and excessive moisture experiences impacting agricultural production and crop yields,
- 2015 drought which resulted in a provincial declaration and multiple municipal declarations,
- Discussion stemming from the provincial Drought and Excessive Moisture Advisory Group (DEMAG) whose mandate is to provide advice and recommendations to complement government actions on drought and excessive moisture related issues affecting Alberta's agricultural producers in Alberta and to advise and provide recommendations to government on long-term strategies for mitigating the effects of drought and excessive moisture. More information regarding DEMAG is included in Appendix C.

## Purpose of the Guide:

The purpose of the Guide is to promote a consistent mechanism for data collection and monitoring to support municipal decision making to guide agricultural disaster declarations.

Through the use of information provided in the Guide, municipalities can bring awareness to a situation as it is developing and ensure all levels of government and local residents are aware of the situation, without immediately declaring it as a "disaster."

The use of this guide is intended as a source of information that will allow data comparisons within a municipality year after year.

The Guide provides:

- Directions for consistent and clear messaging
- Identification of tools available to arrive at condition statement
- Access to technical data to support condition statement
- Timeline documentation of conditions
- The ability to modify condition statements due to a change in conditions
- An explanation of the differences between a condition statement versus a provincial declaration of agricultural disaster
- A recommendation as to when a municipal declaration should be made

- A communications guide noting key parties to notify

## Condition Statement Tool Overview

The Condition Statement Tool is intended to provide a tracking mechanism that will enable data-driven municipal decision making where agriculture production is impacted by natural causes.

Utilizing data available through Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (ASFC) (ex. crop reports available at a regional level) and/or municipal resources such as agricultural fieldmen, the condition statement tool can be used to highlight and track the percentage of crops in poor condition. The use of a colour-coded chart demonstrates a snapshot of conditions at a given time, and includes identification of the size of area impacted (in hectares).

Municipalities are encouraged to attach a map highlighting the impacted area(s) where possible.

It is advisable to assess conditions through this tool every two to three weeks to monitor and document any changes prior to making a formal declaration. It is important to note that improved conditions can result in a declaration being lifted.

The Condition Statement Tool is available in Appendix A for use and a sample is provided below:

Date:	July 7, 2015					
Municipality:	County of RMA					
Total Area Impacted:	324 seeded hectares					
Map Included:	No					
Next Report Due:	July 21, 2015					
	Ranking	Drought	Excessive Moisture	Floods	Pests	Hail
Annuals Impacted (% rated poor):						
Cereals		13% poor				
Oil Seed					26% poor	
Others						
Perennials Impacted (% rated poor):						
Tame Hay				55% poor		

Tame Pasture						
Native Pasture						
Other: (please indicate)						

Legend: % of crop (in hectares) rated 'poor':

	0 – 10%	Crops near normal and above
	10% - 25%	Expected diminished crop yields
	25% - 50%	Pending disaster
	50% or higher	Definite disaster
	No impacts being experienced	

## Technical Information to Support Data

There are a number of tools available that supply data municipalities can use in assessing their local conditions and utilizing the condition assessment tool. Click on the hyperlinks provided for access to information.

### Agriculture and Forestry

Alberta Agriculture and Forestry houses significant data sources that municipalities can utilize, including:

- [Instructions for Accessing Precipitation Data from Alberta Agriculture and Forestry](#)
- [Alberta Climate Information Services](#)
- [Alberta Climate and Atlas Maps](#)
- [Agriculture and Forestry Climate Services Staff Resources](#)
- [Agricultural Moisture Situation Update](#)

### Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC)

AFSC can assist municipal districts and counties when they are experiencing drought or excessively wet conditions. AFSC provides information through the following mechanisms:

- **Crop Reports:** AFSC senior adjusters report on crop conditions every two weeks from emergence until harvest is complete. These reports provide information at the county or municipal district level and are available on the AFSC website. This information can be presented in more detail

during severe dry or wet conditions, for example maps that show the percent of crops rated poor relative to previous years.

- *Insurance Program Response*: Detailed information on how AFSC's existing insurance products respond to a specific conditions are made available on the AFSC website. This would include options for putting crops to an alternate use when crops are deteriorating and there is a shortage of feed in an area.
- *AgriStability Response*: How AgriStability responds can be posted on the AFSC website along with procedures for obtaining an advance under this program.
- *AgriRecovery Process*: AFSC along with Agriculture & Forestry staff can provide municipalities with detailed information on what is required to trigger an AgriRecovery response.
- Information on accessing Environment Canada data:
  - [Instructions for Accessing Precipitation Data](#)
  - [Instructions for Accessing Historical Radar Data](#)

#### **Municipal Information:**

- [RMA](#)
- Association of Alberta Agricultural Fieldmen ([AAAF](#))

## **Government of Alberta Declaration**

### **The Role of AFSC**

Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC) is a provincial Crown corporation that provides farmers, agribusinesses and other small businesses with loans, crop insurance and farm income disaster assistance. AFSC expenditures are consolidated into the provincial budget and the provincial budgeting process includes requirements for ministries and Crown corporations to live within budgeted expenditures, meaning that departments or Crown corporations cannot spend more than what has been budgeted for.

AFSC forecasts annual revenues that will be gained through premiums and estimates expenditures to pay out indemnities. AFSC provides those budget estimates to the Government of Alberta for inclusion into the provincial budget. If indemnities exceed budget amounts, AFSC needs to access reserve funds and the remainder of premiums as expenditures. This requires a formal process through the Treasury Board.

### **Provincial Declaration**

In order to access additional funds the Government of Alberta must declare a disaster to access those funds for claim payments. This decision is made by Cabinet and is informed by data and analytical information provided by AFSC and Alberta Agriculture and Forestry. This declaration triggers a financial transaction through the Treasury Board to enable AFSC access to reserve funds.

### **Municipal Role**

A common misperception is that a municipal declaration of an agricultural disaster will influence a provincial declaration or access to funding supports. This is simply not the case. Municipal declarations bring awareness to an issue in a specific area of the province, but they do not trigger a provincial declaration or access to any funding to support the issue.

Municipalities can work with their local agriculture industries or industry/producer organizations to communicate concerns and assess challenges being experienced.

### **Municipal Communications Process**

The RMA assists AFSC and the Government of Alberta in distributing information to municipalities and Ag Service Board members. Providing a central communication hub for information sharing improves understanding of the challenges being experienced and connecting impacted municipalities with appropriate resources and support.

Before a municipality formally declares a state of agriculture disaster, a number of questions should be considered to enable consistent and thorough communications. These include:

- Does the state of agricultural disaster cover the entire area or just a region within the municipality?
- Does the agriculture disaster cover all agriculture in the municipality or only certain commodity products?
- Has the municipality used AFSC data for the local area to assess the level of impact being experienced?
- Has the municipality contacted producer groups and associations to discuss impacts being experienced?
- Does the municipality have data to support this decision (ex. completed condition assessment tool(s) and municipal mapping)?

Once a declaration of agriculture disaster has been made, the municipality should provide information regarding the details of the agriculture disaster to the following organizations for access to consistent information:

- Government of Alberta (Agriculture and Forestry)
- AFSC
- RMA

## Appendix A: Condition Statement Tool

Utilizing data available through Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (ASFC) (ex. crop reports available online at a regional level and/or municipal resources such as agricultural fieldmen, the condition statement tool can be used to highlight and track the percentage of crops in poor condition.

The use of a colour-coded chart demonstrates a snapshot of conditions at a given time, and includes identification of the size of area impacted (in seeded hectares where applicable).

Municipalities are encouraged to attach a map highlighting the impacted area(s) where possible. It is advisable to assess conditions throughout the growing season to monitor and document any changes.

Date:						
Municipality:						
Total Area Impacted:						
Map Included:						
Next Report Due:						
	Ranking	Drought	Excessive Moisture	Floods	Pests	Hail
Annuals Impacted (% rated poor):						
Cereals						
Oil Seed						
Others						
Perennials Impacted (% rated poor):						
Tame Hay						
Tame Pasture						
Native Pasture						
Other: (please indicate)						

Legend: % of crop (in hectares) rated 'poor':

	0 – 10%	Crops near normal and above
	10% - 25%	Expected diminished crop yields
	25% - 50%	Pending disaster
	50% or higher	Definite disaster
	No impacts being experienced	

## Appendix B: Municipal Agricultural Disaster Declaration Template

### Municipal Agricultural Disaster Declaration

(attach all relevant data and completed condition statements to support declaration)

<b>Municipality:</b>	
<b>Type of Agriculture Disaster:</b>	[Type of disaster experienced and impact, such as drought conditions impacting 60% of cereal yields]
<b>Stages of Disaster Declaration:</b>	[Document the stages on the spectrum of the agriculture disaster and, as best as possible, the dates at which each stage was met]
<b>Data to support:</b>	[Insert or reference the data used to justify the state of agriculture disaster]
<b>Level of impact:</b>	[Describe the areas and commodity types impacted by the agriculture disaster]
<b>Communication process:</b>	[Outline the stakeholders to be contacted by the municipality following the declaration of agriculture disaster including Government of Alberta ministries, AFSC, RMA, and producer associations]
<b>Other information:</b>	

## Appendix C: Drought and Excessive Moisture Advisory Group

The Drought and Excessive Moisture Advisory Group (DEMAG) is comprised of appointed representatives of key stakeholder agencies:

- Agri-Environmental Services Branch of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
- Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC)
- Alberta Agriculture and Forestry
- Alberta Association of Agricultural Fieldmen (AAAF)
- Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (RMA)
- Alberta Environment and Parks
- Crop sector
- Irrigated Crop sector
- Livestock sector
- Wildrose Agricultural Producers Association

Mandate:

- To provide consistent and consolidated advice and recommendations to complement government actions on drought and excessive moisture related issues affecting the agricultural producers in Alberta.
- To advise and provide recommendations to government on long-term strategies for mitigating the effects of drought and excessive moisture.

Key Duties and Responsibilities of DEMAG:

- Facilitate two-way communication that is effective, timely, respectful and clear.
- Recommend extension activities and provide input to drought and excessive moisture related and related risk management information for key stakeholder groups.
- Serve as a formal communication connection between industry and government, and from government back to industry.
- Provide recommendations and policy advice to the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry for effective, fiscally responsible drought and excessive moisture preparedness, monitoring and reporting, and response actions.
- Actively participate in long-term strategic planning for future drought conditions in Alberta; for example, long-term water management and production/crop choices.
- Work with industry organizations to identify how to best assist producers in preparing for and coping with drought and excessive moisture, and develop these discoveries into recommendations.
- Oversee the implementation of the Agriculture Drought Risk Management Plan (ADRMP), and provide advice on and input during the ADRMP's review and evaluation.

## **Acknowledgments**

The RMA would like to thank the following organizations for their contributions in developing this guide:

- Agriculture Financial Services Corporation
- Alberta Association Agriculture Fieldmen
- Alberta Agriculture and Forestry