



SMOKY LAKE COUNTY AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARD MEETING AGENDA

Tuesday, February 11 at 9:00 a.m. held

Virtually <https://video.businessconnect.telus.com/join/985638219> (Meeting ID # 985638219) and
Physically in Smoky Lake County Council Chambers, 4612 McDougall Drive, Smoky Lake

1. Call to Order
2. Adoption of Agenda
3. Adoption of Minutes
 - 3.1. Minutes of the Agricultural Service Board Meeting, Tuesday, December 10th, 2024. ©
4. Delegation(s)
 - 4.1. Alyssa Krawchuk, Executive Director, Lakeland Agricultural Research Association, to provide information on their year-to-date activities @ 9:15 a.m.
5. Business – Requests for Decisions
 - 5.1 Policy Statement No. 62-10-09 Agricultural Service Board Business Plan 2024. ©
 - 5.2 ASB Position Statement Farm-Saved Seed. ©
 - 5.3 Informal Draft of Provincial 2025 ASB Conference Resolution Results. ©
 - 5.4 AgKnow Update.
 - 5.5 Farmers and Ranchers Appreciation BBQ Discussion.
6. Issues for Information
 - 6.1 ASB Chairman’s Report. ©
7. Correspondence
 - 7.1 Letters of Concern Regarding Bill C-293; received from the following municipalities: ©
 - Foothills County, received December 9th, 2024
 - Municipal District of Willow Creek, received December 9th, 2024
 - County of Minburn No. 27, received December 10th, 2024
 - Rocky View County, received December 10th, 2024
 - Leduc County, received December 10th, 2024
 - Flagstaff County, received December 16th, 2024
 - Municipal District of Greenview, received December 16th, 2024
 - Athabasca County, received December 18th, 2024
 - County of Vermillion River, received December 19th, 2024
 - Foothills County, received January 2nd, 2025
 - Wheatland County, received January 2nd, 2025
 - Lamont County, received January 2nd, 2025
 - Starland County, received January 13th, 2025

Lac La Biche County, received January 29th, 2025
Recommendation: File for Information.

7.2 Letters of Support for AgKnow; received from the following municipalities: ©
Flagstaff County, received December 16th, 2024
Woodland County, received January 2nd, 2025
MD of Peace No. 135, received January 9th, 2025
Recommendation: File for Information.

7.3 Email received from the Alberta Insect Pest Monitoring Network, December 11th, 2024, RE: 2024 Insect Survey Results. ©
Recommendation: File for Information.

7.4 Letter of Acknowledgement of Positive Collaboration Efforts with Alberta Transportation from Northern Sunrise County, received January 9th, 2025. ©
Recommendation: File for Information.

7.5 Letter of Urgent Need for Support in Addressing Richardson Ground Squirrel Infestations in the Agriculture Industry from Kneehill County, received January 15th, 2025. ©
Recommendation: File for Information.

7.6 Follow-up Letter on Updates to the Farmer Pesticide Program from Kneehill County, received January 15th, 2025. ©
Recommendation: File for Information

7.7 Moisture Situation Informal Update from January 15th, 2025, from Alberta Climate Information Service Manager at the Natural Resources Management Branch Government of Alberta, received January 20th, 2025. ©
Recommendation: File for Information.

7.8 Letter sent from Smoky Lake County, Dan Gawalko, ASB Chair, January 23rd, 2025, RE: Smoky Lake County Letter of Recommendation for Installation of a Self Weigh Axle Scale. ©
Recommendation: Acknowledge Action Taken.

7.9 Email received from the Honourable Devin Dreeshen January 24th, 2025, RE: Smoky Lake County Letter of Recommendation for Installation of a Self Weigh Axle Scale. ©
Recommendation: File for Information

7.10 Email received from the Honourable Michael Botros January 24th, 2025, RE: Smoky Lake County Letter of Recommendation for Installation of a Self Weigh Axle Scale. ©
Recommendation: File for Information

7.11 Letter of Concern from the 2025 ASB Conference from Northern Sunrise County, received January 29th, 2025. ©
Recommendation: File for Information

7.12 ASB Connector January 2025 Edition, received January 31st, 2025. ©

Recommendation: File for Information

8. Date and time of Next Meeting
Adjournment.

3.1



Minutes of Smoky Lake County's **Agricultural Service Board Regular Meeting** held on Tuesday, **December 10, 2024**, at 9:01 A.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>ATTENDANCE</u>
<u>Title</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Tues. Dec. 10, 2024</u>
Committee Member	Dan Gawalko	Present in Chambers
Committee Member	Jered Serben	Present in Chambers
Alt. Committee Member	Dominique Cere	Present Virtually
Alt. Committee Member	Lorne Halisky	Absent
Producer-at-Large Member	Tori Ponich	Present in Chambers
Producer-at-Large Member	Curtis Boychuk	Present in Chambers
Producer-at-Large Member	Tamara Flondra	Present in Chambers
Alt. Producer-at-Large Member	Kurt Melnyk	Absent
Alt. Producer-at-Large Member	Brett Rurka	Absent
County CAO	Kevin Lucas	Present in Chambers
Ag. Fieldman	Carleigh Danyluk	Present in Chambers
Assist. Ag. Fieldman	Kierstin Dubitz	Present in Chambers
County Executive Services/R.S.	Patti Priest	Present in Chambers
Comm. Officer	Evonne Zukiwski	Present Virtually

No Members of the Media were Present.

1 Member of the Public was virtually Present.

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

2. Agenda:

ASB75-24: Flondra That Smoky Lake County's Agricultural Service Board Meeting Agenda for Tuesday, December 10, 2024, be adopted as presented.

Carried Unanimously.

3. Minutes:

ASB76-24: Ponich That the Minutes of Smoky Lake County's Agricultural Service Board Meeting held on Thursday, October 3, 2024, be adopted as presented.

Carried.

4. Delegation:

Lakeland Agricultural Research Association (LARA)

Virtually present before the Smoky Lake County's Agricultural Service Board from 9:05 a.m. to 9:12 a.m., was Alyssa Krawchuk, Executive Director, Lakeland Agricultural Research Association (LARA), who was experiencing virtual technical difficulties, to provide a verbal update of LARA activities.

Lakeland Agricultural Research Association (LARA) - Delegation

ASB77-24: Flondra That Smoky Lake County's Agricultural Service Board accept the verbal report provided by the December 10, 2024, Delegation: Alyssa Krawchuk, Executive Director, Lakeland Agricultural Research Association (LARA), as information.

Carried.

5. Business - Requests for Decision:

5.1 Agricultural Fieldman Appointment

ASB78-24: Flondra That Smoky Lake County's Agricultural Service Board recommends Smoky Lake County Council appoint Kierstin Dubitz as the Acting Agricultural Fieldman for the duration of the positions' vacancy commencing on the first day of the Agricultural Fieldman's extended leave of absence expected in December 2024, for up to one year.
Carried.

5.2 Policy Statement No. 62-05-07 Grasshopper Control Compensation

ASB79-24: Serben That the Smoky Lake County Agricultural Service Board recommends Smoky Lake County Policy Statement No. 62-05-06: ECO Grasshopper Bait Distributer, be amended by Council to update the name of the Policy to "Grasshopper Control Compensation" and provide procedures for compensating landowners for grasshopper control, due to the County no longer offering grasshopper control services or products.
Carried.

5.3 Policy Statement No. 62-08-01 Agricultural Use of Municipal Right-of-Way

ASB80-24: Ponich That the Smoky Lake Agricultural Service Board recommends the draft Smoky Lake County Policy Statement No. 62-08-01: Agricultural Use of Municipal Right-of-Ways, be forwarded to Council for adoption.
Carried.

Policy Statement No. 62-17-02: License of Occupation of Road Allowance - Ranching & Farming

ASB81-24: Ponich That the Smoky Lake Agricultural Service Board recommends Smoky Lake County Policy Statement No. 62-17-02 License of Occupation of Road Allowance for Ranching and Farming Purposes, be rescinded by Council, as it is made redundant by Policy Statement No. 62-08-01: Agricultural Use of Municipal Right-of-Ways.
Carried.

5.4 Policy Statement No. 62-30-01 Animal Health and Livestock Preparedness

ASB82-24: Flondra That the Smoky Lake Agricultural Service Board recommends the draft Smoky Lake County Policy Statement No. 62-30-01: Animal Health & Livestock Emergency Preparedness, be forwarded to Council for adoption.
Carried.

5.5 Advocate for Vehicle Weigh Scale Station in Smoky Lake County

ASB83-24: Serben That the Smoky Lake Agricultural Service Board recommends administration write a letter to Transportation and Economic Corridors Regional Director: Michael Botros, with copies to Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock MLA: Glenn van Dijken, Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation: RJ Sigurdson, and Minister of Transportation and Economic Corridors: Devin Dreesen, for the purpose of recommending the installation of a vehicle weigh scale station (similar to the one in Westlock) along Highway 28 within Smoky Lake County's boundaries, and suggest feasible locations where such a facility could be developed utilizing existing accesses.
Carried.

5.6 Coyote Bounty Discussion

ASB84-24: Ponich That the Smoky Lake Agricultural Service Board take no action to the information received and discussion held in respect to the possibility of implementing Coyote Bounties.
Carried.

5.7 Agricultural Service Board Provincial Committee's Year-2025 Resolutions

ASB85-24: Flondra That Smoky Lake County's Agricultural Service Board recommend the following support to the Provincial Agricultural Service Board Committee's Year-2025 Resolutions as follows:

#	Resolution	Recommend
1-25	DROUGHT AND LIVESTOCK AGRISTABILITY	In Favour
2-25	LANDOWNERS' RIGHTS FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS	In Favour
3-25	PROTECTION OF CLASS 3 SOILS IN ALBERTA FROM RENEWABLE DEVELOPMENT	In Favour
4-25	WEED CONTROL IN DRAINAGE CANALS (REGISTERED DRAINAGE DITCHES)	In Favour
5-25	CENTRAL CONTACT FOR THE WEED CONTROL AND AGRICULTURAL PEST ACTS	Opposed
6-25	RURAL VETERINARY STUDENT SUPPORT	In Favour
7-25	ROADKILL CARCASS DISPOSAL	In Favour
8-25	COYOTES ELIGIBLE FOR COMPENSATION	In Favour
9-25	NON-MATCHING FUNDING FOR AGKNOW	In Favour
10-25	FARM FAMILY AWARDS	In Favour
11-25	AGRICULTURE EDUCATION FUNDING	In Favour
12-25	CHARITABLE GAMING POLICIES HANDBOOK	In Favour
13-25	RESOLUTION LOBBYING INCLUSION	In Favour

Carried.

Provincial Agricultural Service Board Conference

ASB86-24: Ponich That the Smoky Lake Agricultural Service Board approve a minimum of two members who can attend - to attend the Provincial Agricultural Service Board Conference, scheduled for January 20-22 in Edmonton at Delta Edmonton South, in Edmonton, Alberta.

Carried.

6. Issues for Information:

Agricultural Service Board Chairperson Report

Dan Gawalko ASB Chair Report
December 2024

- Oct 3, Ag Service Board meeting, updated grass hopper bait distributor policy, received an update from LARA, discussed the AgKnow Alberta mental health network and recommended the county provide funds for the program in 2024 and 2025, received the report card on the resolutions, next meeting December 10 @ 9 am.
- Oct 21, attended the LARA meeting, discussed capital funding 3.2 million finalized number for 12 associations ARECA will be in charge applications must be in by end of October all assoc. get together and see who gets what by end of November funds must be spent by December 31 2025, looking into grants and letter of support for new storage building, LARA will sponsor BJ Thomas cowboy poet for the Vilna Ag Society fall supper, Alyssa gave the executive director report, working with Lakeland HR on staff wages and grid, working on 2025 budget, looking at business & corporate sponsorship, Jay gave the LFA report all the heifers are out and the next LFA meeting is next month in Goodridge, the LARA AGM will be in St. Paul county on February 26 @ 10:00 am, other upcoming events were sent out by the Ag department.
- Oct 25, attended the NE Agricultural Service Board Conference in Czar AB. with our 2 ag fieldmen and producer rep Tamara Flondra. Had an update from Alberta Ag ensure your legislative requirements are being met, ASB grant cycle has been approved by the Ag minister for a 5 year agreement, update on the weed review that was started in 2021/2022, keep an eye on Bertha army worms for 2025, dutch elm disease 4 trees in Edmonton that have been dealt with, the road side weed survey 4,500 weed records, 46% Canada thistle then sow thistle, Tansy & oxeye daisy, next ASB townhall November 14 11-12pm, a presentation on the Alberta rat patrol program past & present, Jade Almborg from Prairie Shore Agronomy talked about running an agronomy business in cattle country they service over 80,000 acres and help farmers and ranchers access grants, the MD of Provost gave a talk about reclamation and the key to social license in municipal operations they rebuild approx.. 20 miles of road a year seeding grass on the shoulders with hydro seeders also reclaiming some of their gravel pits to beyond what's needed, went through the resolutions and had a provincial chair update, Natasha Warwaruk of Powerhouse Embryonics from Provost gave an introduction to assisted reproductive technologies in cattle talking about conventional flushes, embryo grading, frozen versus fresh, invitro fertilization, & cloning she is able to provide world class cutting edge technologies to cattle producers, the 2025 Regional conference will be in Minburn county.
- November 18 attended the LARA board meeting in Ashmont, discussed municipal funding and will be sending letters out to the municipalities looking for 2 year funding contracts for known budgeting, Capital funding from the government for equipment only no buildings December 15/24 application deadline Alyssa will be applying, did a recap of the Vilna Ag

Society event that LARA sponsored for 500 dollars (cowboy poet BJ Thomas) at their harvest dine & dance, we will be revitalizing the fish pond at the Ft. Kent site working with LICA and the MD of Bonnyville, looking at changing the LARA logo for marketing purposes & branding, finances were given & Alyssa gave the executive director report, will be receiving our payout from Canada summer jobs we had 4 positions this year, working with Lakeland HR went over 2 policies, will be selling the 2006 Chev 2500 pickup in the spring, Ford tractor tires have been replaced & the 20' sea container has been purchased, in the research report all are busy with data analysis finalizing reports and some project proposals, in communications Kristy is working on the logo design, the peavey Mart community spirit grant & organizing the women in ranching workshop, Next meeting December 16/24, @ noon upcoming events:

- Women in ranching Nov. 30/24, Mallaig
- Farmer Appreciation Event Feb. 7/25 County of St. Paul
- LARA AGM Feb. 26/25, county of St. Paul 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
- Ranching for Profit March 18/25.
- Anything that you as a board would like to see as an extension event or a trial, please contact Alyssa or your board member.

May you cherish the time with family and friends this holiday season and all the best in the New Year.

Dan Gawalko, ASB Chair.

ASB87-24: Serben That Smoky Lake County's Agricultural Service Board Chairperson's report prepared for December 10, 2024, be accepted for information.

Carried.

7. Correspondence:

7.1 Agricultural Research and Extension Council of Alberta – AgKnow Program

ASB88-24: Flondra That the correspondence received by Smoky Lake County's Agricultural Service Board from Alan Hall, Executive Director, Agricultural Research and Extension Council of Alberta, dated October 18, 2024, in respect to temporarily scaling back AgKnow operations due to lack of funding, be filed for information.

Carried.

7.2 Letters of Concern Regarding Bill C-293

ASB89-24: Ponich That Smoky Lake County's Agricultural Service Board acknowledge and file the correspondence received in respect to concerns with Bill C-293, which will enact the Pandemic Prevention and Preparedness Act which includes clauses for providing measures to "promote commercial activities that can help reduce pandemic risk, including the production of alternative proteins" and "to regulate or phase out live animal markets", from:

- Northern Sunrise County, received November 18, 2024;
- M. D. of Fairview No. 136, received November 18, 2024;
- County of Northern Lights, received November 18, 2024;
- M. D. of Bonnyville, received November 25, 2024;
- County of St. Paul, received November 25, 2024;
- Cypress County, received November 25, 2024;
- Lesser Slave River, received November 25, 2024; and
- County of Warner, received November 25, 2024.

Carried.

7.3 Smoky Lake County's Letter of Concern Regarding Bill C-293

ASB90-24: Boychuk That Smoky Lake County's Agricultural Service Board acknowledge action taken by Smoky Lake County in writing a letter of concern, dated November 18, 2024, to the Senate of Canada, stating concerns with Bill C-293, which will enact the Pandemic Prevention and Preparedness Act which includes clauses for providing measures to "promote commercial activities that can help reduce pandemic risk, including the production of alternative proteins" and "to regulate or phase out live animal markets".

Carried.

7.4 MP Shannon Stubbs's Letter of Concern Regarding Bill C-293

ASB91-24: Flondra That Smoky Lake County's Agricultural Service Board acknowledge and file the correspondence received from MP Shannon Stubbs, dated November 20, 2024, in respect to concerns with Bill C-293, which will enact the Pandemic Prevention and Preparedness Act which includes clauses for providing measures to "promote commercial activities that can help reduce pandemic risk, including the production of alternative proteins" and "to regulate or phase out live animal markets".

Carried.

7.5 Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation - AgKnow

ASB92-24: Serben That Smoky Lake County's Agricultural Service Board acknowledge and file the email correspondence received from the Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation, in response to the letter received from Smoky Lake County, requesting financial support to Agricultural Research and Extension Council of Alberta's AgKnow Program, which facilitates access to agriculture-specific mental health resources.

Carried.

7.6 Lakeland Agricultural Research Association

ASB93-24: Serben That Smoky Lake County's Agricultural Service Board acknowledge and file the correspondence received from Alyssa Krawchuk, Executive Director, Lakeland Agricultural Research Association (LARA), received November 29th, 2024, in respect to offering a 2-to-3-year funding agreement to provide LARA with reliable future funding.

Carried.

8. Executive Session:

No Executive Session.

9. Date and time of Next Meeting:

Next Agricultural Service Board Meeting

ASB94-24: Ponich That the next Smoky Lake County Agricultural Service Board Meeting be scheduled for **Tuesday, February 11, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.**, to be held to be held virtually, through Electronic Communication Technology as per Bylaw 1376-20 and/or physically in County Council Chambers.

Carried.

ADJOURNMENT:

ASB95-24: Flondra That Smoky Lake County's Agricultural Service Board Meeting of December 10, 2024, be adjourned, time 10:40 a.m.

Carried.

CHAIRPERSON

S E A L

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER



Request for Decision (RFD)

Meeting Date: Tuesday, February 11, 2025

Agenda Item: # 501

Topic: Policy Statement No. 62-10-10 Agricultural Service Board Business Plan 2025

Presented By: Agricultural Department

Recommendation:

That Smoky Lake County Agricultural Service Board recommend that Smoky Lake County Council amend *Policy Statement No. 62-10-09 Agricultural Service Board Business Plan 2024* to include changes made to *Policy Statement No. 62-28-06 Mowing Program*, 1080 Toxicant recall, Canola Flower Midge monitoring, and Animal Control Technician position. And additionally include *Policy Statement No. 62-30-01 Animal Health & Emergency Preparedness*.

Background:

Smoky Lake County Agricultural Service Board established the Agricultural Service Board Business Plan in 2010 to track duties carried out as part of the agreement with Alberta Agriculture to ensure compliance with all the duties related to the *Weed Control Act*, *Soil Conservation Act*, *Agricultural Pest Act* and *Agricultural Service Board Act*.

Smoky Lake Agricultural Service Board has used the Business Plan as a way of tracking changes and improvements to the ASB Program and ensuring compliance with duties laid out by Alberta Agriculture, Forestry and Irrigation.

Benefits:

Provides ASB Staff with guidance and ensures compliance.

Disadvantages:

N/A

Alternatives:

N/A

Financial Implications:

N/A

Legislation:

Smoky Lake County has an obligation to carry out duties related to the *Weed Control Act*, *Soil Conservation Act*, *Agricultural Pest Act* and *Agricultural Service Board Act*. This Business Plan is a way of tracking those responsibilities in one location and keeping us up to date as things change over the years.

Intergovernmental:

N/A

Strategic Alignment:

N/A

Enclosure(s):

Policy Statement 62-10-10 Agricultural Service Board Business Plan 2025

Policy Statement 62-28-07 Mowing Program

Signature of the CAO: 

SMOKY LAKE COUNTY



Title: Agricultural Service Board Business Plan		Policy No.: 10-10
Section: 62	Code: P-A	Page No.: 1 of 13 E

Legislation Reference:	<i>Alberta Provincial Statutes</i>
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Purpose:	To establish a Business Plan for the Smoky Lake County Agricultural Service Board
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Policy Statement and Guidelines:

1. STATEMENT:

1.1 The Smoky Lake County Agricultural Service Board (ASB) is in the business of providing its residents with agricultural programming to enhance the environment, farm income and quality of life. This is achieved through Vegetation Management Programming, Agricultural Extension Programming, Problem Wildlife Programming, Pest Control and Monitoring as well as, Government Lobbying.

The Agricultural Service Board is also responsible for enforcement of Provincial Legislation such as the *Weed Control Act, Agricultural Pest Act, Agricultural Service Board Act, Soil Conservation Act and the Animal Health Act.*

2. VISION STATEMENT:

2.1 To encourage sustainable agriculture, environmental integrity and improved quality of life in Smoky Lake County.

3. MISSION STATEMENT:

3.1 To provide services, policies and education for Agricultural families, businesses and the public to enhance the environment, farm income and quality of life.

4. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

4.1 **The Smoky Lake County Agricultural Service Board** identifies the following priorities:

- One: Vegetation Management Program
- Two: Weed Control Act Duties
- Three: Environmental Stewardship and Extension
- Four: Problem Wildlife Program
- Five: Agricultural Pest Act Duties
- Six: Soil Conservation Act Duties
- Seven: Intergovernmental Collaboration

Title: Agricultural Service Board Business Plan		Policy No.: 10-10
Section: 62	Code: P-A	Page No.: 2 of 13 E

5. IMPLEMENTATION:

5.1 Smoky Lake County Agricultural Service Board shall review annually as required by Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation.

5.2 Smoky Lake County Agricultural Service Board staff will consider and follow the priorities of the Business Plan when creating budgets and work plans.

	Date	Resolution Number
Approved	December 17, 2010	# 184-10 - Page # 9570
Amended	March 5, 2015	# 416-15 - Page # 11626
Amended	December 12, 2017	# 59-17 - Page # 12873
Amended	December 12, 2018	# 193-18 - Page # 13400
Amended	December 16, 2019	# 291-19 - Page # 13927
Amended	December 8, 2020	# 138-20 - Page # 14367
Amended	December 14, 2021	# 111-21 - Page # 14890
Amended	February 15, 2022	# 353-22 - Page # 14983
Amended	February 22, 2024	# 358-24 - Page # 15517



Agricultural Service Board Business Plan 2025

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7.	Intergovernmental Collaboration	Page 13

Executive Summary

The Smoky Lake County Agricultural Service Board is in the business of providing its agricultural producers with agricultural programming to enhance the environment, farm income and quality of life. This is achieved through Vegetation Management, Agricultural Extension, Problem Wildlife, Pest Control, programming and monitoring as well as, government lobbying. The Agricultural Service Board is also responsible for enforcement of Provincial Legislation such as the *Weed Control Act*, *Agricultural Pest Act*, *Agricultural Service Board Act*, *Soil Conservation Act*, and the *Animal Health Act*.

VISION STATEMENT:

To encourage sustainable agriculture, environmental integrity and improved quality of life in Smoky Lake County.

MISSION STATEMENT:

To provide services, policies and education for Agricultural families, businesses and the public to enhance the environment, farm income and quality of life.

VALUES:

Integrity: The Smoky Lake County Agricultural Service Board will conduct business in an ethical manner respecting the environment, public and applicable legislation.

Commitment to Service: The Smoky Lake County Agricultural Service Board will strive to provide the best service possible to its ratepayers conducting operations in an efficient and cost effective manner.



Progressive: The Smoky Lake County Agricultural Service Board will take a proactive and innovative approach in its programming examining new technologies and protocol while accepting and implementing relevant public input.




1.

Vegetation Management Program

Goal: To implement an integrated vegetation management program on municipal right-of-ways for the purpose of reducing noxious weeds and ensuring sightlines are clear for the motoring public.



Strategies	Action	Measures
<p>Identify problem noxious weeds within the municipal right of way</p>	<p>-Key emphasis will be on Prohibited Noxious and Noxious weed species analyzing both environmental and economic threats.</p>	<p>-All roads inspected for noxious weeds at least once during the growing season.</p>
<p>Herbicide Application</p> 	<p>-1/2 of all county roads will receive a herbicide application using the One-Pass mower herbicide applicators following the rotation guidelines set out in <i>Policy Statement 62-15 "Vegetation Management Plan"</i> and <i>Policy Statement 62-23 "Tansy Reduction Program"</i>. Brush Spraying will be completed during the regular roadside spraying rotation in coordination with Public Works brushing program.</p> <p>-Spot spraying will be completed in the other two zone in which regular roadside spraying is being completed. Noxious weeds and brush will be targeted. Custom spraying of private lands will occur if time and budget allow, and priority is put on landowners struggling to control prohibited noxious weeds.</p>	<p>-Number of miles that receive a herbicide application.</p> <p>-Amount of herbicide applied for brush control.</p> <p>-Number of locations spot sprayed.</p> <p>-Amount of herbicide applied during spot spraying.</p> <p>-Number of landowners who receive help eliminating their Prohibited noxious weeds by the ASB Department.</p>
<p>Roadside Mowing</p> 	<p>-Roadside mowing will be conducted as stated in <i>Policy Statement 62M-02 "Mowing Program"</i>. Roadsides will first receive a single shoulder pass. A second seasonal pass will be completed to the property line A secondary shoulder pass will occur once the primary shoulder passes are complete. where possible, ensuing passes are only done if deemed efficient to eliminate extra freewheeling and passes are 5 feet or more.</p> <p>-Lake roads leading to resorts, Victoria</p>	<p>-1 'shoulder' pass and a second seasonal pass of roadside mowing to the property line for weed and brush control is to be completed by November October 1st of each year.</p> <p>-Miles of road mowed.</p> <p>-Iron Horse Trail mowed once a year.</p> <p>-Amount of additional mowing completed for community events.</p> <p>-Amount of additional mowing completed on other municipal properties.</p>

	<p>Trail and Township Road 610 will be mowed before the July and August long weekends.</p>	
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2. Weed Control Act Duties

Goal: To control the spread and prevent the establishment of invasive species on privately owned land through responsible communication with landowners, occupants, industry stakeholders and members of the general public as set out in the Weed Control Act of Alberta.

Strategies	Action	Measures
<p>Weed Inspection Program</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Weed Inspection are conducted on private land during the growing season annually. -Letters are sent to landowners who are in non-compliance with the Weed Control Act of Alberta, as specified in <i>Policy Statement 62-14 "Weed Inspection and Weed Notice"</i>. -Weed Notices are issued to landowners who do not comply with recommendation letters. -Enforcement actions are completed by the Agricultural Services Department for landowners who are non-compliant with a weed notice that has been issued. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Number of inspections completed. -Number of letters sent to landowners/renters. -Number of weed notices issued. -Number of Weed enforcements completed.
<p>Noxious Weed Education and Awareness</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Provide weed identification for landowners on farm or samples brought in for identification. -Promote weed awareness at our annual Smoky Lake County Farmer Appreciation Event. -Produce and circulate information on invasive species through our website, local newspapers and social media. -Weed Wanted posters hung annually at the Town, Villages & Hamlets including all the water stations and lake lot bulletin boards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of landowners assisted annually. -Number of events hosted. -Number of articles circulated. -Number of brochures and weed wanted posters given out/posted.




3. Environmental Stewardship and Extension






Goal: To provide Environmental Farm Plans to producers and work in partnership with Lakeland Agricultural Research Association to deliver collaborative environmental stewardship initiatives and unbiased research that results in sustainable growth of Smoky Lake County's Agricultural Community.

Strategies	Action	Measures
<p>Environmental Farm Plans</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Assist local producers with completion of Environmental Farm Plans. -Provide air photographs for fields and farmyards and soils information. Provide water well information from the Alberta Water Wells Database. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Number of Environmental Farm plans assisted with. -Increased adoption of beneficial management practices by producers.
<p>Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Assist local producers with information about new agricultural programs and grants. -Stay current with program updates and changes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Number of producers assisted.
<p>Lakeland Agricultural Research Association</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ensure Smoky Lake County received programs as promised by LARA. -Ensure crop plot trials are complete in Smoky Lake County. -LARA to give updates throughout the year by attending ASB meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Number of events hosted by LARA in our County. -Field Day hosted for local producers at the Smoky Lake County Plots. -Number of unbiased research plots within Smoky Lake County. -How many updates were received. -Attendance of Smoky Lake County Farmers & Ranchers Appreciation Event.
<p>Classroom Agriculture Program</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Deliver the Classroom Agriculture Program to Grade 4 students at schools that register for the program within Smoky Lake County. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Number of Classroom Agriculture Program presentations delivered.

4. Problem Wildlife Program

Goal: To co-operate and execute an Integrated Problem Wildlife Management Program.







Strategies	Action	Measures
<p>Beavers</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Beaver Tail Bounty for \$15.00 per tail from pre-approved locations as specified in <i>Policy Statement 62-07 "Beaver Management"</i>. -Beaver Dam Removal may occur to mitigate flooding which causes damage to municipal infrastructure. Dam removal will be conducted as per <i>Policy Statement 62-21 "Beaver Control- Fee for Removal with Explosives"</i>. -Full time Part time Animal Control Technician will obtain required easements from landowners and all provincial and federal permissions needed. -Maintain Certified Blasters License with the Province of Alberta. -Trapping and removing problem beavers and muskrats. -Install/ maintain pond levelers and other Flow Devices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Number of Beaver tails brought in. -Number of dams removed affecting municipal infrastructure. -Amount of revenue generated completing private land blasting. -Damage Control Licenses issued by Alberta Environment. -Trapping of County owned property at Lakes. -Renew every 5 years as required. -Number of beavers and muskrats removed. -Number of pond levelers installed/maintained. -Number of flooded roads.
<p>Coyotes</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Maintain Form 7 License to ensure Smoky Lake County can provide 1080 toxicant to agricultural producers as per <i>Policy Statement 62-03 "Coyote Control"</i>. - Coyote control booklets available for agricultural producers to help better manage coyote predation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Number of 1080 tablets given out annually. -As of December 2024, Health Canada has recalled all 1080.
<p>Richardson Ground Squirrel (Gopher)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -2% Liquid Strychnine registration has been cancelled. -Recommend alternatives to producers. -Recommend local trappers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Number of producers assisted.

4. Problem Wildlife Continued		
Strategies	Action	Measures
<p>Wild Boar</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Participate annually in the Wild Boar Ear Bounty with Alberta Agriculture (if eligible). -Promote the Alberta Invasive Species Council “Squeal on Pigs” Campaign for awareness and reporting wild boar sightings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Number of wild boar ears brought in. -Posts on County Website and Social Media shares.
<p>Waterfowl Damage Control</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Scare Cannons are available for rent as per <i>Policy Statement 62-26 “Scare Cannon Rental”</i>. -Suggest alternative control measures to mitigate crop damage cause by waterfowl during fall migration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Number of rentals that occur. -number of producers that engage in alternative control measure.
<p>Alternative Control Methods</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Agricultural Fieldmen will continue to look into alternative control methods for all pest species. -Promote and notify producers of alternative control measures when they come in. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Attend In Service Training to hear from other Ag Fieldman from across the province. -Attend demonstrations with government research groups.
<p>Northern Pocket Gopher (Mole)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Mole tail bounty for \$1.00 per tail can be brought in as per <i>Policy Statement 62-02 “Bounty for Pocket Gopher Tails”</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Number of mole tails brought in for bounty.
<p>Stray Dog Pickup</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Assist Smoky Lake County’s Peace Officer in responding to ratepayer reports of loose dogs within Smoky Lake County as needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Number of stray dogs picked up and transported to an approved animal shelter; or if possible, reunite them with owners.

5. Agricultural Pest Act Duties

Goal: To provide Smoky Lake County agricultural producers with responsible pest management strategies, pest monitoring and enforcement of declared agricultural pests as deemed by the Agricultural Pest Act of Alberta.

Crop Surveying

Strategies	Action	Measures
Swede Midge of Canola 	-Swede Midge is monitored on behalf of Agri-food Canada. It is an 8-week program where sticky pads are changed weekly.	-Continue to monitor for new and invading pest that threaten our agriculture industry.
Canola Flower Midge 	-Canola Flower Midge is monitored on behalf of Agri-food Canada. It is an 8-week program where sticky pads are changed weekly.	-Continue to monitor for new and invading pest that threaten our agriculture industry
Grasshoppers 	-Townships are surveyed annually and data is sent to Alberta Agriculture for forecasting. The county ditch and field are sampled at each location.	-Number of fields surveyed. -Number of outbreaks that occur.
Bertha Army Worms 	- 3 Fields across the county are monitored starting in June until August. The traps are set out in the fields to collect the moths that lay the eggs.	-Number of moths counted annually. -Number of outbreaks that are forecasted.
Wheat Midge 	- Wheat Midge in high numbers can cause yield loss, wheat crops are monitored around the end of June as wheat heads are emerging up until anthesis (Flowering).	-Samples collected annually and sent to Alberta Agriculture when required.
Blackleg of Canola 	- Canola fields are sampled annually for Blackleg severity. Samples are provided to the Crop Diversification Centre for research purposes. Blackleg can cause significant yield loss and harm international exporting.	-Number of fields sampled annually.

Clubroot



- Random canola fields are surveyed after the crop has been swathed. We look for visual symptoms and if we find galls the plant sample is sent to the lab for DNA confirmation.

-Number of Canola fields sampled annually.

-Number of Clubroot Management Agreements sent to producers annually as per *Policy Statement 62-12 "Clubroot"*.

-Number of Pest Notices given annually.

6. Soil Conservation Act Duties

Goal: Protect the quality and integrity of agricultural soils in Smoky Lake County.

Strategies	Action	Measures
<p>Soil Conservation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Agricultural Fieldman are deemed as inspectors and can issue notices under this Act. -Document and photograph any non-compliance with the Soil Conservation Act. -Promote soil health workshops and site demonstrations. -Monitor soil conditions and respond to an area of concern that needs to be assessed following an event that could impact soil/water sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Number of Soil Conservation Notice issued. -Number of Soil Conservation Letters issued. -Number of workshops. -Number of areas assessed for soil condition concerns.



7. Intergovernmental Collaboration

Goal: Conduct intergovernmental collaboration will all levels of governments.

Strategies	Action	Measures
Collaborate with multiple levels and forms of government	-Agricultural Service Board to participate in drafting and passing resolutions at Regional and Provincial Agricultural Service Board Conferences annually.	-Attend annual conferences and participate by discussion and voting on various agricultural issues.
Protect the interests of Smoky Lake County Agricultural Community	-Every effort will be made to convey agricultural concerns from the agricultural community to relevant government agencies via face-to-face interactions, letter writing or any other available means.	-Number of letters sent to MLA's, PM's or other government members.
Animal Health Act	<p>-Liaison with the Chief Provincial Veterinarian, Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and local Veterinarians, when necessary, on any livestock emergencies as stated by <i>Policy Statement 62- 30 "Animal Health & Livestock Emergency Preparedness"</i>.</p> <p>-Livestock emergencies include cattle liner accidents on the highway.</p> <p>-If a positive case or outbreak as stated in the <i>Animal Health Act</i> is confirmed within Smoky Lake County boundaries, ASB staff will act in accordance with the directives of the Chief Provincial Veterinarian (CPV).</p> <p>-Work with our Fire Protective Service Department in case of livestock emergency on the highways. These duties would include helping them source rendering truck, trailers or calling a local vet.</p>	<p>-Number of investigations asked to assist on.</p> <p>-Number of highway livestock emergencies assisted with.</p>

SMOKY LAKE COUNTY



Title: Mowing Program		Policy No.: 28-07	
Section: 62	Code: P-R	Page No.: 1 of 3	E
Legislation Reference:		Alberta Provincial Statutes	
Purpose:	Smoky Lake County will govern the municipal mowing program on developed road allowances and County lands under the Agricultural Service Board.		

Policy Statement and Guidelines:	
1. STATEMENT:	<p>1.1 Smoky Lake County will mow developed road allowances annually to maintain safe visibility for the travelling public and to improve drainage of infrastructure.</p> <p>1.2 The mowing program promotes effective control of weeds and brush within the municipal right-of-way encroaching the roads surface.</p> <p>1.3 The County will mow County lands on a as needed basis.</p>
2. DEFINITION(S):	<p>2.1 County Lands: Property owned and/ operated by Smoky Lake County</p> <p>2.2 Developed Road Allowances: Road allowances containing a gravel or hard surfaced roadway under the jurisdiction of Smoky Lake County.</p>
3. OBJECTIVES:	<p>3.1 Define areas that will be mowed within the right-of-way and on County lands.</p> <p>3.2 Provide the level of right-of-way mowing as set out by the Agricultural Service Board.</p> <p>3.3 The County`s desire to achieve the following objectives with its roadside mowing program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to assist with weed control by preventing the seed set of noxious weeds in the right-of-way and to cut any brush regrowth encroaching on the road ▪ to enhance road maintenance with minimal gravel loss and allow positive drainage of rainwater to be more efficiently channeled to the right-of-way ▪ to increase visibility of wildlife crossing and reduce obstructed visibility of signs at intersections for the safety of the travelling public ▪ to provide a fire break and reduce the amount of fire load material in right-of-way. ▪ To prevent drifting on roads, where the blowing snow will travel across the road, rather than being trapped by standing vegetation which will travel across
4. GUIDELINES:	<p>4.1 The mowing program will be developed and planned by the Agricultural Service Board and implemented through the Agricultural Services Department. The defined mowing areas consist of three (3) zones, divided using range road 150 and Highway 855 as boundaries.</p>

Title: Mowing Program		Policy No.: 28-07
Section: 62	Code: P-R	Page No.: 2 of 3 E

Policy Statement and Guidelines:

- 4.2 Roadside prep and equipment maintenance will commence 2 weeks prior to mowing program start date.
- 4.3 Mowers will begin mowing operation the third week in May. All mowing operations will cease no later than October 1st.
- 4.4 Mowing Operations consist of three (3) tractors and mowers used to cut grass, brush, and noxious weeds. These mowers are able to accomplish a significant amount of mowing and right-of-way clearing very efficiently when compared to other methods of mechanical control.
- 4.5 Without limiting the program or its effectiveness, it will generally be planned as following:
- 4.5.1 Developed Road Allowances will be mowed twice a season: All grassy areas along oiled, or gravel roads receive a shoulder pass first, meaning one width of the mower. A second seasonal shoulder pass will be completed once all developed road allowances have received the first seasonal shoulder pass. The second seasonal pass will be completed where the mowers began mowing in the early season and if there is high grass regrowth, and approved by the Agricultural Fieldman.
- Mowers will begin mowing outwards from their 'home base' to avoid high blading and eliminate unnecessary travel.
 - Main roads into lake resorts will only be mowed prior to the July and August long weekends (two seasonal passes per year)
 - Township Road 610 from Range Road 181 East to HWY 855 (gravel haul road) and Victoria Trail will be mowed in conjunction with the lake resorts prior to July and August long weekends (two seasonal passes per year)
 - The Iron Horse Trail shall only be mowed once per season
 - It is recognized that inclement weather, such as rain and early winter could prevent completion of the program
- 4.6 All other mowing requests will be at the discretion of the Agricultural Service Board and added to **Schedule "A" Approved Additional Mowing**

	Date	Resolution Number
Approved	May 24, 2018	# 581-18 - Page # 13130
Amended	October 22, 2018	#1030-18 - Page # 13312
Amended	April 13, 2021	# 572-21 - Page # 14597
Amended	August 10, 2021	#1009-21 - Page # 14755
Amended	December 14, 2021	# 108-21 - Page # 14883
Amended	October 11, 2022	#1111-22 - Page # 15362
Amended	January 23, 2025	#146-25 - Page # 15843



SCHEDULE "A"
APPROVED ADDITIONAL MOWING

Smoky Lake Rodeo Grounds

Smoky Lake Air Strip

Hamlin Ball Diamonds

Waskatenau Ball Diamonds

Bellis Ball Diamonds

Bonnie Lake Enviro Reserve 7921626

Victoria Trail

Iron Horse Trail

Warspite Ball Diamond

Agricultural Service Board Position Statement

January 2025 DRAFT

FARM-MADE SEED ([link to feedback form](#))

Overview: Farmers' Rights to Save Seed

The practice of saving seed is fundamental to the economic viability and sustainability of Alberta's agriculture. This practice empowers farmers to maintain autonomy over their operations and fosters the growth of crops uniquely adapted to Alberta's unique climatic and soil conditions. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency's (CFIA) Seed Regulatory Modernization (SRM) initiative, which proposes royalties on farm-saved seed, is complex and presents challenges that require careful navigation to balance the interests of all stakeholders. While the ASB acknowledges the importance of funding robust plant breeding programs, it emphasizes safeguarding farmers' economic interests while minimizing administrative concerns.

Benefits of Farm-Made Seed

- **Adaptability:** Supports locally tailored crop varieties suited to Alberta's unique agricultural landscape.
- **Cost-Effectiveness:** Offers an affordable option for producers, especially for small and medium-sized farms.
- **Resilience:** Reduces dependency on external markets and supports regional food security.

Key Issues

1. Farmers' Rights and Local Adaptation

- Farm-made seed enables Alberta farmers to adapt crop varieties to local conditions.
- Introducing royalties could potentially increase costs and discourage the use of locally adapted seed, potentially reducing genetic diversity and increasing dependency on higher-cost commercial seed varieties.

2. Economic Impact and Public Breeding Programs

- Royalties on farm-made seed would disproportionately affect small and medium-sized producers, including increasing costs and threatening their financial stability.
- Public breeding programs, which provide affordable and region-specific crops (e.g., canola) face declining resources and reduced funding as private industry gains influence. The result is higher seed costs and less choice.

3. Global Alignment and Market Access

- While aligning Canada's seed regulations with international standards under UPOV-91 could improve market access and trade opportunities, local farmers may face increased costs and reduced flexibility.

4. Equity and Transparency in Funding

- Farmers already contribute to breeding programs through checkoffs and levies. Greater transparency in the allocation of these funds is essential to ensure investments benefit public breeding initiatives and align with farmer priorities.

What is the ASB's Position on Farm-Saved Seed?

The ASB stands firmly in support of Alberta farmers' rights to save, store, and replant seed.

Farm-saved seed is an essential practice for Canadian farmers, and maintaining its viability is closely tied to the health of public breeding programs and the wider agricultural economy. The ASB supports a balanced, level-headed approach that protects farmers' rights while addressing the need for innovation.

Public breeding programs have historically provided affordable, high-performing seed varieties. These programs, funded through a mix of government investment and contributions from the ag industry, face increasing pressures from reduced funding and the growing influence of private breeding companies.

A royalty system on farm-saved seed could offer a potential solution, but only if it is designed to maintain farmers' autonomy, limit the financial burden, and support the public breeding sector. Without this support, the public breeding system risks collapse, paving the way for private industry to dominate. That will result in increased dependence on private seed companies, reduced access to locally adapted seed, and higher costs for farmers.

This is not a choice between tradition and progress but between protecting long-term sustainability and over-reliance on external players. Farmers must play a central role in shaping these policies, working collaboratively with government, breeders, and other stakeholders to ensure the long-term resilience of Canadian agriculture.

What the ASB believes is required to achieve a balanced outcome:

1. Inclusive Governance and Local Representation

The ASB should have a prominent role in policy development and implementation to ensure regional considerations, particularly those unique to Alberta, are addressed.

2. Access to Clear, Localized Information

Farmers need straightforward resources to understand the implications of royalties, the benefits of seed adaptability, and compliance requirements.

3. Continuous Farmer Engagement

Establish robust communication channels, including regular consultations and feedback mechanisms, to ensure farmers' voices guide policy decisions.

4. Support for Public Breeding Programs

Allocate funds transparently to ensure public breeding initiatives continue to deliver region-specific, cost-effective seed options.

Summary Questions

1. How important is it to the ASB to protect farm saved seed?
2. How important are the benefits to farm saved seed? Any other benefits that should be added?
3. How important are the key issues discussed in the Position Statement, are there others that should be included? Any other feedback?
4. Do you have any feedback on the ASB's Position on Farm saved seed?
5. How important are the actions suggested in the Position Statement? Any more that should be added? Any other comments?
6. What previous initiatives can we draw on to help defend farm saved seed?



Link to feedback Form: <https://forms.office.com/r/BaPw6vGCNv>

09 Proposed Order of Resolutions

RESOLUTION NUMBER	RESOLUTION	
1-25	DROUGHT AND LIVESTOCK AGRISTABILITY	Carried
2-25	LANDOWNERS' RIGHTS FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS	Defeated
3-25	PROTECTION OF CLASS 3 SOILS IN ALBERTA FROM RENEWABLE DEVELOPMENT	
4-25	WEED CONTROL IN DRAINAGE CANALS (REGISTERED DRAINAGE DITCHES)	Carried
5-25	CENTRAL CONTACT FOR THE WEED CONTROL AND AGRICULTURAL PEST ACTS	Carried
6-25	RURAL VETERINARY STUDENT SUPPORT	Carried
7-25	ROADKILL CARCASS DISPOSAL	Carried
8-25	COYOTES ELIGIBLE FOR COMPENSATION	Defeated
9-25	NON-MATCHING FUNDING FOR AGKNOW	Carried
10-25	FARM FAMILY AWARDS	Defeated
11-25	AGRICULTURE EDUCATION FUNDING	Carried
12-25	CHARITABLE GAMING POLICIES HANDBOOK	Carried
13-25	RESOLUTION LOBBYING INCLUSION	Defeated

****From Personal Notes Since Minutes From ASB Conference Are Not Released Yet*****

PC 1-25

**RESOLUTION ~~PC01-24~~
INFLATIONARY INCREASE FOR ASB GRANTS**

WHEREAS the province of Alberta has included inflationary increases in multi year grants made to ASB stakeholders;

WHEREAS the ASBs continue to be important partners with the province on food and agriculture products assurance systems providing 1:7 return on investment with the ASB grant program;

WHEREAS the ASB grants have not received an increase beyond 2014 levels so grant amounts have not kept up with inflation;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

THAT ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST

That the Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation approve a 3%/year inflationary increase for the ASBs grant program.

SPONSORED BY: ASBPC

MOVED BY: _____

SECONDED BY: _____

CARRIED: _____

DEFEATED: _____

STATUS: Provincial

DEPARTMENT: Agriculture and Irrigation

PASS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The ASBPC wrote to the Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation asking that a 3% per year inflationary increase be added to the ASB grant on November 25, 2025. The ASB grant cycle renews in 2025, and historically the grant has not included inflationary increases.

January 9, 2025 the Committee received the following reply:

Dear Brenda Knight:

Thank you for your November 25, 2024 letter requesting a yearly three per cent increase to the Agricultural Service Board (ASB) Grant.

The ASB Provincial Committee and ASBs are critical partners for the Government of Alberta. We remain committed to supporting the important work ASBs do each year to administer and implement the *Agricultural Service Board Act*, *Weed Control Act*, *Agricultural Pest Act* and *Soil Conservation Act*. We are also grateful for ASBs' assistance in the control of animal diseases under the *Animal Health Act*. The province continues to have a strong relationship with

municipalities, and we recognize the vital role of ASBs in protecting Alberta's access to markets through the surveillance and control of pests.

I appreciated your November 25th letter. However, at the time the letter was received, the budget planning process for 2025-26 was complete, so I was unable to consider the requested increase. Inflationary pressures associated with population growth and a decline in forecasted revenues associated with weakened oil prices also place pressures on budget increases.

That being said, I have approved the renewal of the ASB Grant for the next five years at the 2023-24 funding level and would be open to discussions in future budget years related to ASBs funding into the future.

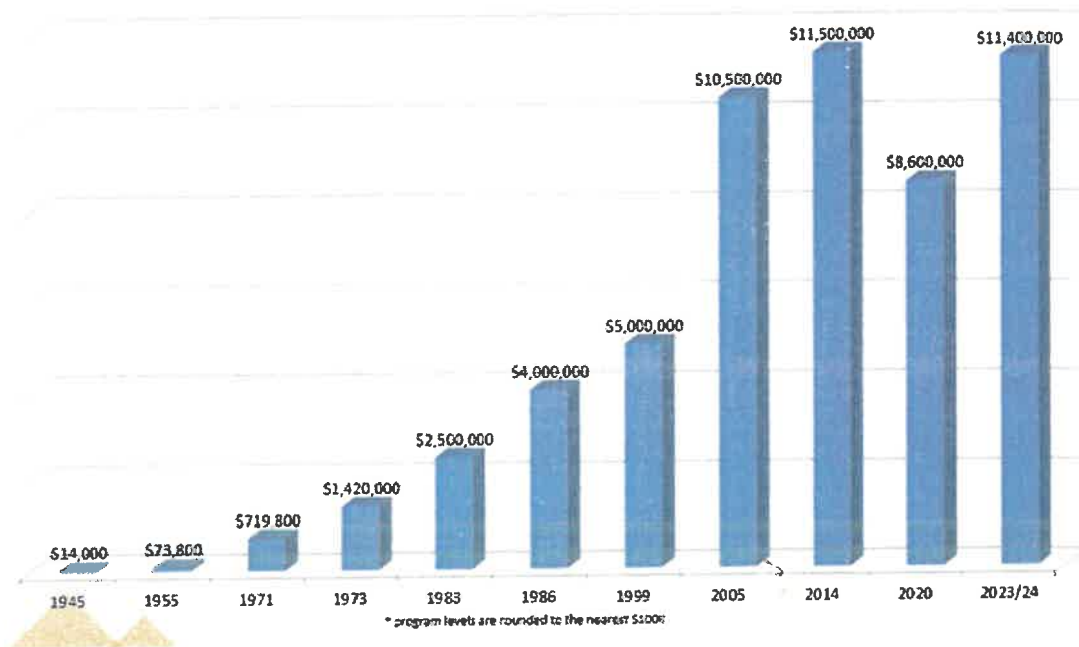
Thank you again for writing. Strong agriculture industry remains at the heart of Alberta's economic strategy, and ASBs will continue to be an important partner in this success.

Sincerely,

Honourable RJ Sigurdson
Minister, Agriculture and Irrigation
AR86562

This resolution will be used to push for an amendment or adjustment in the second year of the grant program to include inflationary increases in subsequent years.

ASB Grant Program Legislative Funding History



Dan Gawalko ASB Chair Report

January 2025

- December 10, Smoky Lake County ASB meeting, Alyssa Krawchuk Executive director of LARA provided information on their year to date activities, the board recommended policy statement no. 62-30-01 Animal Health & Livestock Emergency Preparedness be adopted, that policy statement 62-08-01 Agricultural use of Municipal Right of Ways be adopted, that policy statement 62-17-02 License of Occupation of Road Allowance be rescinded, that policy 62-05-06 Grasshopper Bait Distributor be amended to update the name of the policy to Grasshopper Control Compensation & provide procedures for compensating landowners, the board also recommended appointing Kierstin Dubitz as acting Agricultural Fieldman for the duration of the positions vacancy, having a self weigh scale in the county was discussed, several letters from other municipalities with concern over bill C-293 that is before the Senate were received, next ASB meeting February 11 @ 9am.
- December 16, attended LARA meeting RDAR base funding was discussed, the chair attended the Canadian Grazing conference along with all LARA staff, Alyssa gave the executive director report submitted for 5 Canada summer jobs & are advertising these positions, met with Smoky Lake county, Lakeland HR helped with the performance evaluations she also gave the finance review and 2025 draft budget, upcoming extension programs :
Seed starting workshop, Jan 21 Eastbourne community hall.
Securing success program, Jan, 28 Ashmont, Jan 30 Smoky Lake,
Feb 5 Elk Point, Feb 10 Eastbourne hall.
Poisonous pasture plants, online webinar Feb 4,

Farmer appreciation night, Feb 7 Glendon,
Working well workshop Feb 11 St. Paul,
LARA AGM, March 6 county St. Paul,
Composting workshop March 11 TBD,
Ranching for profit March 18 St. Paul.
Gardening forum, April 26 Ft. Kent hall

- January 20,21,22 attended the ASB Conference in Edmonton with board member Tori Ponich & Ag Fieldman Kierstin Dubitz, the first afternoon we went to the asb chair and fieldman meeting with speaker John Conrad ADM he discussed the 5 year grant renewal program for ASB's for 2025 -2029, he gave an update on the weed review, wild boar, ground squirrel and the water review act, 1.7 million from the province to AgKnow and producer mental health, in the evening we were welcomed to the conference by Lacombe County, then Minister RJ Sigurdson gave a welcome address also, the next day we had an ASB update, they have been in Alberta for 80 years serving 41,000 farms, Dr. John Church gave a talk about precision ranching, drones with thermal imaging, virtual fencing, plants and animals together enabling a smart biome, Bill Kingston then gave an overview of the wetland policies the benefits of wetlands the wetland replacement program & funding available from different sources, Dave Johnson gave an update on ag waste recycling the EPR program for chemical jugs, grain bags & twine pilot projects & the option for large farms or groups of farmers to have 10 or more bags picked up on farm. Karen Wickerson gave an update on the Alberta rat program, no rats in Alberta which is great for trade, the province gave \$215,000 towards the rat program for 2025, the Alberta Sask. border is inspected twice yearly with 31 confirmed rats reported in 2024. Jane Tansey gave the Richardsons squirrel update on the reproduction cycle they

have 1 litter per year with 5-8 in a litter, 60-80% of them can be removed by a single badger, also suggested making bird boxes for the barn owls and raptor stands and platforms as these also help to control this type of ground squirrel, Micheal Marlow gave an overview of the USDA national swine feral program how the swine are causing crop damage, infrastructure damage to grave yards golf courses & more, in excess of 6 million animals in the US in 30 of the 50 states he says to control before it gets out of hand using legislation also. Then we went in to the resolution session for the remainder of the day. The following morning started with Mikki Shatosky discussing the legal tools used to get easements for agricultural land into a Alberta Farmland trust or conservation formats used and the benefits of, Tanis Baker then gave a presentation of Ag tourism and the Alberta open farm days in August they partner with Travel Alberta & Ag society's, they anticipate 9.4 billion people in the world in the next 5 years, 84% of Alberta tourism are Albertans, John Knap they talked about the future of Ag in Alberta the fertility rates on the planet, the rising sea, taking out delta farmland in the world, we'll need 173 million more acres to produce 50% more food, John believes the ag industry will form a progressive larger part of Alberta's future economy, Megan Evans talked about the state of Alberta's native bee's, the threats to bee's, there are 375 bee species in Alberta, 40% of insect species at risk of extinction in Alberta from insecticides, pathogens & pests, these bee's are important pollinators in our world. Dr. Alycia Chrenek then talked about connecting mental wellness to sustainable agriculture & the causes of veterinarian mental crisis & farmers needing help, talking is one of tools along with changing your prospective on

things, AgKnow and in the Know are some of the groups available for Help.

- January 27 attended the LARA board of Directors meeting, discussed capital funding, 12 associations submitted applications will know by end of January then sign contracts, Lara is working on a new logo, municipal funding was also discussed with St. Paul county providing 70,000 per year for 3 years & the MD. of Bonnyville giving 80,000 for 2025, on April 7th will be holding a strategic planning session with Lakeland Human Resources, Alyssa gave the financial report, OFCAF will schedule a meeting to give an update of what needs to be done & reported on for the grants, the AGM will be in Mallaig on March 6th with 2 positions on the board to be elected 1 in Smoky Lake County, 1 in MD of Bonnyville, Alyssa gave the Executive director report applied for 5 positions for Canada summer jobs, Making a plan for the garden & greenhouse, 98 feed samples in 2024 using ½ the sample budget, researchers are busy ordering seed, attended the soil conference & working on projects for RDAR check out the upcoming events on LARA website or Smoky Lake county website.
- January 30 attended the Securing Success programs & funding opportunities for your farm or ranch in Smoky Lake with councillor Lorne Halisky & Ag Fieldman Kierstin Dubitz put on by LARA, Lance introduced the LARA staff in attendance & gave a presentation on what LARA has done in the last 33 years on unbiased research & what they can do for producers feed tests, help with grant applications, Kierstin then gave an update on what the county is doing, ditch mowing, spraying ditches, 400 weed notices sent out in 2024, clubroot survey, EFP's, animal control for beaver & dogs, Sonia from the OFCAF program & CFGA gave an update on the program, online learning, events, workshops, fencing, pasture

improvement, rotational grazing, need an EFP for these programs and Agri Invest for 2025, Chris from the RALP program talked about the program, inter cropping, pollinator strips, trees, wetland restoration, annual crops to forages, he also mentioned the Alberta Water Program for wells & dugouts, the RALP program opens February 3/25 closes November 30/25, call 1866-310 RALP for more info or Lance @ LARA or your ag fieldman. These are some good programs for our producers.

- February 7 attended the Farmer Appreciation Event in Glendon put on by LARA with the talents of Ben Crane entertaining the crowd.



7.1

FOOTHILLS COUNTY

309 Macleod Trail, Box 5605
High River, Alberta T1V 1M7
Phone: 403-652-2341
Fax: 403-652-7880
www.FoothillsCountyAB.ca

December 4, 2024

The Honourable Senators of Canada
Senate of Canada
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A4

RE: Foothills County Letter of Concern Regarding Bill C-293

Dear Honourable Senators,

I write to you today on behalf of the Foothills County Agricultural Service Board. Foothills County is a vibrant rural municipality in southern Alberta with a strong economy of agriculture and food production. We are proudly occupied by wide open ranges for cattle grazing, intensive livestock operations and food processing facilities both large and small. We are very concerned about the implications of passing Bill C-293, *An Act respecting pandemic prevention and preparedness* currently before the Senate.

About 40% of Alberta's farm cash receipts are from livestock production, contributing over 10 billion dollars to Alberta's GDP in 2023. This represents the livelihood of a significant number of farm families, a large contribution to local and exported food supply and an important contributor to our rural and remote communities.

With federal, provincial, and municipal oversight, Canada is already home to a very robust and all-inclusive food regulatory system. The robust system is respected worldwide and is tightly monitored and controlled to protect not only Canadians, but also consumers through our exports. Bill C-293 however, suggests otherwise.

Bill C-293 allows the government to shut down entire sectors of the economy and food production and is an attack on the freedom of choice that Canadians hold dear. This bill also allows the government to choose winners and losers and takes Canadian's ability to choose their own food of reference.



FOOTHILLS COUNTY

309 Macleod Trail, Box 5605

High River, Alberta T1V 1M7

Phone: 403-652-2341

Fax: 403-652-7880

www.FoothillsCountyAB.ca

Alberta farmers, ranchers, food producers and regulators work hard to regulate and protect our valuable livestock industry, and we ask you to join us. Please consider the consequences that passing Bill C-293 will have on the source and stability of our local food system, and the livelihood of our livestock producers and the communities they support.

Bill C-293 is an attack on Canada's highly regulated agri-food sector and we urge you to say **NO TO BILL C-293!**

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely

Rob Siewert, Chairman
Agricultural Service Board
Foothills County

Cc: The Honourable Senators of Canada (individually emailed)
Mr. John Barlow, MP Foothills
The Honourable Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
The Honourable Mark Holland, Minister of Health Canada
The Honourable Danielle Smith, Premier of the Province of Alberta
The Honourable R.J Sigurdson, Alberta Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation
Alberta Agricultural Service Boards
Agricultural Service Board Provincial Committee



Municipal District of Willow Creek

Office of the Administrator

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November 27th, 2024

Honourable Senator Scott Tannas

Scott.tannas@sen.parl.gc.ca

Senate of Canada

Ottawa, Ontario

K1A 0A4

RE: Bill C-293 – An Act Respecting Pandemic Prevention and Preparedness

Dear Honourable Senator Scott Tannas,

The Municipal District of Willow Creek Agricultural Service Board (ASB) would like to express its concerns regarding Bill C-293, *An Act Respecting Pandemic Prevention and Preparedness*.

Section 3(2)(l) of Bill C-293 proposes regulating “commercial activities that can contribute to pandemic risk, including industrial animal agriculture,” and promoting “alternative proteins.” This section lacks clarity, leaving it open to broad interpretation. Without specific definitions or parameters, the bill risks unnecessary government interference in agricultural practices, consumer choice, and the broader economy.

Canada’s agricultural sector has long demonstrated leadership in biosecurity and disease prevention. Programs such as the Canadian On-Farm Beef Cattle Biosecurity Standard and tailored biosecurity protocols for hog and poultry operations exemplify this commitment. Furthermore, initiatives like the North American Preparedness for Animal and Human Pandemics Initiative (NAPAHPI), updated post-COVID-19, already strengthen collaboration across sectors to manage pandemic risks. These existing measures reduce the need for additional regulatory overreach under Bill C-293.

Animal agriculture plays a vital role in supporting rural economies and ensuring food security across Canada. Imposing unclear or overly restrictive measures under Bill C-293 could inadvertently harm these sectors, disrupt local communities, and weaken Canada’s agricultural foundation.

We urge you to encourage the Senate to carefully consider the potential consequences of this legislation and advocate for a more balanced approach that respects the contributions of Canada’s agricultural sector while enhancing pandemic preparedness.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your consideration of our concerns.

Sincerely,

John Van Driesten

Chair, Municipal District of Willow Creek Agricultural Service Board

Cc: The Honourable Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
The Honourable R.J. Sigurdson, Alberta Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation
Mr. John Barlow, Shadow Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Chelsae Petrovic, Member of Legislative Assembly of Alberta for Livingstone Macleod
Agricultural Services Boards



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November 29, 2024

The Honourable Senators of Canada
Senate of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A4
Email: sencom@sen.parl.gc.ca

Dear Honourable Senators,

RE: Bill C-293, Pandemic Prevention and Preparedness

We are writing to express our opposition and significant concerns regarding Bill C-293, which addresses pandemic preparedness. While we recognize the importance of enhancing readiness to manage public health risks, we believe certain provisions within the Bill require closer examination and revision to ensure they align with evidence-based policymaking.

Specifically, Section L of the Bill, which calls for "derisking" animal agriculture and advancing alternative proteins, raises profound issues. This recommendation seems misaligned with the stated goal of pandemic preparedness, instead singling out a vital sector of our economy. Animal agriculture is integral to Canada's food security and rural economies, and any proposed changes must be supported by clear, scientifically validated risk assessments.

The language in this section is particularly troubling. Terms like "regulate" and "phase-out" introduce uncertainty and cause unnecessary alarm, suggesting that animal agriculture is inherently linked to disease spread—a claim that lacks robust evidence. Avoiding strict measures based on unproven assumptions is critical, as they risk undermining the agricultural sector and diminishing public trust. While exploring alternative proteins may have potential benefits, these initiatives should complement, rather than compromise existing agricultural systems.

Additionally, we are also concerned about Section O, which mandates "a summary of key cooperative measures or agreements on disease outbreak prevention and preparedness between the Government of Canada, other foreign governments, and key international organizations, including the World Health Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Organisation for Animal Health, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations."

These organizations, while influential, are not directly accountable to Canadians, yet their input could have significant implications for Canadian policy, we are especially concerned about potential recommendations or measures impacting the agricultural sector. Allowing unelected international entities to influence decisions affecting Canada's economy and food security undermines the role of Canadian stakeholders and elected officials in policymaking. Pandemic preparedness must prioritize solutions developed by and for Canadians rooted in domestic expertise and science.

We strongly urge the Senate to reconsider Sections L and O to ensure that policies designed to reduce future pandemic risks are targeted, evidence-driven, and mindful of their potential impacts on Canada's agricultural communities. Effective pandemic preparedness must focus squarely on public health objectives, avoiding unintended disruptions to vital economic sectors and ensuring decisions remain accountable to the Canadian people.

Thank you for considering these concerns. We trust the Senate will approach this legislation with the careful deliberation it requires.

Sincerely,



Roger Konieczny, Reeve

- c: Hon. Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food for Canada
Hon. R.J. Sigurdson, Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation for Alberta
Hon. Mark Holland, Minister of Health for Canada
Hon. Adriana LaGrange, Minister of Health for Alberta
Member of Parliament, Shannon Stubbs, Lakeland, Alberta
Hon. Jackie Armstrong-Homeniuk, Member of the Legislative Assembly for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville
Rural Municipalities of Alberta

December 3, 2024

The Honourable Senators of Canada
The Senate of Canada
Senate of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A4

RE: Rocky View County concerns regarding Bill C-293

Dear Honourable Senators,

The Agricultural Service Board of Rocky View County wishes to express its strong concerns and opposition to *Bill C-293 - An Act respecting pandemic prevention and preparedness* currently before the Senate. While we broadly support the objective of the Bill to enhance pandemic preparedness, we are deeply concerned about its potential negative impact on the agricultural industry.

Clause 2, Section L (ii) of Bill C-293 addresses the regulation of commercial activities, specifically mentioning industrial animal agriculture. Subsections (iii) and (iv) raise particular concern, as they promote the production of alternative proteins to mitigate pandemic risks and suggest the phase-out of commercial activities involving high-risk species. We believe this provision constitutes an overreach, as it targets a specific sector of the economy without clear evidence of its relevance to pandemic preparedness.

In Alberta, livestock production accounts for approximately 40% of farm cash receipts, contributing over \$10 billion to the economy in 2023. This represents the livelihood of many farm families, a crucial part of the local food supply, and a significant economic driver for our rural communities. Any policy changes affecting animal agriculture must be based on clear, evidence-based risk assessments to avoid unintended consequences.

Furthermore, the Bill implies that regulatory oversight of livestock in Canada is either nonexistent or insufficient, which is a deeply misguided belief. The agricultural sector in Alberta is highly regulated, with world-class animal disease surveillance programs, food safety protocols, and biosecurity measures already in place. We firmly believe that these existing frameworks should be recognized and considered within the scope of the Bill, rather than introducing additional, potentially redundant federal regulations.

Alberta farmers and regulators are committed to protecting our valuable livestock industry. We urge you to consider the consequences of passing Bill C-293 on the stability of our local food system, the livelihood of livestock producers, and the communities they support.

Sincerely,



Greg Boehlke
Rocky View County ASB Board Chair
Councillor Division 5

Cc: The Honourable Danielle Smith, Premier of the Province of Alberta
The Honourable R. J. Sigurdson, Alberta Minister of Agricultural and Irrigation
The Honourable Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
The Honourable Mark Holland, Minister of Health Canada
Mr. Martin Shields, MP Bow River
Mr. Blake Richards, MP Banff-Airdrie
Mr. John Barlow, MP Foothills
Alberta Agricultural Service Boards
Agricultural Service Board Provincial Committee



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Agricultural Services

Nov. 22, 2024

The Honourable Daryl Fridhandler, Senator of Canada
Daryl.Fridhandler@sen.parl.gc.ca
Senate of Canada
Ottawa, AB
K1A 0A4

Attention: The Honourable Daryl Fridhandler

Re: Bill C-293, An Act Respecting Pandemic Prevention and Preparedness

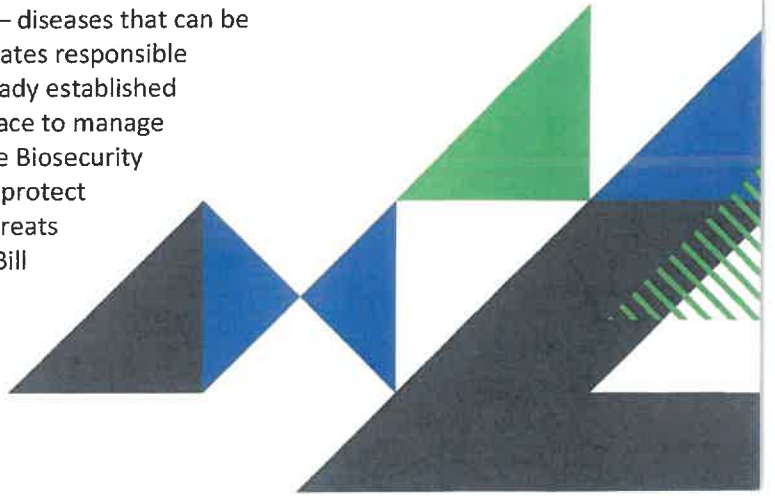
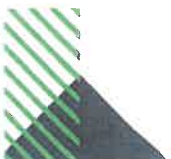
Dear Honourable Paula Simons,

On behalf of the Leduc County Agricultural Service Board, I am writing you to express our concerns and opposition to Bill C-293 – *An Act Respecting Pandemic Prevention and Preparedness* which is currently before the senate.

The COVID-19 pandemic was a significant issue that Canadians and our governments had to endure and overcome. Although we can agree on the need for governments to plan more effectively for future pandemics, Leduc County's Agricultural Service Board believes that Bill C-293 raises concerns of unnecessary regulation and requires further scrutiny and clarification before it is enacted.

Section 3(2)(l) of the Bill suggests regulation over "commercial activities that can contribute to pandemic risk, including animal agriculture," and the promotion of "commercial activities that can help reduce pandemic risk, including the production of alternative proteins". These statements are extremely vague and leave the door open for broad interpretations that have little scientific backing. When legislation is promoted without specific definitions, it risks undue government intervention. These statements do not have a place in legislation regarding pandemic preparedness.

Canada's agricultural sector currently implements rigorous biosecurity standards to prevent the spread of zoonotic diseases – diseases that can be spread between animals and humans – and demonstrates responsible stewardship. Within animal agriculture there are already established protocols that exemplify the proactive measures in place to manage health risks, such as the Canadian On-Farm Beef Cattle Biosecurity Standard. These biosecurity measures are in place to protect Canada's animal agriculture from external zoonotic threats and protect Canada's food security. The language of Bill



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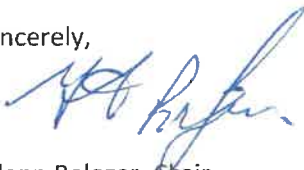
Animal agriculture supports rural economies and food security in Canada. Alberta's livestock industry contributed approximately \$10 Billion to the economy in 2023; federally, the livestock industry contributed over \$31 billion. This represents the livelihood of a significant number of farm families, a significant contribution to local food supply and an important economic contributor to our rural and remote communities. Efforts to phase out activities without concrete evidence of their risks could harm sectors like pork, poultry, and beef production, which employ thousands and feed millions.

In times of pandemic crisis, food security for Canada is essential. Legislation which could put food security at risk needs to be carefully written and considered to ensure that all food products are safe for Canadians. As it currently stands, the language of Bill C-293 is extremely vague and lacks the details necessary to understand the full implications to both our agricultural community as well as the consumers of Canada's robust and secure food system.

The Leduc County Agricultural Service Board would ask that as the Deputy Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, you urge your fellow senators to consider the consequences on the source and stability of Canada's food system that Bill C-293 could create if passed as it currently stands.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter. We trust that you will consider these concerns as you deliberate on the contents of Bill C-293.

Sincerely,



Glenn Belozar, Chair
Leduc County Agricultural Service Board

Cc: Hon. Danielle Smith, Premier of the Province of Alberta
Hon. R.J. Sigurdson, Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation for Alberta
Hon. Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food for Canada
Alberta Agricultural Service Boards
Agricultural Service Board Provincial Committee



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Agricultural Services

Nov. 22, 2024

The Honourable Patti LaBoucane-Benson, Senator of Canada
Patti.LaBoucane-Benson@sen.parl.gc.ca
Senate of Canada
Ottawa, AB
K1A 0A4

Attention: The Honourable Patti LaBoucane-Benson

Re: Bill C-293, An Act Respecting Pandemic Prevention and Preparedness

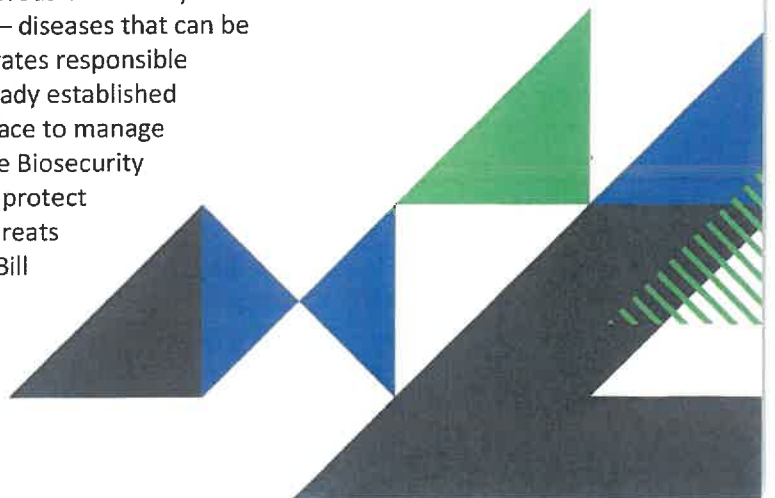
Dear Honourable Paula Simons,

On behalf of the Leduc County Agricultural Service Board, I am writing you to express our concerns and opposition to Bill C-293 – *An Act Respecting Pandemic Prevention and Preparedness* which is currently before the senate.

The COVID-19 pandemic was a significant issue that Canadians and our governments had to endure and overcome. Although we can agree on the need for governments to plan more effectively for future pandemics, Leduc County's Agricultural Service Board believes that Bill C-293 raises concerns of unnecessary regulation and requires further scrutiny and clarification before it is enacted.

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Canada's agricultural sector currently implements rigorous biosecurity standards to prevent the spread of zoonotic diseases – diseases that can be spread between animals and humans – and demonstrates responsible stewardship. Within animal agriculture there are already established protocols that exemplify the proactive measures in place to manage health risks, such as the Canadian On-Farm Beef Cattle Biosecurity Standard. These biosecurity measures are in place to protect Canada's animal agriculture from external zoonotic threats and protect Canada's food security. The language of Bill



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Animal agriculture supports rural economies and food security in Canada. Alberta's livestock industry contributed approximately \$10 Billion to the economy in 2023; federally, the livestock industry contributed over \$31 billion. This represents the livelihood of a significant number of farm families, a significant contribution to local food supply and an important economic contributor to our rural and remote communities. Efforts to phase out activities without concrete evidence of their risks could harm sectors like pork, poultry, and beef production, which employ thousands and feed millions.

In times of pandemic crisis, food security for Canada is essential. Legislation which could put food security at risk needs to be carefully written and considered to ensure that all food products are safe for Canadians. As it currently stands, the language of Bill C-293 is extremely vague and lacks the details necessary to understand the full implications to both our agricultural community as well as the consumers of Canada's robust and secure food system.

The Leduc County Agricultural Service Board would ask that as the Deputy Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, you urge your fellow senators to consider the consequences on the source and stability of Canada's food system that Bill C-293 could create if passed as it currently stands.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter. We trust that you will consider these concerns as you deliberate on the contents of Bill C-293.

Sincerely,



Glenn Belozer, Chair
Leduc County Agricultural Service Board

Cc: Hon. Danielle Smith, Premier of the Province of Alberta
Hon. R.J. Sigurdson, Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation for Alberta
Hon. Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food for Canada
Alberta Agricultural Service Boards
Agricultural Service Board Provincial Committee



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Agricultural Services

Nov. 22, 2024

The Honourable Paula Simons, Senator of Canada
Paula.Simons@sen.parl.gc.ca
Senate of Canada
Ottawa, AB
K1A 0A4

Attention: The Honourable Paula Simons

Re: Bill C-293, An Act Respecting Pandemic Prevention and Preparedness

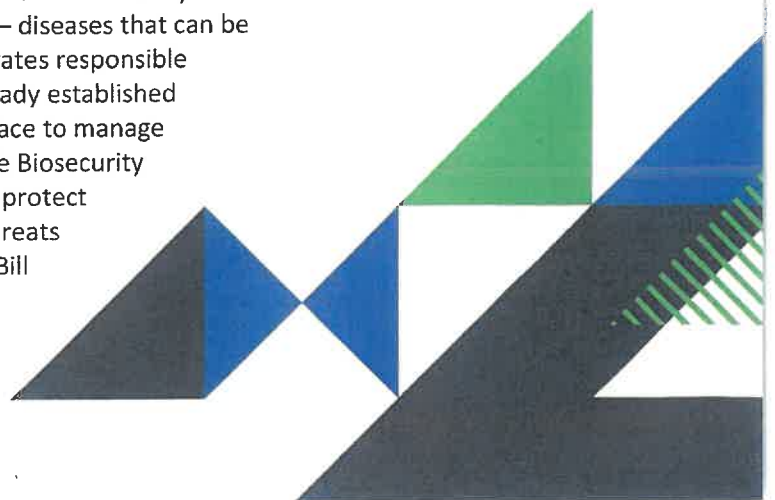
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The COVID-19 pandemic was a significant issue that Canadians and our governments had to endure and overcome. Although we can agree on the need for governments to plan more effectively for future pandemics, Leduc County's Agricultural Service Board believes that Bill C-293 raises concerns of unnecessary regulation and requires further scrutiny and clarification before it is enacted.

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Canada's agricultural sector currently implements rigorous biosecurity standards to prevent the spread of zoonotic diseases – diseases that can be spread between animals and humans – and demonstrates responsible stewardship. Within animal agriculture there are already established protocols that exemplify the proactive measures in place to manage health risks, such as the Canadian On-Farm Beef Cattle Biosecurity Standard. These biosecurity measures are in place to protect Canada's animal agriculture from external zoonotic threats and protect Canada's food security. The language of Bill



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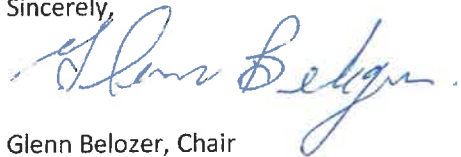
Animal agriculture supports rural economies and food security in Canada. Alberta's livestock industry contributed approximately \$10 Billion to the economy in 2023; federally, the livestock industry contributed over \$31 billion. This represents the livelihood of a significant number of farm families, a significant contribution to local food supply and an important economic contributor to our rural and remote communities. Efforts to phase out activities without concrete evidence of their risks could harm sectors like pork, poultry, and beef production, which employ thousands and feed millions.

In times of pandemic crisis, food security for Canada is essential. Legislation which could put food security at risk needs to be carefully written and considered to ensure that all food products are safe for Canadians. As it currently stands, the language of Bill C-293 is extremely vague and lacks the details necessary to understand the full implications to both our agricultural community as well as the consumers of Canada's robust and secure food system.

The Leduc County Agricultural Service Board would ask that as the Deputy Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, you urge your fellow senators to consider the consequences on the source and stability of Canada's food system that Bill C-293 could create if passed as it currently stands.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter. We trust that you will consider these concerns as you deliberate on the contents of Bill C-293.

Sincerely,



Glenn Belozar, Chair
Leduc County Agricultural Service Board

Cc: Hon. Danielle Smith, Premier of the Province of Alberta
Hon. R.J. Sigurdson, Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation for Alberta
Hon. Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food for Canada
Alberta Agricultural Service Boards
Agricultural Service Board Provincial Committee



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Agricultural Services

Nov. 22, 2024

The Honourable Karen Sorensen, Senator of Canada
Karen.Sorensen@sen.parl.gc.ca
Senate of Canada
Ottawa, AB
K1A 0A4

Attention: The Honourable Karen Sorensen

Re: Bill C-293, An Act Respecting Pandemic Prevention and Preparedness

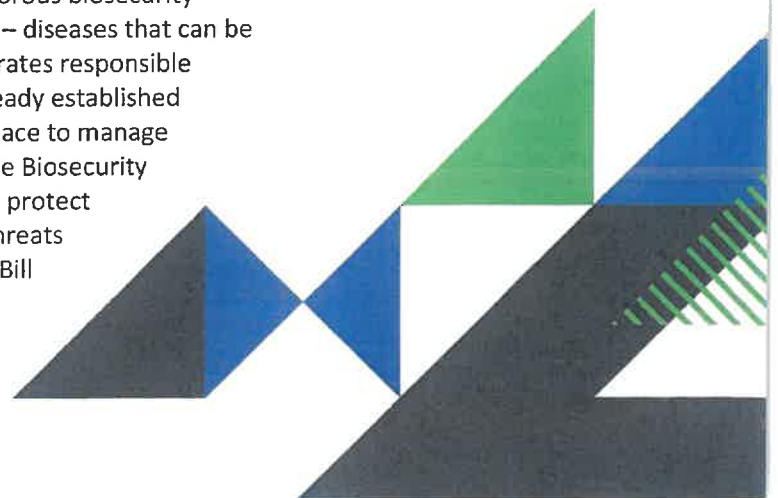
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In times of pandemic crisis, food security for Canada is essential. Legislation which could put food security at risk needs to be carefully written and considered to ensure that all food products are safe for Canadians. As it currently stands, the language of Bill C-293 is extremely vague and lacks the details necessary to understand the full implications to both our agricultural community as well as the consumers of Canada's robust and secure food system.

The Leduc County Agricultural Service Board would ask that as the Deputy Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, you urge your fellow senators to consider the consequences on the source and stability of Canada's food system that Bill C-293 could create if passed as it currently stands.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter. We trust that you will consider these concerns as you deliberate on the contents of Bill C-293.

Sincerely,



Glenn Belozar, Chair
Leduc County Agricultural Service Board

Cc: Hon. Danielle Smith, Premier of the Province of Alberta
Hon. R.J. Sigurdson, Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation for Alberta
Hon. Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food for Canada
Alberta Agricultural Service Boards
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Agricultural Services

Nov. 22, 2024

The Honourable Scott Tannas, Senator of Canada
scott.tannas@sen.parl.gc.ca
Senate of Canada
Ottawa, AB
K1A 0A4

Attention: The Honourable Scott Tannas

Re: Bill C-293, An Act Respecting Pandemic Prevention and Preparedness

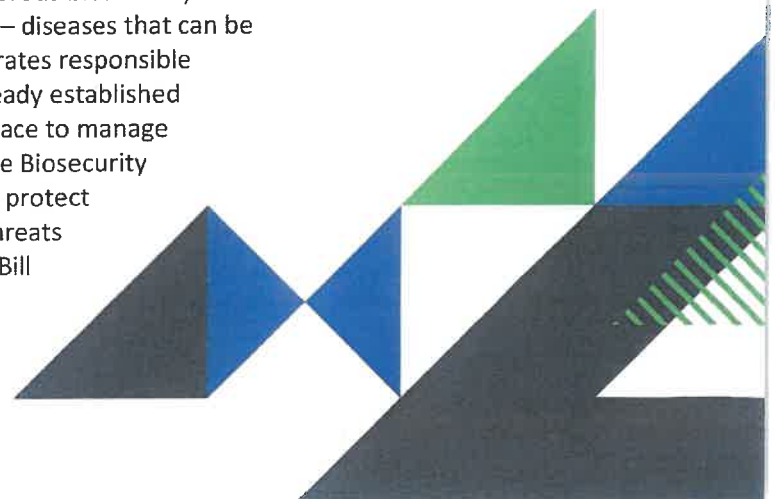
Dear Honourable Paula Simons,

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In times of pandemic crisis, food security for Canada is essential. Legislation which could put food security at risk needs to be carefully written and considered to ensure that all food products are safe for Canadians. As it currently stands, the language of Bill C-293 is extremely vague and lacks the details necessary to understand the full implications to both our agricultural community as well as the consumers of Canada's robust and secure food system.

The Leduc County Agricultural Service Board would ask that as the Deputy Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, you urge your fellow senators to consider the consequences on the source and stability of Canada's food system that Bill C-293 could create if passed as it currently stands.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter. We trust that you will consider these concerns as you deliberate on the contents of Bill C-293.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Glenn Belozer', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Glenn Belozer, Chair
Leduc County Agricultural Service Board

Cc: Hon. Danielle Smith, Premier of the Province of Alberta
Hon. R.J. Sigurdson, Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation for Alberta
Hon. Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food for Canada
Alberta Agricultural Service Boards
Agricultural Service Board Provincial Committee



December 13th, 2024

The Honourable Senators of Canada
The Senate of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A4

Dear Honourable Senators of Canada,

Re: Flagstaff County concerns regarding Bill C-293 An Act Respecting Pandemic Prevention and Preparedness

On behalf of the Flagstaff County Agricultural Service Board, we would like to express our strong opposition to Bill C-293 in its current state. While we understand and support the need for biosecurity and pandemic preparedness, we are deeply concerned about the potential negative impacts this legislation will have on our region's agricultural industry, particularly animal agriculture.

In Alberta, livestock production accounts for approximately 40% of farm cash receipts, contributing over \$10 billion to the economy in 2023. This represents the livelihood of many farm families, a crucial part of the local food supply, and a significant economic driver for our rural communities.

One of our primary concerns with Bill C-293 is section L, which demonstrates the lack of consultation with stakeholders in the agricultural industry. Clause 2, Section L (ii) of Bill C-293 addresses the regulation of commercial activities, specifically mentioning industrial animal agriculture. Subsections (iii) and (iv) raise concerns with promoting the production of alternative proteins and phasing out commercial activities that involve high-risk species. These statements threaten the livestock sector for all Canadian producers and therefore more clarification is needed.

Our livestock producers have consistently demonstrated their commitment to sustainable practices by adapting to evolving standards and abiding by the current regulatory oversight to ensure transparency and traceability. The existing regulatory framework needs to be recognized and considered within the scope of the proposed Bill. Unfortunately, Bill C-293 appears to have been developed without adequate input from farmers, ranchers, and agricultural organizations.

FLAGSTAFF COUNTY PO Box 358, Sedgewick, Alberta T0B 4C0

Phone: 780-384-4100

Fax: 780-384-3635 Email address: county@flagstaff.ab.ca

The Flagstaff County Agricultural Service Board would ask that the Honourable Senators of Canada consider the consequences Section L imposes to animal agriculture, as it is currently stated within Bill C-293.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Shield', written in a cursive style.

Howard Shield
Agricultural Service Board Chairmen
Deputy Reeve – Division 7

Cc: Hon. Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food for Canada
Hon. R.J. Sigurdson, Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation for Alberta
Hon. Mark Holland, Minister of Health for Canada
Hon. Adriana LaGrange, Minister of Health for Alberta
Alberta Agricultural Service Boards
Agricultural Service Board Provincial Committee



Municipal District of **GREENVIEW**

December 16, 2024

The Honourable Senators of Canada
Senate of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A4

Subject: Letter of Concern Regarding Bill C-293

Dear Honourable Senators,

While Bill C-293 aims to provide legislation related to pandemic prevention and preparedness, should it pass without amendment to Section 4(2)(l), it will negatively impact Canadian Agricultural Producers. While the overarching pandemic prevention and preparedness goal is laudable, the current language within the bill shows the author to be poorly informed regarding agricultural production in general, the biosecurity measures currently required by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) of Canadian livestock producers, as well as revealing a biased assumption of what sustainable protein production would entail.

In approaching the sustainability of food production, consideration must be given to the ecosystems of the world, as well as the consequences of changing these ecosystems to annual cropping acres. Conversion of these acres to annual crop production will necessitate increased use of synthesized fertilizer, increased risk of soil erosion and decrease the ability of these parcels to sequester carbon. These ecosystems require grazing by large herbivores for plant propagation to continue acting as a carbon sink rather than an emission source. This specific ecological service is currently provided by livestock. If a “One Health” perspective is the goal, please consider the sustainability of these ecosystems that are currently grazed by livestock and managed by ranchers. The conversion of these acres would be required to support plant-based protein being the primary protein source for the world’s population.

In the last release of the Global Food Security Index in 2022, Canada was ranked first in the world for the quality and safety of our food and eighth of 113 countries overall when all metrics are considered. While Canada would benefit from a national policy on pest infestation as well as disease mitigation and risk management coordination, this Bill is not the legislation to attain those goals. For a comprehensive strategy, Canada would do well to consult and

emulate the Province of Alberta which mandated surveillance for agriculturally significant pest and disease at the local government level in 1943 with the passage of the Agricultural Service Board Act.

Early detection and rapid response with a cooperative local-provincial model would do well with replication across the country and incorporation into CFIA's mandate. This has safeguarded market access for Alberta producers- one such highlight being the discovery of genetically modified wheat in Alberta by a local agricultural service department. This rapid detection from dedicated local staff averted a potential trade barrier should it have been detected later, in an exported seed lot.

We write today to state clearly our significant concerns with aspects of Bill C-293, particularly in its impact on the Canadian animal agriculture sector. We ask that the Senate amend this bill or reject it outright. The approach of this bill is one of the best examples we have seen to date of why there needs to be more practical education regarding agriculture in all Canadian classrooms.

Respectfully,



Dave Gibbard,
Chair of the MD of Greenview Agricultural Service Board

cc: The Honourable Senators of Canada (individually emailed)
Honourable Premier Danielle Smith, Premier of Alberta
Honourable RJ Sigurdson, Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation
Honourable Todd Loewen, Minister of Forestry and Parks
Mr. Ron Weibe, Member of the Legislative Assembly, Grande Prairie - Wapiti
Mr. Chris Warkentin, Member of Parliament, Grande Prairie - Mackenzie
Mr. Gerald Soroka, Member of Parliament, Yellowhead
Mr. Arnold Viersen, Member of Parliament, Peace - Westlock
Agricultural Service Boards of Alberta
Provincial Agricultural Service Board Committee

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www.athabascacounty.com



3602 - 48 Avenue
ATHABASCA, ALBERTA
T9S 1M8

December 18, 2024

The Honorable Senators of Canada
The Senate of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A4
Email: sencom@sen.parl.gc.ca

Dear Honorable Senators:

RE: Bill C-293, Pandemic Prevention and Preparedness

On behalf of the Athabasca County Agricultural Service Board, I am writing you to express our concerns and opposition to Bill C-293 *An Act Respecting Pandemic Prevention and Preparedness* which is currently before the senate.

The COVID-19 pandemic was a challenging issue that Canadians and our governments had to endure and overcome. We can agree on the need for governments to plan more effectively for future pandemics but Athabasca County's Agricultural Service Board believes that Bill C-293 raises concerns of excessive regulation and requires further assessment and clarification before enacted.

Section 3(2)(l) of the Bill states regulation over 'commercial activities that can contribute to pandemic risk, including animal agriculture', and the promotion of 'commercial activities that can reduce pandemic risk, including the production of alternative proteins'. These statements are extremely vague and as such can have broad interpretations that can be detrimental to the agriculture industry. Broad legislation without specific definitions risks undue government intervention based on potentially uninformed interpretation. These statements should not be in legislation regarding pandemic preparedness.

Canada's agricultural sector currently has rigorous biosecurity standards to prevent the spread of zoonotic diseases and demonstrates responsible stewardship practices. There are established protocols within animal agriculture with extremely proactive measures in place to manage health risks, such as the Canadian On-Farm Beef Cattle Biosecurity Standard. These biosecurity measures are in place to protect Canada's animal agriculture from external threats and protect our food security. The language of the Bill implies that Canada's animal agriculture is a threat to Canadians and is unable to manage health risks.

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Animal agriculture supports rural economies and food security in Canada. The livestock industry in Alberta contributed roughly \$10 billion to the economy in 2023; and the Canadian livestock industry contributed over \$31 billion. This represents the livelihood of many farm families and a significant contribution to Canadian food supply as well as an economic contributor to remote and rural economies. Phasing out animal agriculture without factual evidence of their risks would harm all sectors of animal production which employ thousands of Canadians and feed the Country.

Food supply security in times of pandemic crisis is essential. Legislation which would put food security at risk should be carefully considered to ensure Canadian interests are protected. The vague language of Bill C-293 is a direct threat to the agricultural community and Canadians access to protein that comes from a robust and secure system.

The Athabasca County Agricultural Service Board asks that Senate consider the consequences on the source and stability of Canada's food system that bill C-293 could create if passed as it currently stands.

Thank you for your attention on this important matter. We trust you will consider these concerns as you deliberate on the contents of bill C-293.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelly Chamzuk". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Kelly Chamzuk, Chair
Athabasca County Agricultural Service Board

c: Hon. Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food for Canada
Hon. R.J. Sigurdson, Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation for Alberta
Hon. Mark Holland, Minister of Health for Canada
Hon. Adriana LaGrange, Minister of Health for Alberta
Member of Parliament, Shannon Stubbs, Lakeland, Alberta
Rural Municipalities of Alberta
Agricultural Service Board Provincial Committee



December 10, 2024

The Honourable Senators of Canada
Senate of Canada
Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0A4

RE: Bill C-293 An Act Respecting Pandemic Prevention and Preparedness

Dear Honourable Senators,

The County of Vermilion River Council and Agricultural Service Board would like to express our concerns with Bill C-293 An Act Respecting Pandemic Prevention and Preparedness. We are very concerned with the implications of passing this bill currently before the Senate. While we acknowledge the importance of this Bill and fully support the need for governments to plan more effectively to manage risk, we believe that certain aspects of the Bill require further scrutiny and clarification.

This Bill could severely impact Canada's agricultural sector, especially the animal production industry. Section 3(2)(l), which aims to regulate industrial animal agriculture and phase out activities considered high-risk, lacks clear definitions and guidelines, potentially harming Canadian agriculture, rural communities, and national food security.

Canada's agricultural sector currently uses rigorous biosecurity standards to prevent disease transmission and demonstrates responsible stewardship. Established protocols, including the Canadian On-Farm Beef Cattle Biosecurity Standard and specialized plans for hog and poultry farms exemplify the proactive measures already in place to manage health risks. The North American Preparedness for Animal and Human Pandemics Initiative (NAPAHPI) has also been updated since COVID-19 to enhance cooperation between sectors in pandemic scenarios, reducing the need for additional regulations under Bill C-293. Bill C-293 fails to acknowledge the Canadian livestock sector's responsible antimicrobial use and robust biosecurity programs, implying a lack of trust in an industry that has long prioritized public health.

Animal agriculture supports rural economies and food security in Canada. About 40% of Alberta's farm cash receipts are from livestock production, contributing over \$10 billion in 2023. This represents the livelihood of a significant number of farm families, a significant contribution to local food supply and an important economic contribution to rural and remote communities. Efforts to phase out these activities without concrete evidence of their risks would harm sectors like beef, pork and poultry production, which employ thousands of people and feed millions.

We urge the Senate to carefully consider the implications of Section 3(2)(l) of Bill C-293 and ensure that any policies designed to mitigate future pandemic risks are balanced, evidence-based, and focused on the core issue of public health rather than introducing measures that could unintentionally disrupt Canada's food system. While MPs may assert that Bill C-293 is not meant to eliminate meat production, the Bill's current language provides no such assurances. Without clear limitations and definitions, future interpretations may impose restrictions on significant areas of agriculture, without basis in evidence-driven risk assessments.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We trust that you will consider these concerns as you deliberate on Bill C-293.

Sincerely,



Marty Baker

Reeve, County of Vermilion River

Cc: Hon. Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Hon. R.J. Sigurdson, Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation for Alberta
Mr. John Barlow, Shadow Minister for Agriculture and Agri-Food
Hon. Shannon Stubbs, Member of Parliament for Lakeland
MLA Garth Rowsell Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright
Rural Municipalities of Alberta Member Municipalities
Alberta Agricultural Service Boards
Alberta Agricultural Service Board Provincial Committee



FOOTHILLS COUNTY

309 Macleod Trail, Box 5605
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www.FoothillsCountyAB.ca

December 19, 2024

The Honourable Senators of Canada
Senate of Canada
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A4

RE: Foothills County Letter of Concern Regarding Bill C-293

Dear Honourable Senators,

I write to you today on behalf of the Foothills County Council. Foothills County is a vibrant rural municipality in southern Alberta with a strong economy of agriculture and food production. We are home to wide-open ranges used for grazing cattle, intensive livestock operations and food processing facilities both large and small. We are very concerned about the implications of passing Bill C-293, *An Act respecting pandemic prevention and preparedness* currently before the Senate.

Approximately 40% of Alberta's farm cash receipts are from livestock production, contributing over 10 billion dollars to Alberta's GDP in 2023. This represents the livelihood of a significant number of farm families, a large contribution to local and exported food supply and important provider to our rural and remote communities.

With federal, provincial, and municipal oversight, Canada is currently home to a very robust and all-inclusive food regulatory system. The robust system is respected worldwide and is tightly monitored and controlled to protect not only Canadians, but also consumers through our exports. Bill C-293 would suggest otherwise.

Bill C-293 allows the government to shut down entire sectors of the economy and food production and is an attack on the freedom of choice that Canadians hold dear. This Bill also allows the government to choose winners and losers in the food production industry, taking away Canadian's ability to choose their preferred food source.



FOOTHILLS COUNTY

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www.FoothillsCountyAB.ca

Alberta farmers, ranchers, food producers and regulators work hard to regulate and protect our valuable livestock industry, and we ask you to join us. Please consider the consequences that passing Bill C-293 will have on the source and stability of our local food system, and the livelihood of our livestock producers and the communities they support.

Bill C-293 is an attack on Canada's highly regulated agri-food sector, and we urge you to say **NO TO BILL C-293!**

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

Delilah Miller
Reeve, Foothills County

Rob Siewert
Councillor, Foothills County

Cc: The Honourable Senators of Canada (individually via email)
The Honourable John Barlow, MP Foothills (via email)
The Honourable Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (via email)
The Honourable Mark Holland, Minister of Health Canada (via email)
The Honourable Danielle Smith, Premier of the Province of Alberta (via email)
The Honourable R.J Sigurdson, Alberta Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation (via email)
Alberta Agricultural Service Boards (via email)
Agricultural Service Board Provincial Committee (via email)



Office of the Reeve

December 19, 2024

The Honourable Senators of Canada
Senate of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A4

RE: Concerns Regarding Bill C-293 – Pandemic Prevention and Preparedness

Dear Honourable Senators,

We are writing to express our strong concerns about Bill C-293, which is intended to focus on readiness and response strategies for potential pandemics. While we appreciate the importance of preparing for health crises, we are troubled by certain elements of this proposed legislation and the unintended consequences they may bring to Canadian agriculture.

Our chief concern involves the Bill's references to managing risks within animal agriculture and the possibility of restricting or gradually discontinuing activities deemed "high-risk." Such language, as it stands, lacks the precision needed to prevent misinterpretation. We are concerned that an overly broad approach could wrongfully cast a shadow over well-established livestock operations that already employ stringent standards to protect both animal and public health. Producers across the country have long adhered to recognized, science-based safeguards that ensure the integrity of our food system.

We must also emphasize that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency already holds considerable authority to address outbreaks and implement biosecurity measures. Overlapping or poorly defined new rules could create confusion, disrupt local economies, and undermine the trust that agricultural communities have worked hard to build. The economic vitality of our rural areas depends on policy choices that acknowledge the effectiveness of existing frameworks and uphold evidence-driven practices, rather than introducing unnecessary layers of control.

In addition, we are concerned that the Bill's current wording may encroach on areas traditionally managed by provincial and municipal authorities. Agriculture and related industries form a cornerstone of our national identity and prosperity. Policy directions should be forged collaboratively, with meaningful consultation and clear definitions that reflect the realities of those who steward our lands and feed our citizens.

While exploring alternative protein sources may have merit in certain contexts, it should not come at the expense of Canada's longstanding agricultural backbone. We urge the Senate and other decision-makers to ensure that any revisions to Bill C-293 are grounded in transparent criteria, well-substantiated evidence, and respect for jurisdictional boundaries.

By refining this legislation to prevent broad misinterpretations and potential harm to our essential agricultural sectors, you will help safeguard the stability, resilience, and mutual confidence that underpin our food supply. We ask that you





carefully reconsider the proposed measures and engage substantively with industry stakeholders, provinces, and local governments before moving forward.

Thank you for taking our perspective into account. Wheatland County's Reeve and Council trust that we can work together to develop policies that reinforce our collective well-being without placing undue burdens on the communities that ensure our nation's nourishment and economic strength.

Sincerely,

Amber Link – Reeve
Wheatland County

- cc. Wheatland County Council
Hon. Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food for Canada
Hon. R.J. Sigurdson, Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation for Alberta
Mr. John Barlow, Shadow Minister for Agriculture and Agri-Food
Martin Shields, MP, Bow River
Chantelle de Jonge, MLA, Chestermere-Strathmore
Angela Pitt, MLA, Airdrie-East
Joseph Schow, MLA, Cardston-Siksika
Nathan Cooper, MLA, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills
Rural Municipalities of Alberta
Agricultural Service Board Provincial Committee
Alberta Agricultural Service Boards





December 24, 2024

[delivered by email]

lawrence.macaulay@parl.gc.ca

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay,
Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food for Canada
House of Commons,
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Re: Opposition of Bill C-293 (an Act Respecting Pandemic Prevention and Preparedness)

Dear Minister MacAulay,

Lamont County Agricultural Service Board (ASB) is writing to express strong opposition and significant concerns regarding Bill C-293. This is an important Bill and there is a need for government to plan for and manage health and pandemic risks; however, there are certain aspects of this Bill that need further attention, clarification and consideration for amendments.

In its current state, Bill C-293 gives Ottawa the authority to shut down operations that it considers 'high risk', and the potential for these sudden closures of key facilities could destabilize supply chains and affect the livelihoods of workers in the agricultural and agri-food sectors.

For example, Section L of the Bill, recommends "derisking" animal agriculture and promoting alternative proteins. This provision appears to be an overreach, as does not clearly identify actions related to pandemic preparedness towards farmers and producers—this appears to target the agriculture and agri-food industry unfairly and can have a huge impact on individual businesses, food production and animal care, and further economic implications. Animal agriculture is an essential component of our food system, and any policy changes affecting it must be based on clear, evidence-driven risk assessments.

There are significant language concerns in this Bill because it is both vague and harsh, lacking the necessary details to understand its full implications for both farmers and consumers. Terminology related to animal agriculture, such as "regulate" and "phase-out" are utilized, and appears to imply that animals are a significant contributor to the spread of disease. Lamont County unequivocally reject this concern, as it is not supported by evidence.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) already has the power to quarantine, restrict movement of livestock, implement disease control measures, and euthanize livestock during disease outbreaks and biosecurity threats. This has been used by CFIA in the past and sometimes has seen significant impact and reduction on the cattle market, impacting both financial and mental-health-related hardships (including how the Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy threat was managed in recent years).

Agriculture and the agri-foods industry are vital to Alberta in job creation, rural development and innovation, and excessive intervention could undermine Alberta's economic stability.

Page 1 of 2



Fortunately, there has been a revival in the market through the trust of the producers and best practices utilized throughout Western Canada. But overregulation has seen significant impacts on the cervid industry as well as across animal production.

The agriculture sector is already well-regulated in managing disease and biosecurity threats. More regulation and overstep in respect to livestock and livestock welfare can be significantly impacting and we do not see legislation overseen by the Minister of Health as being beneficial. It is important to ensure concerns and regulation to ensure animal welfare and public safety, and we request further clarification into Bill C-293 before it is passed into law.

Part of this Bill also includes alternative proteins, and this does have merit in certain contexts; though, it should not come at the expense of others within the agricultural sector.

We urge Members and the Senate to carefully consider the implications of Section L and that any policies aimed at mitigating future pandemic risks are balanced, evidence-based, and focused on the core issue of public health rather than introducing measures that could unintentionally disrupt our food system.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We trust that you will consider these concerns as you deliberate and finalize the contents of Bill C-293.

Sincerely,



Neil Woitas
ASB Chair, Lamont County

CC... Lamont County Council

Honourable Mark Holland, Minister of Health
The Honourable Senators of Canada
Ms. Shannon Stubbs, Member of Parliament for Lakeland, Alberta
Mr. John Barlow, Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Agri-Food and Food Security
Honourable RJ Sigurdson, Alberta Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation
Ms. Jackie Armstrong-Homeniuk, Alberta MLA Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville
Rural Municipalities of Alberta
Alberta Agricultural Service Boards





January 07, 2025

The Honourable Senators of Canada
Senate of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A4

RE: Bill C-293, An Act respecting pandemic prevention and preparedness

Dear Honourable Senators,

The Starland Agricultural Service Board would like to express our strong opposition to Bill C-293, An Act respecting pandemic prevention and preparedness, which is now before the Senate. To mirror the views put forth by so many other concerned parties in Alberta and throughout the country, we believe the current wording in this bill is dangerously ambiguous and anti-agriculture. Without clear wording and directives, this bill could severely impact Canada's agriculture industry and therefore are significant percentage of our county residents. Although the bill admirably aims to create a more effective way to manage the risks associated with pandemics, the wording and themes regarding agriculture referenced in the text, specifically in section 3(2)(l), is concerning.

For example, regulating "commercial activities that can contribute to pandemic risk, including industrial animal agriculture" has no clear definitions of "industrial animal agriculture" and therefore could be used to oversee production of livestock and animal by-products throughout the entire supply chain. This has the possibility of disrupting the supply of these products to all Canadians and affecting family farms and local operations.

Further referencing section 3(2)(l), although not malicious at face-value, suggesting promoting "the production of alternative proteins" seems misguided in terms of this bill and what it aims to enact, and clearly intrudes into personal choices that should be left to Canadian citizens. Where the other points under section 3(2)(l) are vague and do not allude to the explicit activities it would regulate, citing an example as specific as alternate proteins is out of place in relation to the rest of this bill.

Finally, suggesting to "phase out commercial activities that disproportionately contribute to pandemic risk, including activities that involve high-risk species" is directly an attack on the Canadian agriculture industry and their already rigorous health and biosecurity standards and protocols.

We strongly urge the Senate consider the consequences of passing this bill with the current wording, and to think of the implications that this bill in its current state could have



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www.starlandcounty.com

on Canadian agricultural producers. We thank you for your attention regarding this issue and look forward to seeing discussions with involved stakeholders regarding changes to this bill going forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Sargent". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "R" and "S".

Robert Sargent, Agricultural Service Board Chair
Starland County

CC:

The Honourable Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
The Honourable R.J. Sigurdson, Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation for Alberta
The Honourable Mark Holland, Minister of Health for Canada
The Honourable Adriana LaGrange, Minister of Health for Alberta
The Honourable Danielle Smith, Premier of the Province of Alberta
The Honourable Nate Horner, Member of the Legislative Assembly for Drumheller-Stettler
The Honourable Damien Kurek, Member of Parliament for Battle River- Crowfoot
Rural Municipalities of Alberta Member Municipalities
Alberta Agricultural Service Boards
Alberta Agricultural Service Board Provincial Committee



January 20, 2025

The Honourable Senators of Canada
The Senate of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A4

Dear Honourable Senators:

On behalf of the Lac La Biche County Agricultural Service Board and our broader community, we are writing to express our significant concerns regarding Bill C-293, particularly its potential impact on Canadian agricultural producers, including livestock farmers. Lac La Biche County, located in Alberta, is home to a robust agricultural sector that plays a vital role in both feeding Canadians and contributing to the global food supply. We believe that, while the bill's goal of improving pandemic prevention and preparedness is admirable, its current language could unintentionally harm our agricultural industry.

While the bill addresses important public health issues, we are concerned with these sections:

- *(l) after consultation with the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, the Minister of Industry and provincial governments, provide for measures to*
 - *(i) reduce the risks posed by antimicrobial resistance,*
 - *(ii) regulate commercial activities that can contribute to pandemic risk, including industrial animal agriculture,*
 - *(iii) promote commercial activities that can help reduce pandemic risk, including the production of alternative proteins, and*
 - *(iv) phase out commercial activities that disproportionately contribute to pandemic risk, including activities that involve high-risk species;*
- *(m) include the following information, to be provided by the Minister of the Environment:*
 - *(i) after consultation with relevant provincial ministers, a summary of changes in land use in Canada, including in relation to disturbed habitats, that could contribute to pandemic risk, such as deforestation, encroachment on wildlife habitats and urbanization and that were made, in the case of the first plan, since the last report on changes in land use published under the Federal Sustainable Development Act or, in the case of the updated plans, during the reporting period for the updated plan,*

.../2

- *(ii) a summary of the measures the Minister of the Environment intends to take to reduce the risk that the commercial wildlife trade in Canada and abroad will lead to a pandemic, including measures to regulate or phase out live animal markets, and*
- *(iii) a summary of the measures the Minister of the Environment intends to take to protect global biodiversity and to halt and reverse global deforestation;*

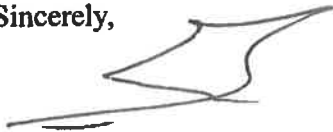
These sections overlook key elements of agricultural production, including the biosecurity protocols already in place through the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), and what is meant specifically by phasing out live animal markets, endorsing alternative proteins and deforestation.

If left unaddressed, these gaps could have serious consequences for the agricultural sector, particularly livestock producers. To put it plainly, producers are concerned that this bill grants the Federal Government the authority to prevent them from owning or raising livestock, selling livestock at auctions, or clearing trees for grazing and crop production. It seems to prioritize lab-based production over traditional agriculture, which threatens the livelihoods of Canada's hardworking farmers.

Considering these concerns, Lac La Biche Agricultural Community strongly urges the Senate to reconsider Bill C-293 in its current form. We are particularly concerned about its potential negative impact on livestock producers and the broader agricultural community.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We trust the Senate will approach this bill with a balanced and informed perspective, ensuring that pandemic preparedness and agricultural sustainability are effectively addressed.

Sincerely,



Sterling Johnson
Chairman, Lac La Biche County Agricultural Service Board

cc: The Honourable Danielle Smith, Premier of the Province of Alberta
The Honourable R. J. Sigurdson, Alberta Minister of Agricultural and Irrigation
The Honourable Brian Jean, MLA Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche, Alberta Minister of Energy and Minerals
The Honourable Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
The Honourable Mark Holland, Minister of Health Canada
Alberta Agricultural Service Boards
Agricultural Service Board Provincial Committee
Lac La Biche County Council



December 13th, 2024

Honourable Danielle Smith
Premier of Alberta
307 Alberta Legislature Building
10800 97 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2B6

Honourable Rj Sigurdson
Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation
131 Alberta Legislature Building
10800 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

Dear Premier Danielle Smith and Minister Rj Sigurdson,

Re: Flagstaff County Letter of Support for AgKnow

On behalf of the Flagstaff County Agricultural Service Board, we wholeheartedly express our unwavering support for the AgKnow program, joining Wheatland County, Saddle Hills County, the County of Vermilion River, and the County of Stettler in urging the province to ensure the program's longevity and success. We respectfully ask that the province provide stable, dedicated funding to AgKnow by integrating its grant into the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (SCAP) funding streams.

Mental health challenges are a growing global concern, and nowhere is this more evident than in our rural communities. Farmers, ranchers, and those in the agricultural sector face a unique and often overwhelming set of challenges, from unpredictable weather and market conditions to the physical and emotional toll of their work. These pressures can take a heavy toll, not only on individuals but also on families, communities, and the broader agricultural industry that sustains our province.

FLAGSTAFF COUNTY PO Box 358, Sedgewick, Alberta T0B 4C0

Phone: 780-384-4100

Fax: 780-384-3635 Email address: county@flagstaff.ab.ca

AgKnow has become a lifeline for many rural Albertans, offering mental health support and services that are uniquely tailored to the realities of life in agriculture. The program's providers come from rural agricultural backgrounds, offering an understanding and empathy that can only come from lived experience. They stand shoulder to shoulder with farmers and ranchers, helping to foster resilience and hope in the face of adversity.

Stable funding for AgKnow is not just an investment in a program; it is an investment in the people who feed and sustain our province. It is a commitment to ensuring that no farmer or rancher feels alone in their struggles, and it is a recognition of the vital role mental health plays in the overall health and sustainability of Alberta's agricultural sector.

We strongly urge the province to prioritize the AgKnow program by securing its grant under the SCAP funding streams. By doing so, we can ensure that rural Albertans have access to the support they need, when they need it most.

Sincerely,



Howard Shield
Agricultural Service Board Chairmen
Deputy Reeve – Division 7

Cc: Dan Williams, Minister of Mental Health and Addiction
Linda Hunt, AgKnow Program Director
Alberta Agricultural Service Boards
Agricultural Service Board Provincial Committee

Municipal Office
PO Box 60, 1 Woodlands Lane
Whitecourt, AB T7S 1N3
Telephone: 780-778-8400
woodlands.ab.ca



Regional Municipal Office
PO Box 33
Fort Assiniboine, AB T0G 1A0
Telephone: 780-584-3866

December 3, 2024

Honourable Minister of Mental Health and Addictions
Dan Williams
9820-107 Street 6th Floor
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 1E7

Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation
RJ Sigurdson
131 Legislature Building
10800-97 Avenue NW Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2B6

Dear Honorable Ministers:

RE: Letter of Support for AgKnow - The Alberta Farm Mental Health Network

On behalf of the Agriculture Services Board of Woodlands County, I am writing to express strong and unwavering support for the AgKnow Program and to advocate for its continued funding by the Province of Alberta.

AgKnow has become a lifeline for many rural Albertans, offering mental health support and services that are uniquely tailored to the realities of life in agriculture. AgKnow plays a vital role in the Farm Mental Health Network, offering essential support to farmers and ranchers who face significant mental health challenges. AgKnow not only provides crucial counseling services but also helps to reduce the stigma associated with mental health in rural communities. The program's providers come from rural agricultural backgrounds, offering an understanding and empathy that can only come from lived experience.

Mental health challenges are a growing global concern, and nowhere is this more evident than in our rural communities. Farmers and ranchers often deal with isolation, financial uncertainty, and the unpredictable nature of their livelihoods, contributing to heightened stress levels and, tragically, a higher incidence of mental health issues and suicide rates. These pressures can take a heavy toll, not only on individuals but also on families, communities, and the broader agricultural industry that sustains our province.

The need for mental health support in our agricultural sector cannot be overstated. Stable funding for AgKnow is not just an investment in a program; it is an investment in the people who feed and sustain our province. It is a commitment to ensuring that no farmer or rancher feels alone in their struggles, and it is a recognition of the vital role mental health plays in the overall health and sustainability of Alberta's agricultural sector.

Supporting AgKnow is not just an investment in mental health but also in the resilience and well-being of our agricultural communities. By ensuring adequate and stable funding, the Province can help AgKnow continue its crucial work of supporting our farmers and ranchers.

Thank you for considering this request. We are confident that with continued support, AgKnow will be able to expand its impact and continue providing essential services to those who need it most.

Sincerely


Peter Kuelken
Agriculture Service Board Chair, Woodlands County

c.c.
AgKnow
Agricultural Service Board Provincial Committee
Municipal Agricultural Service Boards



PO Box 34, 5240-52 Ave
Berwyn, AB T0H 0E0
Phone: (780) 338-3845
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January 8, 2025

Honourable RJ Sigurdson
Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation,
131 Alberta Legislature Building
10800 97 Ave,
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

Honourable Dan Williams
Minister of Mental Health and Addictions
9820 107 Street 6th Floor
Edmonton AB T5K 1E7

Dear Minister Sigurdson and Minister Williams,

RE: Municipal District of Peace No. 135 - Letter of Support for AgKnow, Long-term Stable Funding

I am writing on behalf of the Municipal District of Peace No. 135 Agricultural Service Board to express our unwavering support for AgKnow, the Alberta Farm Mental Health Network. We strongly advocate for consistent and continued long-term funding by the Province of Alberta.

Highlighted at the 2019 Provincial Agricultural Service Board Conference through Resolution E-19: Access to Agriculture-Specific Mental Health Resources, and further championed by our own Resolution E2-23: Stable Funding for Farm Mental Health in 2023, the importance of AgKnow cannot be overstated. Despite these endorsements, securing stable funding for this program remains an ongoing challenge.

AgKnow has emerged as a lifeline for many rural Albertans, providing mental health resources, support networks, and educational programs uniquely tailored to the realities of agricultural life. This initiative plays a vital role in the Farm Mental Health Network, offering essential support to farmers and ranchers who face significant mental health challenges. Beyond providing crucial counselling services, AgKnow actively helps reduce the stigma associated with mental health in rural communities. The program's providers, with their rural agricultural backgrounds, offer an understanding and empathy that only lived experience can provide. Even in its infancy, the Alberta Farm Mental Health Program has demonstrated success and promises to continue supporting much-needed mental health services.



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Email: admin@mdpeace.com

Supporting AgKnow is not just an investment in mental health but also in the resilience and well-being of our agricultural communities. By ensuring adequate and stable funding, the Province can help AgKnow continue its crucial work of supporting farmers and ranchers.

Sincerely,
Sandra Eastman

ASB Chair, MD of Peace No. 135

cc: AgKnow
Agricultural Service Board Provincial Committee
Municipal Agricultural Services Boards

INSECT SURVEY RESULTS – 2024 – SMOKY LAKE

2024 Summary

Well Kierstin, I know you will rock your time in the Fieldman roll for the County. Just wanted to say that your enthusiasm for the grasshopper survey, and all the work you do for my program is so wonderful. Keep it up for all the work you do for the insect monitoring program, especially the grasshopper survey. I realize the time commitment on your part and it is appreciated.

There were three bertha armyworm sites in Smoky Lake in 2024, none even went over 25 moths. Bertha was not a concern in 2024. This monitoring system is very good at predicting when/if farmers need to be out scouting for bertha in their crops in the current growing season, but also, will indicate when the population is starting to build for a possible outbreak in the following growing season.

Pea leaf weevil has become established and is doing very well in the Edmonton north region, but in 2024, survey technicians didn't find much feeding damage. They might have missed the fields with high feeding damage, due to the randomness of the survey, but it seems the weevil struggled to survive the winter of 23/24.

The after harvest wheat midge survey found no midge in the samples. We know that the midge can spend years in the soil waiting for idea conditions to complete their lifecycle. So should we get rain in May and June, farmers will want to be ready to scout their fields for midge while wheat is from boot crack to the end of anthesis.

No cabbage seedpod weevil turned up in the survey.

BERTHA ARMYWORM (BAW)

Bertha armyworm is very cyclical. In order to catch outbreaks and help producers minimize losses it is necessary to maintain a good monitoring system using pheromone traps. The number of moths caught in the traps informs us of the risk of damaging populations with a 3 to 5 week lead time. These numbers are generated from paired pheromone traps in single fields.

Bertha armyworm populations are normally kept in check by such factors as weather and natural enemies. Potential damage may be more or less severe than suggested by the moth count data depending on weather and crop conditions and localized population dynamics. Research has clearly shown that very few fields are ever affected in an area with moth catches less than 300. Even at higher moth counts field scouting is critical for pest management decisions because experience has shown that field to field and even within field variations can be very large.

LLD	TRAP AVERAGE
NW-15-60-19-W4	18
SE-11-59-17-W4	14.5
SW-29-58-13-W4	1.5

Shaded cells were managed by County
Sampling period June 16 – July 27, 2024

CABBAGE SEEDPOD WEEVIL (CSPW)

In southern Alberta, including all counties south of and touching Highway 1, the earliest flowering canola crops will be at the highest risk from cabbage seedpod weevil and should be monitored very closely.

Cabbage seedpod weevil overwinters as an adult so the risk of infestation is further indicated by the adult population of the preceding fall. Winter condition also appear to have an impact on populations with mild winter favoring build-up of populations and expansion of their range.

We track the population of other insects in these sweeps as well. These go into long term data sets that will help us research their population trends over time from individual fields.

LEGAL LAND DESCRIPTION					CSPW IN 25 SWEEPS	LYGUS ADULT	LYGUS NYMPH	LEAFHOPPER	FLEA BEETLE	RED TURNIP BEETLE	DBM ADULT	DBM LARVA	WASP <5 MM	WASP >5MM	HONEY BEE	BEE BUT NOT HONEY	CATERPILLAR
se	3	57	15	4	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
se	24	59	16	4	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
se	29	59	18	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0

Samples done with standard sweep net. (15" diameter & 3 foot handle). 25-180 degree sweeps.

Sampling done by Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation, Plant and Bee Health Surveillance Section staff

PEA LEAF WEEVIL (PLW)

Experience has shown us that high numbers of pea leaf weevil adults in fall will likely mean significant infestation levels in the following spring. The timing and intensity of spring damage is strongly related to the onset of warm conditions (>20°C) for more than a few days in April or May. The earlier the weevils arrive in fields the higher yield loss potential. Extended cool weather delays weevil movement into the field. Yield impact is lower if the crop advances past the 6 node stage before the weevils arrive. The numbers represented here are generated from assessing feeding damage on 10 plants in 5 locations in a field.

LEGAL LAND DESCRIPTION	TOTAL NOTCHES	AVERAGE NODE STAGE	AVERAGE NOTCHES/PLANT
NE-16-60-17-W4	0	5.2	0
NE-14-58-15-W4	9	6.12	.18

Sampling done by Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation, Plant and Bee Health Surveillance Section staff.

WHEAT MIDGE (SOIL) (WM)

Wheat midge is an insect that increases in numbers in wet years. Numbers can vary drastically from field to field and we try to sample wheat adjacent to the previous years' wheat in order to pick up populations if they are present. There is no definitive way to know exactly the risk in any given field so field scouting when the wheat comes into head is critical. The numbers shown here give a general trend of midge populations. Individual fields will have a different risk.

These numbers are generated by taking soil samples from wheat fields after harvest using a standardized soil probe.

The risk level as shown on our maps is as follows:

- 0 midge will be displayed as light grey (No infestation)
- 2 or less midge will be shown as dark grey (<600/m²)
- 3 to 5 will be shown as yellow (600 to 1200/ m²)
- 6 to 8 will be shown as orange (1200 to 1800/ m²)
- 9 or more will be shown as red. (>1800/ m²)

LEGAL LAND DESCRIPTION					TOTAL MIDGE	PARASITOID
se	22	59	19	4	0	0
ne	24	59	17	4	0	0
ne	7	59	17	4	0	0

Sampling done by Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation, Alberta Plant Health Lab Survey Technicians.

WHEN DOING FIELD VISITS WE:

- never drive into the field
- sanitize our equipment between fields with bleach solution
- wear boot covers





7.4

January 9, 2025

The Honourable Devin Dreeshen
Minister of Transportation and Economic Corridors
127 Legislative Building
10800 – 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

The Honourable RJ Sigurdson
Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation
131 Legislation Building
10800 – 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

RE: Acknowledgement of Positive Collaboration Efforts with Alberta Transportation

The Northern Sunrise County Agricultural Service Board would like to express our gratitude for the ongoing collaborative efforts with Alberta Transportation regarding weed management on the provincial highways and crown land within Northern Sunrise County.

The timely communication and approvals from Alberta Transportation for managing prohibited noxious and noxious weeds have been essential for effective eradication and monitoring efforts on provincial land. In 2016, an invasive species of Phragmites was investigated along the provincial highway leading to Peace River. Thanks to efficient communication and rapid approval for weed management, prompt action was taken to eradicate and monitor this site. We are optimistic that the 2016-2024 weed management efforts have successfully eliminated the invasive Phragmites species from this site.

This positive, efficient, and effective collaboration plays a critical role in enforcing the *Weed Control Act* and preventing the spread of prohibited noxious and noxious weeds throughout Alberta.

Thank you for your time and support.

Sincerely,

Corinna Williams, Chairperson
Agricultural Service Board
Northern Sunrise County

CC:

John Conrad, Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM), Agriculture and Irrigation
Dan Williams, MLA Peace River
Kara Westerlund, President, Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA)
Alberta Agricultural Service Boards



January 14, 2025

Honourable RJ Sigurdson
Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation
131 Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB
TSK 2B6
AGRIC.Minister@gov.ab.ca

Honourable Lawrence MacAulay
Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
1341 Baseline Road
Ottawa, ON K1A 0C5
aafc.minister-ministre.aac@agr.gc.ca

Dear Ministers RJ Sigurdson and Lawrence MacAulay,

Subject: Urgent Need for Support in Addressing Richardson Ground Squirrel Infestations in the Agriculture Industry

The Kneehill County Agriculture Service Board is writing to express our deep concern regarding the increasing negative impact of Richardson ground squirrels (commonly known as gophers) on the agricultural industry in Alberta. These pests are causing widespread damage to agricultural resources, resulting in significant economic losses for producers. The removal of 2% liquid strychnine, a previously effective control measure, has worsened the situation.

The challenges posed by Richardson ground squirrels are multifaceted and deeply impactful. Their burrowing activity not only damages pastures and creates hazards for livestock but also disrupts the structural integrity of agricultural land. Their consumption of crops reduces yields and often requires costly replanting, adding to producers' burdens. Producers now rely on less efficient and costlier alternatives, exacerbating their financial challenges. This issue threatens the sustainability of the agriculture sector, underscoring the need for immediate and comprehensive solutions.

We respectfully request the following support from your respective ministries:

4. **Insurance Coverage:** Inclusion of Richardson ground squirrel damage as an insurable form of wildlife damage eligible for compensation under the Agricultural Financial Services Corporation (AFSC) programs. This would provide critical financial relief to producers facing significant losses due to these pests.



Box 400, 1600 - 2nd Street NE, Three Hills, Alberta, T0M 2A0
Phone: 403-443-5541 · Toll Free: 1-866-443-5541
Email: office@kneehillcounty.com
www.kneehillcounty.com



5. **Funding Support:** Establishment of financial assistance programs for producers to access effective alternative control measures. This could include subsidies for approved pest control products, cultural practice implementation, equipment, and training.
6. **Research and Development:** Increased investment in research to develop new, effective, and environmentally sustainable solutions for Richardson ground squirrel management. This includes exploring potential biological controls, innovative deterrents, and safer chemical options.
7. **Advocacy to Other Ministries and Levels of Government:** Collaboration with other relevant ministries, such as Environment and Parks, to ensure that regulatory frameworks support practical and effective pest control solutions. Advocacy to federal bodies and international partners to address this issue as a shared priority in the context of agricultural sustainability.

The removal of 2% liquid strychnine has left a critical void in pest management, depriving producers of an essential, cost-effective tool to combat Richardson ground squirrel infestations. This growing challenge continues to harm crops, pastures, and ecosystems, escalating the financial and environmental strain on the agricultural sector. Immediate and decisive action from your ministries is essential to address this gap, protect our producers, and ensure the long-term sustainability of agriculture in the region.

We urge your ministries to recognize the severity of this issue and to take proactive steps to support the agricultural community. Richardson ground squirrels are a persistent threat, but with the right resources, research, and regulatory support, we can mitigate their impact and protect the livelihoods of Canadian farmers.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wade Christie", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Wade Christie
Chair, Kneehill County Agricultural Service Board

cc:

Honourable Nathan Cooper

Honourable Damien Kurek

Honourable Martin Shields

Alberta Association of Agricultural Fieldmen
Provincial Agricultural Service Boards

A large, horizontal, blurred grey area, likely a redacted signature or stamp.

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January 14, 2025

Minister of Environment and Protected Areas
204 Legislature Building
108000 – 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

RE: Follow-Up on Updates to the Farmer Pesticide Program

Dear Honourable Minister Rebecca Schulz,

The Kneehill County Agricultural Service Board wishes to follow up on prior correspondence and discussions regarding the Farmer Pesticide Program. In our letter dated April 25, 2022, we outlined several concerns regarding outdated course materials, inconsistencies in exam alignment, and gaps in resource allocation for the program. We appreciated the response from Devon Smiegielski on May 16, 2022, which highlighted plans for a review in Fall 2022 and the establishment of a sub-committee to update the training materials. However, despite this assurance, we have yet to observe substantive progress regarding the status of this critical program update.

We commend your ministry's efforts to modernize Alberta's regulatory framework, including developing the new Digital Regulatory Assurance System (DRAS) and updating the Environmental Code of Practice for Pesticide Use. These initiatives align with the broader goals of sustainable pesticide management. We also recognize the recent updates to the National Pesticide Applicator Certification Core in 2024 as a valuable reference that could support the redevelopment of the Alberta Farmer Pesticide Program.

However, the Farmer Pesticide Program faces unique challenges, including reliance on municipal facilitators and limited resource access. Unlike other pesticide certification programs with access to Lakeland College resources for development and review, this program is not a part of the Lakeland College partnership. It may require additional provincial support to ensure its modernization aligns with evolving standards and meets the needs of Alberta's agricultural producers. In this process, it is essential to include municipal stakeholders, who bring firsthand knowledge of the program's delivery and the needs of local producers, to ensure that revisions are both practical and effective.

To advance this essential program, we respectfully request:

1. An update on the timeline and progress of the program review and redevelopment.
2. Consideration of dedicated provincial resources to support the modernization and implementation of the program.
3. An outline detailing the intended stakeholder involvement in the program review and development.



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Kneehill COUNTY

The Farmer Pesticide Program is essential for Alberta's agricultural sector, ensuring the safe and effective use of restricted pesticides while supporting environmental stewardship and market access. A timely update to this program will reinforce Alberta's commitment to its producers and stakeholders.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your response and continued engagement.

Sincerely,

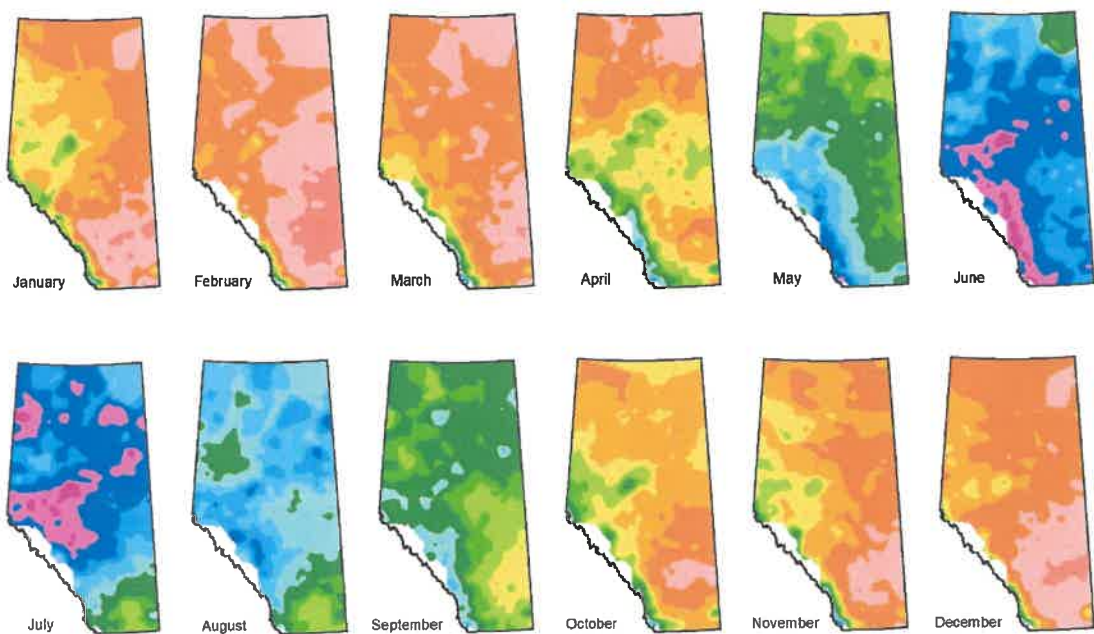
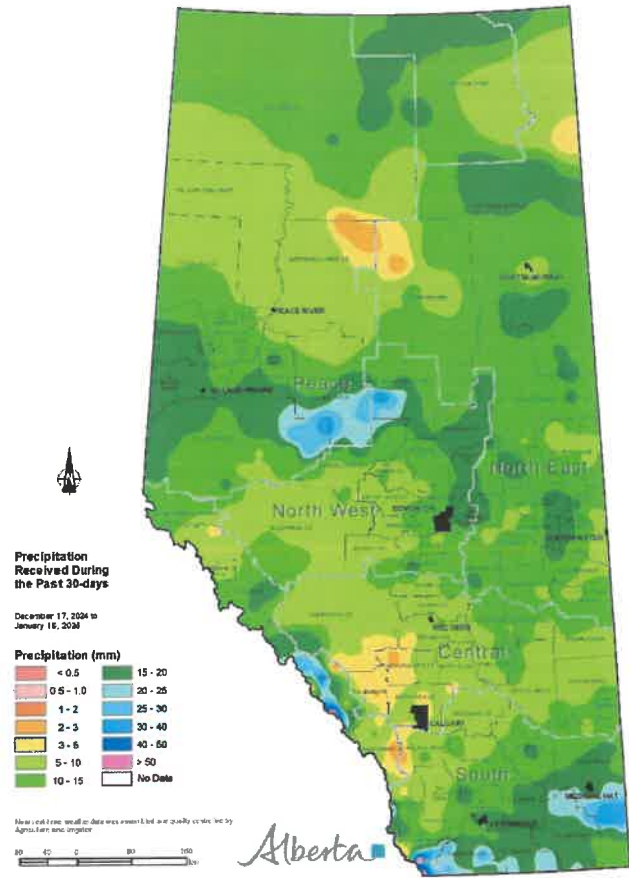


Wade Christie
Chair, Kneehill County Agricultural Service Board

cc:
Honourable Nathan Cooper
Honourable RJ Sigurdson
Alberta Association of Agricultural Fieldmen
Provincial Agricultural Service Boards



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www.kneehillcounty.com



Normal Monthly Precipitation Accumulations

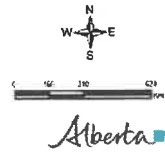
1991-2020

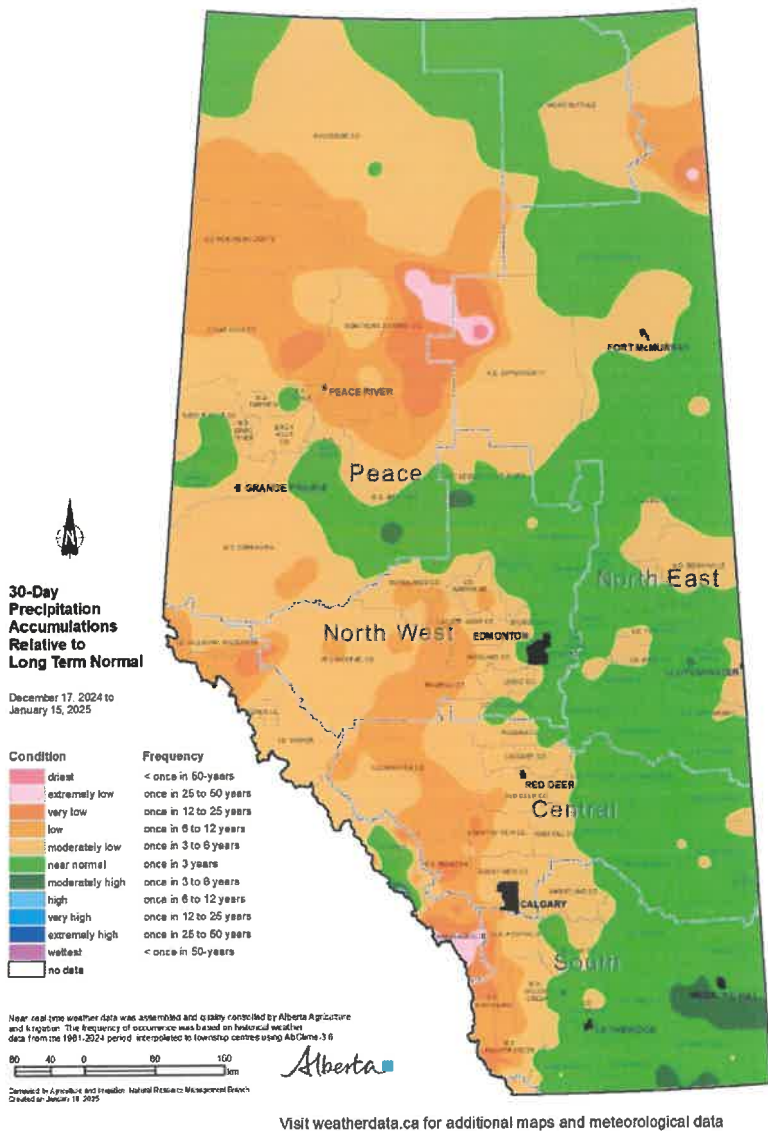
Weather data was assembled and quality controlled by Agriculture Forestry and Rural Economic Development then interpolated to township centres using AbClimate-3.6

Copyright Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Economic Development, Natural Resources, Environment and Climate Change Canada 2022

Precipitation (mm)

< 10	30 to 35	70 to 80
10 to 15	35 to 40	80 to 100
15 to 20	40 to 50	100 to 120
20 to 25	50 to 60	> 120
25 to 30	60 to 70	no data

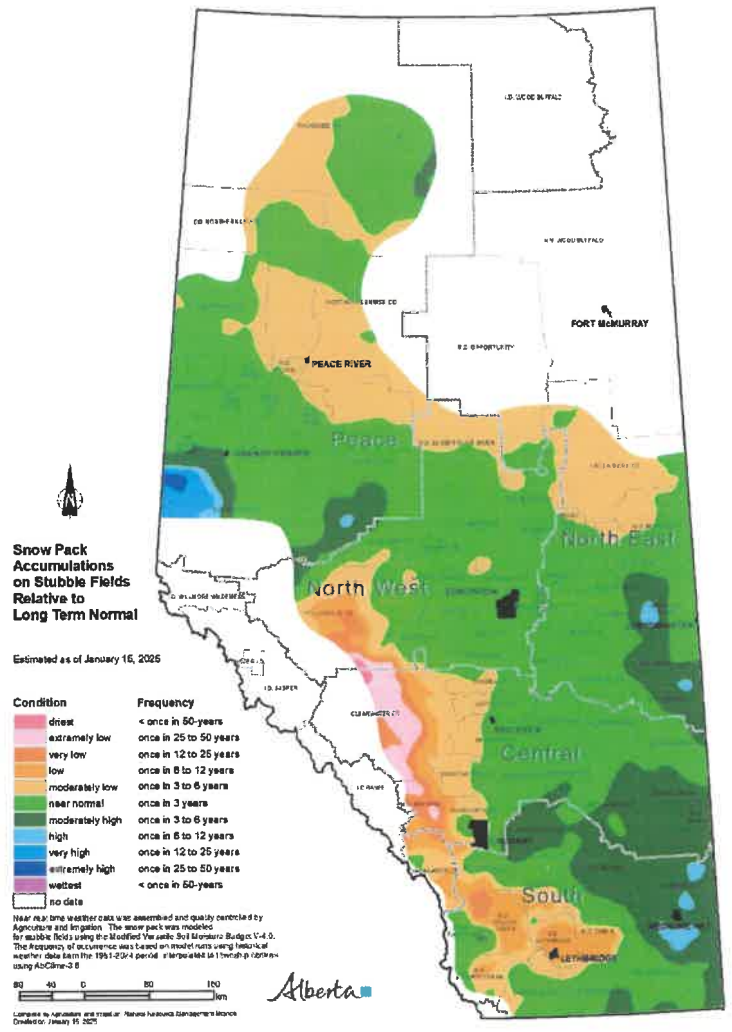
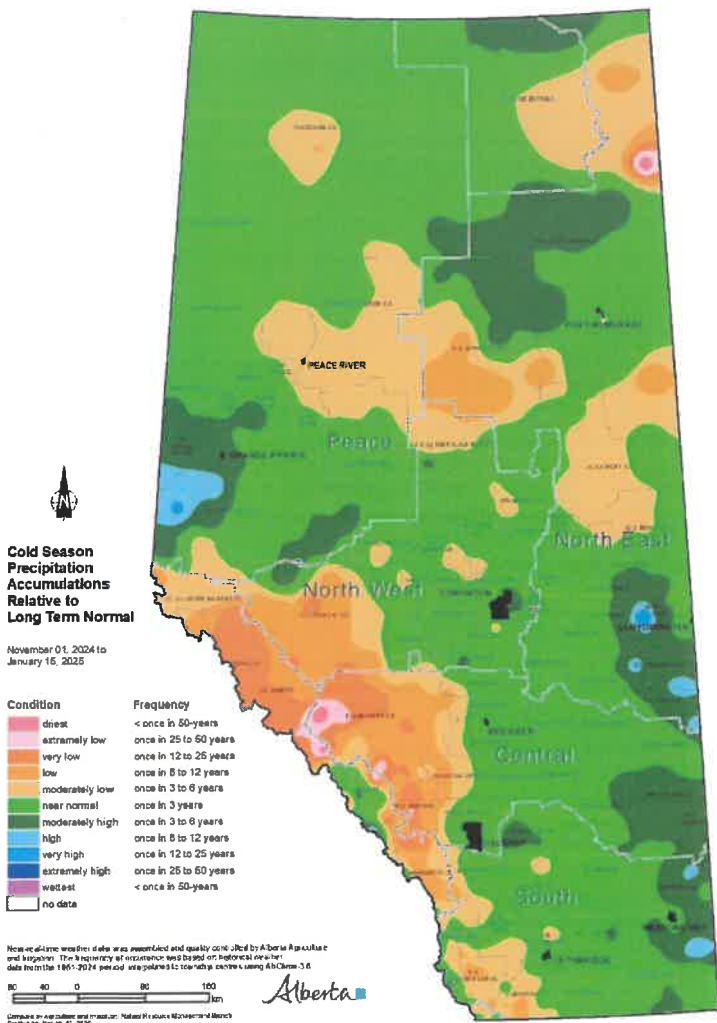




Synopsis (Maps 1, 2, and 3)

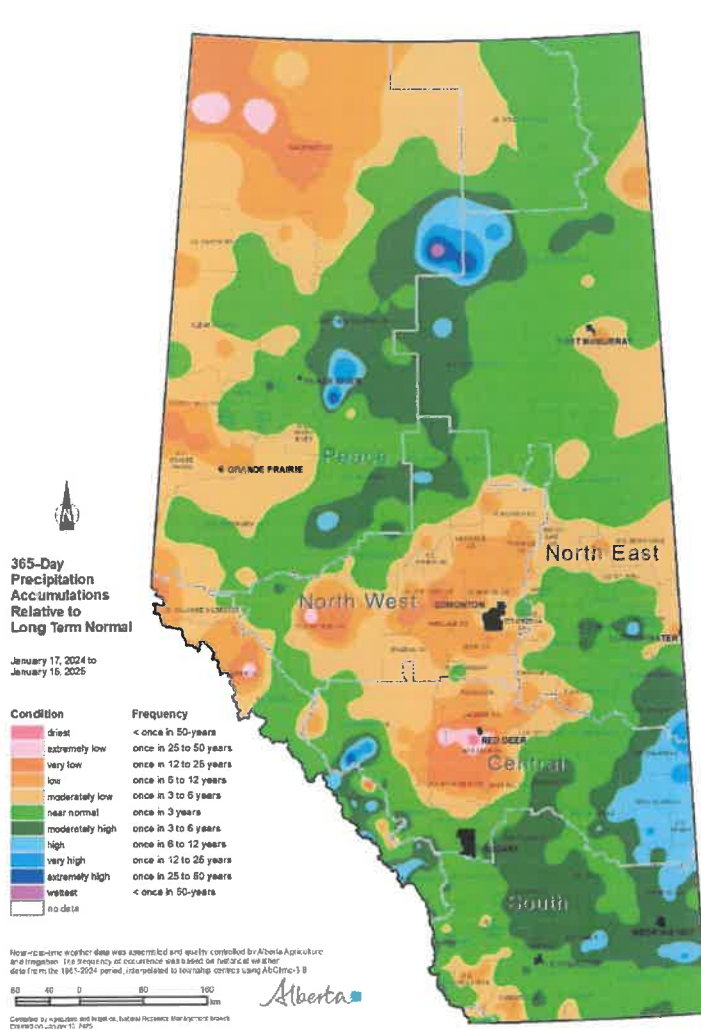
Since the last report, issued on December 11, 2024, the agricultural areas of the province have generally received anywhere between 2 to 25 mm of precipitation (Map 1). Accumulations were greatest through parts of the southern portions of the Southern Region, with some areas receiving upwards of 25 mm of moisture. Additionally, a strip of land south of Grand Prairie extending down through to the Swan Hills, have also received upwards of 25 mm moisture. In contrast, stations along the foothills south and west of Red Deer and west of Calgary were reporting less moisture, ranging from only 2 to 5 mm.

Bear in mind that late December and early January are usually a dry time of the year in Alberta (Map 2). Relative to normal the 30-day precipitation accumulations (Map 3) shows dryer than normal trends occurring along the western-half of the province affecting each of the Southern, Central, Northwest and Peace Regions, with the exception of the lands in and around the Swan Hills where near normal accumulation have occurred. Across the dry areas accumulations relative normal range from 1 in 3 to 6 year lows to 1 in 6 to 12 year lows. Some areas of the Peace Region and in the mountains and foothills southwest of Calgary are experiencing at least once in 12 to 25 year lows for this time frame.

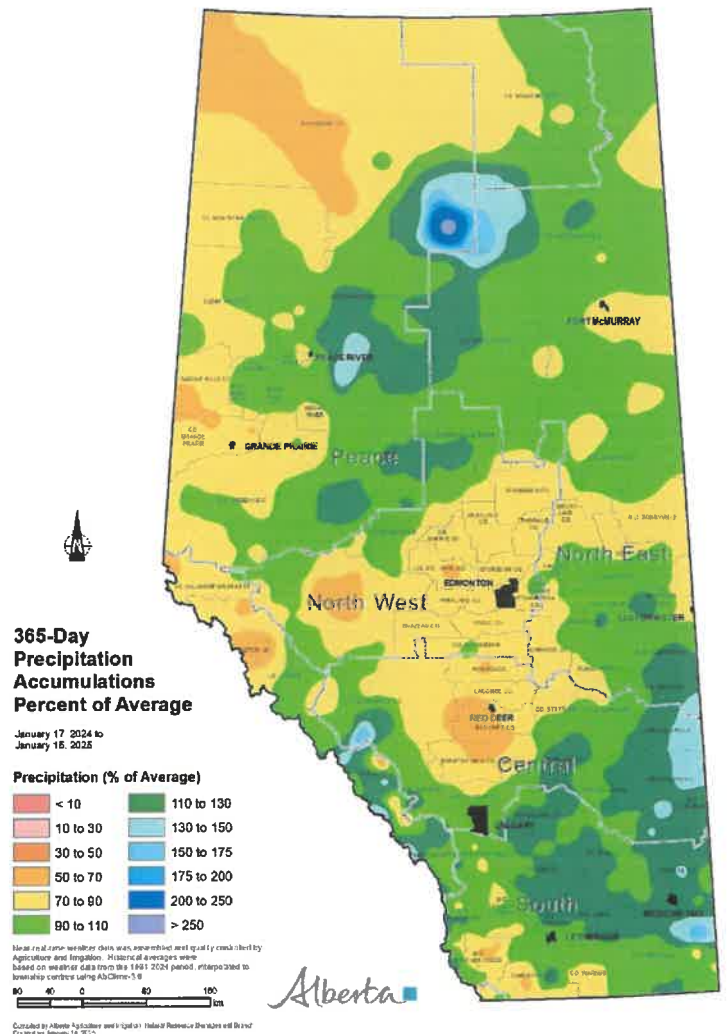


Winter Precipitation Trends (Maps 4 and 5)

Winter (cold season) precipitation accumulations to date (Map 4) and snowpacks (Map 5) are ranging above normal along the Saskatchewan border, stretching from Medicine Hat up through to Vermillion. Some areas here are currently experiencing snowpack accumulations in and around 1 in 3 to 6 year highs. Elsewhere moisture accumulations are trending towards normal through central portions of the agriculture areas in the South, Central, Northwest, Northeast and Peace Regions and trend to below normal moving westward toward the foothills. Here some lands are experiencing 1 in 3 to 6 year lows to 1 in 12 to 25 year low snow pack accumulations (Map 5). Throughout, the Peace Region a mixture of near normal and moderately lower snowpack accumulations relative to normal are found.



Visit weatherdata.ca for additional maps and meteorological data

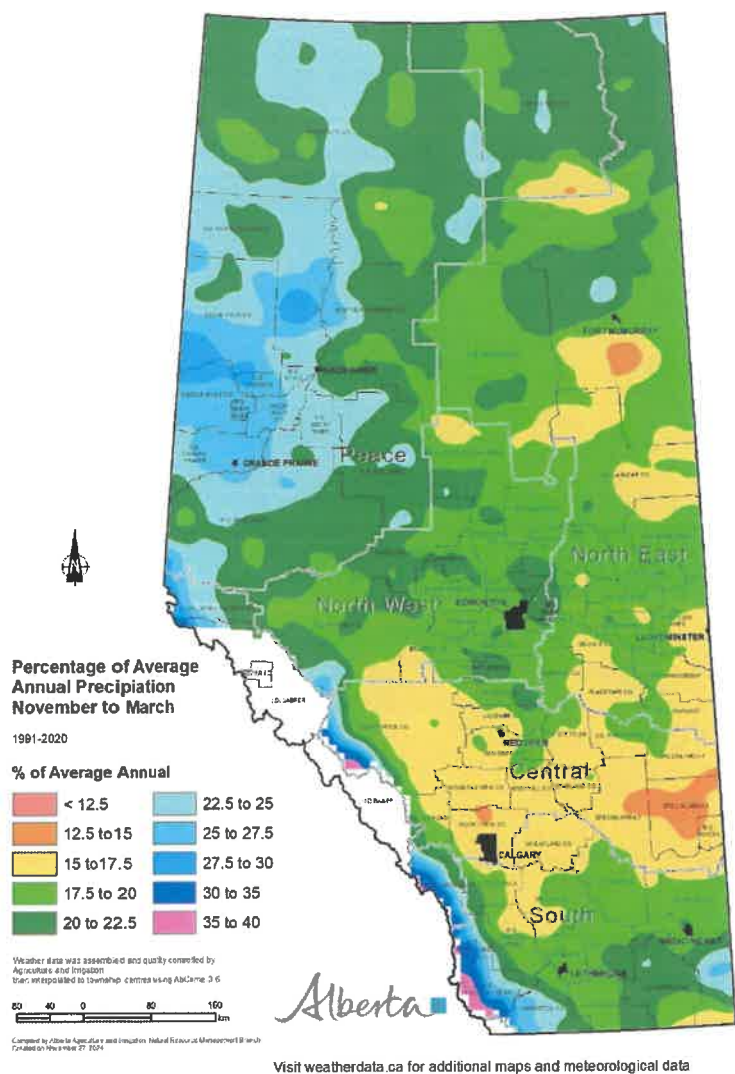


Visit weatherdata.ca for additional maps and meteorological data

365-day Precipitation Trends (Map 6 and 7)

Looking back over the past 365 days, precipitation accumulations (Map 6) continue to remain below normal across a large area from Mountain View County, through to Yellowhead County and then generally extend due east to the Saskatchewan border, along with similar conditions being found through much of the Peace Region. At least once in 25 year lows are persistent on lands in and around Red Deer with 6 to 12 year lows extending up through areas west of Edmonton along with lands northwest of Grande Prairie, extending north across large parts of the western Peace Region up as far as the border with the Northwest Territories. Across the dry areas, relative, year over year accumulations represent 70 to 90% of normal (average) with some widely scattered areas only receiving 50 to 70% of annual average precipitation (Map 7).

Conversely land south and east of a line between Calgary and Lloydminster extending all the way down to the US border and east to the Saskatchewan border are experiencing moderately higher, than normal precipitation accumulations. Here, some areas are reporting accumulations of 110 to 130% of normal (average) along with some other relatively small pockets reporting accumulations of 130 to 150% of normal, which is positive news for those farming these lands.



Perspective (Maps 8)

It is important to emphasize that this last 30-day period, on average, is one of the driest times of the year. In fact, across the agriculture region normal precipitation over this time frame, only averages from 5 to 10 mm through the Special Areas increasing to a maximum of 20 to 25 mm across the Peace. Being the relative dry season, even above average moisture at this time of year is typically not enough to make a significant impact on “year to date” moisture deficits nor would they usually be sufficient to create excess moisture conditions. For example, across the Central Region just over 15% of the average annual moisture falls during the winter season (Map 8). However, across the Peace Region winter moisture tends to be very important for the annual water cycle with at least 25% of their annual moisture falling during this time frame.

Current precipitation trends across some parts of the province such as the below normal snowpacks in the foothills and throughout much of the Peace Region is trending on the dry side and these areas have been experiencing dryer conditions for several months now.

While some areas of the province are reporting higher than normal moisture in snow packs, it remains to be seen if this will translate into improved seasonal moisture conditions. As mentioned earlier, winter is typically the driest time of the year for Alberta, and for agriculture, May June and July remain the most important months for receiving precipitation. The 2025 cropping season is still months away and there is ample time to receive adequate moisture. As always at this time of year we can only be patient and hope that sufficient moisture comes in a timely fashion for this year’s crops.

7.8



Smoky Lake County

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4612 McDougall Drive
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Phone: 780-656-3730
1-888-656-3730
Fax: 780-656-3768
www.smokylakecounty.ab.ca

January 9, 2025

Michael Botros, P.Eng.
Transportation and Economic Corridors
Regional Director
North Central & Ft. McMurray Regions
127 Legislature Building
10800-97 Avenue NW
Edmonton AB T5K 2B6

RE: Smoky Lake County Letter of Recommendation for Installation of a Self Weigh Axle Scale

Dear Director Botros,

The Smoky Lake County Agricultural Service Board is suggesting that a self-weigh axle scale station (see figures 1 and 2) be installed within Smoky Lake County, ideally along Highway 28.

Currently, there is a notable gap in truck weigh scale locations in northeastern Alberta. Most of our neighboring municipalities possess a truck weigh scale (e.g. Two Hills County, MD of Bonnyville, Lac La Biche County, and Westlock County). These scales on average are an hour away from Smoky Lake County. The closest provincial weigh station near Radway, about 30 minutes from Smoky Lake County.

Our county hosts many grain and livestock producers who frequently transport goods along provincial highways. A local self-weigh axle scale would provide significant benefits for residents and those in neighboring counties by reducing travel distances and offering a more convenient option for highway traffic passing through the region. By lessening highway wear and tear, this will also assist preserve the integrity of provincial infrastructure in a proactive manner. The number of resources devoted to patching potholes along Highways 857, 859, and 36 in previous years makes this clear.

Two new Safety Rest Areas will be constructed along Highway 28 east of Smoky Lake, as previously communicated in a follow-up letter from the 2024 Fall Rural Municipalities of Alberta convention that was sent out on December 20, 2024.

We suggest adding the installation of a self-weigh axle scale station to one of these Safety Rest Areas construction plans. As an alternative, during the upgrades of Highway 36 pre-existing Safety Rest Area and access lanes (see figures 3 and 4), could also be a potential location for your consideration.

Establishing a weigh-check station in Smoky Lake County would enhance highway safety and help preserve the integrity of primary and secondary highways over time. As a result, less time and money will be spent on our highways annually.



Thank you for considering this proposal and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dan Gawalko". The signature is written in a cursive style with a blue ink color.

Dan Gawalko
ASB Chairman
Smoky Lake County

cc.

Hon. R.J. Sigurdson, Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation for Alberta
Hon. Devin Dreesen, Minister of Transportation and Economic Corridors
Glenn Van Dijken, MLA, Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock



Figure 1. Aerial photo of Westlock County's self-weigh scale near Clyde, AB. GPS coordinates 54°09'07.9"N 113°43'21.8"W



Figure 2. Ground photo of axel weigh scale set up and components in Westlock County near Clyde, AB.

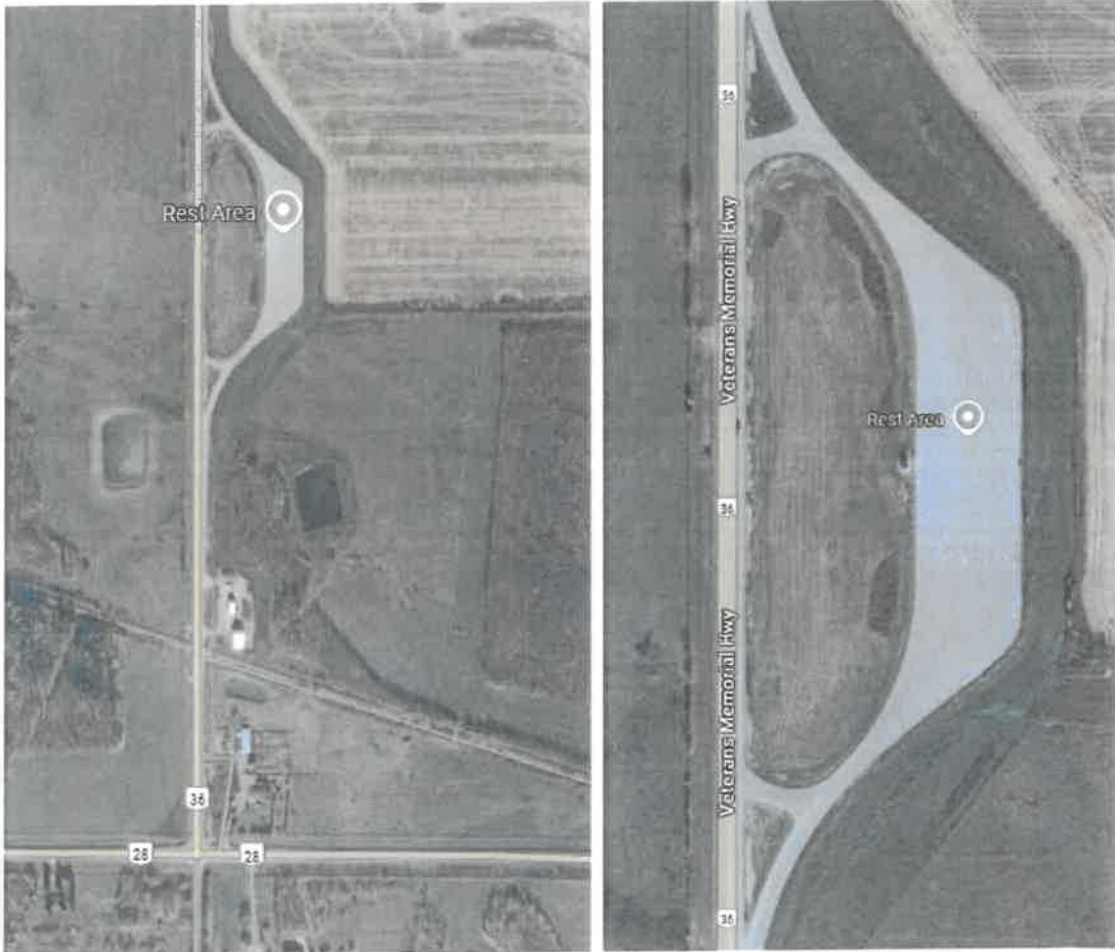


Figure 3. Aerial photos of truck rest stop in Smoky Lake County located north of Highway 28 and east of Highway 36. GPS coordinates 54°07'47.6"N 112°01'29.1"W



Figure 4. Ground photo of truck rest stop in Smoky Lake County located north of Highway 28 and east of Highway 36.

7.9

Kierstin Dubitz

From: TEC Minister <Transportation.Minister@gov.ab.ca>
Sent: Friday, January 24, 2025 8:11 AM
To: Kierstin Dubitz
Subject: RE: Installation of a Self Weigh Axle Scale

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Thank you for contacting the Honourable Devin Dreesen, Minister of Alberta Transportation and Economic Corridors. Please be advised your correspondence has been received and is being reviewed by the Minister's Office.

For information on highway conditions, roadwork, weather alerts, major incidents you can access the information via phone toll-free by calling 511. **Please note 511 will only respond to questions related to highway conditions, roadwork, weather alerts or major incidents.**

7.10

Kierstin Dubitz

From: Michael Botros <Michael.Botros@gov.ab.ca>
Sent: Friday, January 24, 2025 8:07 AM
To: Kierstin Dubitz
Subject: Automatic reply: Installation of a Self Weigh Axle Scale

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

***** OUT OF OFFICE ALERT *****

I am currently away from the office and will be returning February 3, 2025. During this time, I will have no access to my email.

Please contact Mr. Rob Huston at (780) 968-4218 or Rob.Huston@gov.ab.ca.

7.11



COUNTY OF Northern Lights

#600, 7th Ave NW, PO Box 10, Manning AB T0H 2M0
Phone 780-836-3348 Fax 780-836-3663
Toll Free 1-888-525-3481

The Agricultural Service Boards
Provincial Committee
C/O Quinton Beaumont
Box 1270
Stettler, AB
T0C 2L0

15.40.10

January 24, 2025

Re: 2025 ASB Conference

The County of Northern Lights ASB recently attended the 2025 ASB Provincial Conference in Edmonton and was represented by 4 board members and the Agricultural Fieldman. This conference is always much anticipated by our board members as it offers many valuable updates, keynote speakers, networking opportunities, tradeshow and most importantly, the chance to present resolutions.

Resolutions have a long history of bringing regional and provincial agricultural matters forward. After a democratic process of presenting the resolutions, they are often debated, amended and then put to the assembly for a vote. Those that are approved then go to the ASB Provincial Committee, who in turn send them out for responses, grade the responses and then advocate for the resolution's intent. I want to bring attention to some inappropriate conduct during the resolution session on January 22nd. The County of Northern Lights brought forward 2 resolutions; one (8-25) was presented on the January 21st, and the second (13-25) on January 22nd. We always welcome debate and potential small amendments during the presentation and understand that in true democratic fashion, the subsequent vote determines whether the resolution passes or fails. What we do not agree with is condescending and disrespectful remarks.

These actions were displayed by an ASB member from Vulcan County who provided opposition to 13-25 and seemed frustrated that the resolution process was taking too long, as indicated by his comments and theatrical behavior regarding resolution 3-25 the day before. The comments that were made did not attempt to debate ideas, but attacked the resolutions as a waste of time, burdensome and that certain municipalities were sponsoring too many resolutions. "It is only an issue for a municipality that sponsored over half the resolutions" was the comment, while it doesn't sound too terrible on paper, the leadup, sentiment and delivery was enough to draw audible gasps and muttering from the crowd. After the conclusion of the Resolution Session, we received numerous commiserations for the exaggerated reaction, as it went too far.



COUNTY OF
Northern Lights

#600, 7th Ave NW, PO Box 10, Manning AB T0H 2M0
Phone 780-836-3348 Fax 780-836-3663
Toll Free 1-888-525-3481

Our feeling is, if this type of behaviour is allowed to continue with no intervention from the board, the potential for mudslinging and chaos will be inevitable and credibility of this great organization will be compromised. I have been approached by many ASB's that were witness to this uncalled-for comment, who strongly agree that it was totally inappropriate and needs to be addressed. These types of comments stifle debate, lead to less participation and dissuade future resolutions in fear of humiliation and ridicule.

These types of sessions are critical to generating solutions and change, if you disagree with an idea then say why you are against it—it doesn't need to be turned into a personal indiscretion against another municipality that is sponsoring the idea. The main purpose of the conference is to debate the resolutions, and debate should follow the correct code of conduct.

Thank you for your consideration,

Terry Ungarian
Reeve and ASB Chair,
County of Northern Lights

Cc: AAAF and ASB's of Alberta



ASB Connector

ASBs are key to Alberta's robust pest surveillance network that helps Alberta maintain market access by mitigating the risk of agricultural pest threats and managing the negative impacts of weeds in crops and the environment. This in turn enables the industry to provide assurance to trading partners and continue to produce high-value crops and livestock. The 68 ASBs in Alberta help nearly 60,000 farmers and ranchers protect the over 50 million acres they farm.

January 2025

[View as webpage](#)



ASB Grant Program - Happy 80th Anniversary!

2025 marks 80 years of ASBs partnering with the provincial government through a regulatory compliance role under delegated authority provided through the *Agricultural Service Board Act*.

Another five-year ASB grant cycle (2025-2029) has been approved following the immediate past grant cycle which ended on December 31, 2024. Applications for the ASB Grant Program renewal closed on January 31, 2025. Applications will be reviewed in the following months and the 2025-2029 agreements to be in place for spring 2025. The ASB Grant Program supports rural municipalities through three funding streams: Legislative, Resource Management and Rat Control.

Agricultural Service Board Grant



Orange hawkweed

Regulated Weed Review update

To date, the weed review committee has met three times to review 22 weeds and is scheduled to meet again in February to continue the review of all the feedback received through the invited stakeholder and AAAF/ASB survey responses. Following each meeting, members provide their regions with the committee's proposed decisions and bring all feedback to the next meeting. Once the committee has completed the review we will develop proposed recommendations for decision by Minister and continue to provide regular updates on the review process.



Updates to seed cleaning facility inspection form

Since launching the current seed cleaning inspection form and process for the licensing of co-operative and private stationary and mobile seed cleaning facilities last year, we have been collecting feedback from fieldmen and the Alberta Seed Processors Association (ASPA) on both the form and process. Based upon this we are looking to improve the guidance and criteria for the scoring of the cleaned seed samples for the Product Verification checks 18-V. This will be done virtually, likely late winter/early spring, with representatives from AAAF and the ASPA.

If you have any input or would like to contribute to this process, please let your AAAF Regional representative know as we will be reaching out to set this up near the end of February with the intention to complete the updates for review and implementation this season. If you would like further information or to provide any feedback on the licensing form and process please contact Kellie at kellie.jackson@gov.ab.ca or 403-813-9406.



Call for feedback on farm-saved seed

The ASB Provincial Committee is looking for feedback from ASBs and the farmers they represent on a draft position statement supporting a farmer's right to save seed.

Just prior to COVID the CFIA announced public engagements on the Seed Regulation Modernization that would bring Canada in line with global standards. Early in-person engagements sparked controversy and concern from Alberta farmers around the implications of the modernization on access to varieties bred in Canada for Alberta conditions, and the ability to save and use the seed from those varieties. Concerns were expressed about the implications to availability of public varieties, cost of seed, and the right to save seed for future crops.

[Read more](#)



Image courtesy Hannah Mckenzie, Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation.

Clearwater County wild boar trapper training and wild boar program update

The wild boar control program had a busy 2024 and we are continuing full steam ahead in 2025.

"We received 75 reports of wild boar in 2024 through [Squeal on Pigs!](#), including some escaped domestic pigs," says Hannah Mckenzie, wild boar specialist with Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation. "Thank you to everyone who is keeping an eye out and taking action to report wild boar signs or sightings. We always follow up and investigate each report."

[Read more](#)

[Wild Boar Control Program](#)



Rat on Rats! - Keep Alberta rat-free

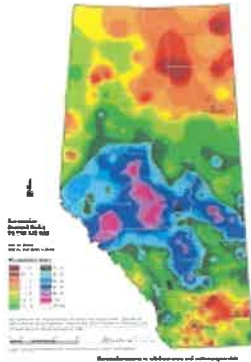
For more than 70 years, Alberta has proudly been rat-free, meaning the province prevents the pest from establishing a permanent population while swiftly dealing with any infestations.

Through Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership funding to the Alberta Invasive Species Council, the governments of Canada and Alberta are reminding Albertans to "Rat on Rats!"

The \$110,000 investment will fund billboards and outreach materials encouraging Albertans to report rats and rat signs.

[Rat on Rats!](#)

Farming and the environment



Agricultural moisture situation update

Moisture situation updates from the team at Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation's Agrometeorology Applications and Modelling Unit can be found [here](#).



2025 Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture Tracking Survey - an introduction

Alberta's farmers and ranchers have a reputation for dedication, leadership and hard work as stewards of the land. Every 2 years, the Government of Alberta sponsors the Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture Tracking Survey (ESATS) to track use of beneficial management practices (BMPs) by Alberta's farmers and ranchers.

The survey has been running since 1997 and focuses on BMPs that promote responsible resource management of Alberta's soil, air, water and biodiversity.

Read the [article](#)



Mapping groundwater in southern Alberta

The province is providing a \$3.8-million grant to the Alberta Geological Survey to complete a three-year study mapping the quality, quantity and location of groundwater across southern Alberta.

Better understanding this groundwater will help the province make the most out of every drop to support families, business, farmers and ranchers and the environment.

[More information](#)



Preparation, swift response define wildfire season

Through effective investments, including a \$155-million wildfire base budget, Alberta's government ensured the province was prepared to respond throughout the 2024 wildfire season. In anticipation of the wildfire season, the province recruited 100 additional wildland firefighters and an additional 40 contract wildland firefighters – in addition to securing more airtankers, heavy equipment, and helicopters equipped with night vision technology.

As a result of this preparation, front-line crews were able to respond quickly and fight fires around the clock, containing 85% of wildfires within 24 hours of detection.

[Learn more about the 2024 wildfire season](#)



Central Alberta reservoir study underway

The province is moving forward a study to assess the feasibility of building a new reservoir on the Red Deer River to help support growing communities.

The province has now begun assessing the feasibility of building a potential new reservoir east of Red Deer near Ardley. A two-phase, multi-year study will explore the costs and value of constructing and operating the reservoir, and its impact on downstream communities, farmers and ranchers, and businesses.

[Read more](#)

Insect surveys and maps



Bertha armyworm

While it is difficult to accurately predict the 2025 bertha armyworm populations based on the 2024 moth catch, it appears there is no threat from bertha armyworm in 2025. It will be critical to have good coverage of pheromone traps in 2025 to provide an early warning of potential problems during the growing season.

Experience from previous outbreaks has shown that adjacent fields or even different parts of the same field can have greatly different bertha armyworm numbers. Although traps are set in canola fields, producers growing flax, peas, faba bean and quinoa also need to pay attention to this system as this insect is also known to feed on these crops.

[Bertha armyworm survey and maps](#)



Cabbage seedpod weevil

The 2024 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 20-25% flower.

The survey found cabbage seedpod weevil at or below economic levels in southern Alberta with the exception of a couple of hotspots. In southern Alberta, it will still be important to scout canola when in early flower, especially those first to flower fields, to make control decisions.

Cabbage seedpod weevil survey and maps



Grasshopper

The 2024 grasshopper survey map is based on adult grasshopper counts conducted in late July and August 2024 by the agricultural fieldmen of Alberta.

In 2024 in the Peace region, the grasshopper numbers were low, while grasshopper was less of an issue in Southern Alberta in 2024 than in 2023.

Scouting in areas with significant grasshopper risk in late May and June of roadsides and field edges and where high concentrations were found the previous year is vital to understand the grasshopper risk.

Grasshopper survey and maps



Pea leaf weevil

The pea leaf weevil survey was completed in late May and early June 2024. It is based on damage ratings in 219 fields from 56 municipalities.

The area affected by weevil feeding shifted from the eastern part of the province (2023), to along the Highway 2 corridor from Olds to Thorhild. Weevil damage remains low in the southern region, although hotspots were found. Pea leaf weevil is in the Peace region, but the 2024 survey technicians could find very little feeding damage in any of the fields surveyed.

Pea leaf weevil survey and maps



Wheat midge

The wheat midge survey results are positive for 2024. Midge population is low across the province.

Keep in mind, wheat midge can remain as a diapausing larva in the soil for at least one cropping year. A resurgence of the population can occur if there is a higher than normal rainfall in May and June.

Over the past several years, the field-to-field variation has been considerable throughout the province. Individual fields throughout Alberta may have economic levels of midge. Each producer needs to assess their risk based on indicators specific to their farm.

Wheat midge survey and maps



Wheat stem sawfly

The wheat stem sawfly survey is an after-harvest survey completed in the fall of 2024. The population map is based on 86 fields in 20 municipalities across southern Alberta and the municipalities along the Saskatchewan-Alberta border as far north as Bodo (MD of Provost).

Overall, the severity and area affected by sawfly cutting damage in 2024 has decreased in Alberta. We are still seeing moderate to high cutting percentages in the traditional sawfly areas. The risk in the traditional wheat stem sawfly areas is real in 2025.

Wheat stem sawfly survey and maps

What's new from Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation



L to R: Blair Roth, Dr. Kee Jim, Elke Kanehl, RJ Sigurdson, Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation. Image courtesy Ryan Kowalyk, Reynolds Museum.

Ag Hall of Fame inducts visionaries, opens new exhibit

On January 29, the 41st induction ceremony to the Alberta Agriculture Hall of Fame took place at the Reynolds Museum in Wetaskiwin, honouring three outstanding Albertans. In addition to the induction, a permanent exhibit at the Reynolds Museum in Wetaskiwin has been opened, which will showcase both new and former inductees, as well as the rich history of agriculture in Alberta.

The 2024 inductees are being honoured for their advocacy, leadership and pioneering spirit in advancing the province's agriculture and food industry. The inductees are:

- Dr. Kee Jim, from Okotoks, for his innovative, data-driven approach to feedlot cattle health, effective disease protocols and strengthening Alberta's cattle industry.
- Blair Roth, from Lethbridge, for his visionary role in developing pulse crops as a dryland farming option, shaping early agronomics, variety selection and marketing strategies.

- Manfred Kanehl (posthumous induction), from Parkland County, for his outstanding contributions and advancements to animal welfare and food safety within the Canadian egg industry and for pioneering the Start Clean – Stay Clean on-farm food safety program launched nationally and still in use today.

[Media release](#)

[Alberta Agriculture Hall of Fame](#)



Technical Advisory Group helps producers meet AOPA

In 2008, a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) was formed to help identify and prioritize issues where technical guidelines are needed to help agricultural producers understand and meet the requirements of the *Agricultural Operation Practices Act* (AOPA).

TAG is accountable to senior management within Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation and the Natural Resources Conservation Board.

[Read more](#)



Updated guidelines provide clarity when monitoring liquid manure storages

Under the *Agricultural Operation Practices Act* (AOPA), the owner or operator of a liquid manure storage facility may be required to install a leakage detection system. This system will use either groundwater monitoring wells or leachate collection systems to monitor for leaks or seepage.

The Technical Advisory Group, made up of Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation, Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB) and agricultural industry representatives, has published two updated technical guidelines to clarify AOPA requirements for owners and operators. These guidelines focus on sample collection and the necessary parameters for monitoring to ensure accurate information is available to the operator and the NRCB when assessing liner performance.

[Read more](#)



Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership Value-Added Grant Program Overview

Are you interested in applying for a Value-Added Program grant but not sure where to start? This upcoming webinar will give you an easy-to-follow overview of everything you need to know, from understanding eligibility to putting together a complete application.

In this 1.5-hour session, you will learn:

- How to apply: step-by-step guidance to get started
- Who can apply: understanding eligibility requirements
- Eligible activities and expenses: what qualifies for funding and what does not

Speaker: Jared Huston, Manager, Industry Development Programs from Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation

[Learn more and register for the March 6 webinar](#)



Larger fines for illegal slaughter, uninspected meat

The sale of uninspected meat is illegal in Alberta. Illegal slaughter and food safety non-compliance pose a risk to human and animal health and could harm Alberta's entire livestock and meat processing industry.

In response to the increase of illegal slaughter and sale of uninspected meat, the province is increasing penalties to protect consumers. If passed, the *Meat Inspection Amendment Act* would increase fines from a maximum of \$10,000 to \$100,000 for each offence.

[Learn more](#)



Staying ahead of the antimicrobial resistance curve

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a significant health issue worldwide, including in Alberta.

In response to this growing issue, the province has developed a framework to address AMR. Alberta's One Health Antimicrobial Resistance Framework for Action lays the groundwork for Alberta's response to antimicrobial resistance and guides efforts to effectively address this growing threat.

Agriculture and Irrigation Minister RJ Sigurdson says antimicrobial resistance affects animal health and the agriculture sector far and wide and is likely to get worse without coordinated efforts. He adds this framework outlines Alberta's response on all fronts to ensure farmers and ranchers can face this issue head-on and continue to produce healthy, high-quality food for people worldwide.

[More information](#)



Alberta Food Centre celebrates 40 years

On December 6, 1984, the Alberta Food Centre opened its doors to help start-ups and established food, beverage and ingredient ventures grow and bring new products to market.

More than 3,000 industry projects later, the Centre is here to help processors thrive.

[40th anniversary video](#)

[Alberta Food Centre](#)

What's in the news



On-Farm Climate Action Fund expands

Agriculture Canada recently announced the expansion of the On-Farm Climate Action Fund (OFCAF), which will provide an additional \$300 million to 13 organizations in continuation of their efforts to help farmers become more climate resilient over the next three years. Among the 13 organizations are Results Driven Agriculture Research (RDAR) and the Canadian Forage and Grassland Association.

Direct support to farmers falls under these target areas: cover cropping, nitrogen management and rotational grazing.

[Read more](#)

[On-Farm Climate Action Fund](#)



**Canadian Food
Inspection Agency**

Milk sampling and testing for highly pathogenic avian influenza in Canada

As part of the Government of Canada's One Health approach, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) in collaboration with the Public Health Agency of Canada and Health Canada, is taking [proactive measures](#) to monitor Canadian dairy cows for highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI).

Commercially sold milk and milk products remain safe to consume. In Canada, milk must be pasteurized before sale. The pasteurization process kills harmful bacteria and viruses, including HPAI, ensuring milk and milk products are safe to drink and eat.

As of September 5, 2024, CFIA laboratories have tested 1,211 retail milk samples from across Canada. All samples have tested negative.

[More information](#)



Record inspections to keep invasive mussels out

Alberta inspected a record number of boats and other watercraft in 2024 to help keep the province zebra and quagga mussel free.

In 2024, the province identified a rising risk of invasive mussels entering the province. Reports of the invasive mussels were increasing across Canada and the United States, as tiny species can be easily spread through boats and other watercraft. These mussels rapidly damage waterways and infrastructure, destroy habitats and can cause hundreds of millions in damages.

[Learn more](#)

Fighting the spread of aquatic invasive species

With growing concerns that invasive mussels could arrive in our province, Alberta launched the first Provincial Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force to identify ways to improve inspection, detection, response and education so that these dangerous species do not get established here.

This task force has now provided a set of recommendations to address the threat of invasive mussels while also strengthening Alberta's prevention and early detection efforts.

[Learn more](#)



**Canadian Food
Inspection Agency**

Vigilance around Foot and Mouth Disease

Germany recently confirmed that Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) was detected in water buffalo. The Canadian Cattle Association says this incursion of the FMD virus into Europe warrants heightened awareness by Canadian producers and travellers.

Canadian producers should take extra precautions at this time. Farm tours for international visitors are discouraged. Additional information is available on the Canadian Cattle Association [Emergency Preparedness webpage](#).

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency also provides information for travellers. It is not recommended to visit farms in countries infected with FMD.

[More information](#)

New restrictions due to Foot and Mouth Disease in Germany

With a new outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in Germany, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency is implementing

import measures to safeguard the health of Canada's livestock and mitigate the economic impact of a potential FMD outbreak in Canada.

[More details](#)



Practical tools to protect Canadian livestock from Food and Mouth Disease

Beef producers feel the responsibility of keeping their herds and those in contact with their cattle safe, and they appreciate practical tools that support their disease prevention practices. When it comes to biosecurity practices on beef cattle operations, limiting hazards and appropriately responding with good management are key in disease prevention. These practices ultimately protect the herd and the Canadian livestock industry from the animal health and economic impacts of foreign animal diseases, including Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD).

To increase awareness of available tools for farmers and ranchers, a collaborative effort between the Beef Cattle Research Council and Animal Health Canada is currently underway, ensuring that prevention and emergency response resources are being tailored specifically to the needs of Canadian beef producers.

[More information](#)



Alberta Mule Deer Collaring Project

The Alberta Professional Outfitters Society recently announced the start of the Alberta Mule Deer Collaring Project for winter 2024/25. In the first year of this multi-year project, 100 mule deer will be captured and collared in southeast and southwest Alberta to gather information to help support mule deer management in Alberta.

Information will increase understanding of mule deer abundance and distribution and, most importantly, help inform management actions to ensure mule deer conservation throughout their range within Alberta.

[More information](#)



Restoring more wetlands in Alberta

The province is awarding \$5 million through the Wetland Replacement Program to help three municipalities and two non-profits construct or restore seven projects affecting more than 165 hectares of wetlands throughout the province. This will help strengthen Alberta's natural drought and flood protections, improve water quality and create healthier ecosystems.

[Read the media release](#)



Order your 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 any farming operation. The Blue Book is collaboratively produced by three of Alberta's crop commissions – Alberta Canola, Alberta Grains and Alberta Pulse Growers.

[Order your 2025 Blue Book](#)



Saving Alberta farmers time and money

Changes to Agriculture Financial Services Corporation's (AFSC) AgriStability program will reduce paperwork and lower costs for producers.

A new option to align AgriStability reporting with tax filing in 2025 will result in less paperwork, reduce accounting fees, and make enrolment and participation in the program much easier. An accelerated deadline to submit program forms to AFSC will lead to earlier payments. Enrolling in AgriStability can also provide producers access to other credit options like the federal Advance Payments Program, which offers low-cost cash advances.

[More details](#)

[AgriStability](#)

Improving AFSC's offerings

AFSC has made a few changes to its products to optimize them for today's agriculture industry.

- For crop insurance for the 2025 crop year, changes include improving payment timing for Silage Greenfeed Barley Proxy Insurance, the addition of mixed grain as a primary cocktail crop for both Silage Greenfeed Insurance options, the expansion of soft white spring wheat risk areas for pedigreed growers, and a new claim deadline for wildlife

excreta damage in the Wildlife Damage Compensation Program.

- Changes are also on the way for AgriStability that will reduce the filing burden, increase dependability and predictability, and result in files being processed sooner.
- AFSC has also expanded eligibility for the Next Generation loan making it easier for producers to enter and re-enter the agriculture industry, giving greater opportunities to new and growing operations, making succession more appealing and encouraging new and young people to get into farming.

More details



Building or expanding a confined feeding operation? What you and your consultant need to know

Are you planning to expand or build a new confined feeding operation (CFO), manure storage facility or manure collection area? If so, be sure your consultant is aware of the guidance for conducting subsoil investigations. Failure to follow this guidance could delay or otherwise impact your ability to obtain a permit under the *Agricultural Operation Practices Act*.

Over the past few years, the Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB) and Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation, in conjunction with representatives from the livestock industries, have issued a series of technical guidelines providing guidance to consultants conducting subsoil investigations for CFOs:

- [Agdex 096-61: Determining Equivalent Protective Layers and Constructed Liners](#)
- [Agdex 096-62: Subsoil Investigations for Manure Storage Facilities and Manure Collection Areas](#)
- [Agdex 096-63: Subsoil Investigations for Naturally Occurring Protective Layers](#)
- [Agdex 096-64: Subsoil Investigations for Compacted Soil Liner](#)

These guidelines provide instructions for how to properly identify a groundwater resource, determine depth to a water table, and estimate equivalent depths and hydraulic conductivity of liners and protective layers.

The last guideline of the series was issued in March 2023 and the NRCB has considered the past few years a transition period in the use of this guidance. However, going forward, NRCB approval officers will require that the procedures described in the guidelines are followed in applications for new facilities.

For more information please contact an approval officer at your nearest [regional office](#).

NRCB online application system now available

The Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB) has launched a new interactive online application system for applications under

the *Agricultural Operation Practices Act*.

Now, you can easily apply online for permits to construct or modify confined feeding operations, manure storage facilities or manure collection areas.

The online application system is one more way to apply for a permit. You can also still submit your application by email or mail, by dropping it off at an NRCB office, or by handing it to an NRCB approval officer when they visit your site. As always, approval officers are available to answer any questions you may have.

Ready to get started? [Click here](#) to begin the application process.

Questions? Contact an approval officer at your nearest [regional office](#).



Record growth for Alberta Open Farm Days in 2024

In 2024, Alberta Open Farm Days saw exponential growth. “We were very excited about Alberta Open Farm Days 2024,” says Tim Carson, CEO, Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies. “We saw a notable increase in the number of participating farms, with more than 150 farms opening their doors to Albertans. Visitor numbers also rose significantly, jumping from nearly 36,000 in 2023 to over 52,000 in 2024.”

[Read the article](#)



The Great Twine Round-Up Comes to Alberta

Cleanfarms, in partnership with the Agricultural Plastics Recycling Group is excited to announce the launch of ‘The Great Twine Round-Up’, a new province-wide initiative designed to promote used plastic baler twine recycling.

This exciting contest offers substantial cash prizes to the winners’ 4-H club or district or an Alberta-based nonprofit organization or charity of their choice that supports agriculture.

The entry period runs until **May 31, 2025**.

[More details](#)



Helping kids lead with heart, head, hands and health

A new investment in 4-H Alberta will offer the province's youth new opportunities to get into agriculture.

Through Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership funding, the governments of Canada and Alberta are investing more than \$731,000 over five years for three 4-H Alberta programs. The Intro to 4-H program, the Agriculture Safety and Mental Health

Workshop and the Senior Spring Symposium will benefit from the funding.

[Learn more](#)

Announcing the 2024 4-H Alberta Hall of Fame

4-H Alberta proudly announces the induction of Arlene Good into the 4-H Alberta Hall of Fame for 2024. This distinguished recognition celebrates Arlene's enduring contributions and leadership within the 4-H program, impacting countless members and leaders across Alberta.

[Read 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 a significant and lasting contribution to their communities. 220 Albertans have been invested into the Alberta Order of Excellence since it was established in 1979.

Nominations are accepted year-round, but must be received by **February 15** to be considered for investiture this year.

[More information and nomination forms](#)

What's new from partners



2024 Alberta Society to Prevent Dutch Elm Disease (STOPDED) annual report

The Society to Prevent Dutch Elm Disease (STOPDED) is a non-profit organization that has administered and operated the Provincial Dutch Elm Disease (DED) Prevention Program since 2005.

Its mandate is to foster and promote survival of the American elm (*Ulmus americana*) in Alberta and to protect the province's landscape trees threatened by pests, with emphasis on invasive alien species. Program funding comes from the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership Program under the Resiliency and Public Trust Initiative, membership fees, Landscape Alberta Nursery Trades Association and Nursery Producers, and casino proceeds.

[Read the report](#)



Pests in the City Workshop

The Alberta Invasive Species Council (AISC) is hosting a free Pests in the City Virtual Workshop on February 7.

This workshop will address identifying, managing and preventing common pests, including rodents, insects (bees, cockroaches), and skunks in urban dwelling areas. The workshop is essential for structural pesticide applicators to stay informed and improve their skills in managing urban pests responsibly and efficiently. Pesticide applicator credits will be offered.

[Learn more and register for the February 7 virtual workshop](#)

Register for AISC's 12th annual conference

Get the latest on invasive species technology, research and management with a variety of sessions offering certified pesticide applicator credits and CEU credits. Register now for the AISC Conference and AGM in Olds on March 5 and 6.

[Learn more and register](#)

Pesticide Applicator Credit Workshop

This workshop is being held March 4, one day before AISC's annual conference in Olds. Pesticide applicator credits will be available in all classes in concepts ranging from environment, human health and safety, to emergency response.

[Register for the March 4 workshop](#)



AgSafe Alberta

AgSafe Alberta is the non-profit health and safety association for Alberta farmers and ranchers, serving agricultural operations of all types and sizes. We help farmers navigate how occupational health and safety applies to their particular operations, as well support them in finding practical ways to make their farms a safer place to live, work and grow up on.

- Keep up with what is happening with agricultural safety in the province by signing up for our free monthly newsletters or following us on social media.
- We offer all types of services to the agricultural community, including free online resources, free and low-cost online learning opportunities, as well as in-person workshops.
- We are always looking for input and feedback. If there is something you think we should be aware of or would support farmers in your area, we would love to hear from you.

What's new from AgSafe Alberta

- All of our paid online courses are free until March 31, 2025 using the **Promo Code STAYSAFE25**.
- Every course (free & paid) or level of the FARMERS CARE Program completed between now and March 31, 2025 gets the person who completed it a chance to win 1 of 5 \$100 UFA gift certificates.
- We are launching our **new** Agricultural Confined Space Awareness Course in late February/early March, 2025. This course is designed to educate farmers on the presence of confined spaces on farms, how to identify them, and provide them with guidance on what next steps to take. This course is short, written in plain language, and is filled with true stories about confined space incidents (far beyond just grain incidents) to drive the message home.

AgSafe Alberta



Working Well workshops

The Working Well program has offered educational workshops for private water well owners across the province for 17 years. In that time, almost 11,000 people have attended 427 workshops across Alberta, learning how to manage and maintain their water wells.

This program would not be what it is today without the enduring support of Alberta Environment and Protected Areas, Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation, Alberta Health Services, licensed water well contractors and the Alberta Water Well Drilling Association, and workshop hosts across the province.

The winter schedule has just been released.

[Find a workshop near you](#)



Nutrient Management [Webinar Series](#)

- Soil Health: Soil Amendments; Soil Health Indicators - [February 3](#)
 - Pasture Management: Bale Grazing; Regenerative Management - [February 10](#)
-



Watershed Stewardship Grant program

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. Creative, innovative and collaborative stewardship projects are encouraged.

The application deadline is **February 21, 2025**.

[Learn more and apply](#)

What's new from the federal government



Winter 2024 seed regulatory modernization consultation

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) sought feedback on recommendations for seed regulatory modernization. The consultation was open for comments from February 8 until May 1, 2024, and covered potential changes that could impact:

- variety registration
- sampling, testing and grading of seed
- sale, import and export of seed
- establishment of an advisory committee and its role in standard setting, including crop varietal purity standards
- establishment of a digital end-to-end seed certification information management system
- establishment of an alternate service delivery arrangement with the Canadian Seed Growers' Association for certain seed certification tasks currently done by the CFIA

A summary report outlines [what we heard](#) from farmers, producers, seed growers, seed analysts, seed developers, seed conditioners, the general public and others who have an interest in seed regulatory modernization.

[Seed regulatory modernization](#)



More wheat but less canola in 2024

In its Production of Principal Field Crops report, Statistics Canada says Canadian farmers reported growing more wheat, oats, soybeans, dry peas and lentils, but less canola, corn for grain and barley in 2024. In general, yields were higher this year compared with 2023.

Alberta highlights:

- higher wheat yields (+7.2% to 47.9 bushels per acre) in 2024, combined with lower harvested area (-0.8%)

to 7.6 million acres), resulted in a 6.4% increase in wheat production to 9.9 million tonnes

- canola production fell 8.5% to 5.1 million tonnes in 2024 due to lower yields (-9.0% to 35.6 bushels per acre), while harvested area rose 0.6% to 6.3 million acres

[Check out all the numbers](#)



2024 crop quality reports

Each year, the Canadian Grain Commission reports on the end-use quality of Canadian grain in the annual harvest and in exports.

Among the highlights for the 2024 crop year:

- the quality of CWRS was excellent, with 94% of the crop in the top two grades
- the quality of Canada Western Amber Durum was generally good, with more than 70% of the crop in the top two grades
- smaller, lighter and thinner kernels of 2024 barley negatively affected the malt extract

[Check out all the reports](#)



**Government
of Canada**

Census of Agriculture: Content Consultation Report, 2026

Before each Census of Agriculture, Statistics Canada conducts an extensive consultation and qualitative testing process to ensure that the content of the questionnaire accurately reflects changes in Canada's agriculture industry. The [Census of Agriculture: Content Consultation Report, 2026](#) reference product is now available.



New intake period for Youth Employment and Skills Program

Applications for the Youth Employment and Skills Program (YESP) opened on **January 27, 2025**. Supported by an investment of approximately \$13.5 million, YESP is an initiative aimed at helping young Canadians access employment opportunities and gain valuable work experience in the agricultural sector, while contributing to the growth of the agricultural community in Canada.

Eligible applicants include producers, agri-businesses, industry associations, provincial and territorial governments, Indigenous organizations and research facilities. Applications from Indigenous employers will be prioritized for the 2025-2026 program year.

[Youth Employment and Skills program](#)

Events

Nutrient Management [Webinar Series](#)

- Soil Health: Soil Amendments; Soil Health Indicators - [February 3](#)
- Pasture Management: Bale Grazing; Regenerative Management - [February 10](#)

Working Well Workshops, in-person and virtual - [February 4 - March 25](#)

Pests in the City Workshop, virtual - [February 7](#)

Bridging the Gap Farm Transition [Workshop](#)

- [February 11](#) - Lloydminster
- [February 25](#) - Lethbridge
- [March 5](#) - Grande Prairie

Farming Smarter Conference & Trade Show, Lethbridge - [February 12 & 13](#)

Water Management in Alberta's Boreal 2025: The state of boreal watersheds, Grande Prairie - [February 25 & 26](#)

Professional Vegetation Management Spring Conference & Trade Show, Enoch - [February 25-27](#)

Pesticide Applicator Credit Workshop, Olds - [March 4](#)

Canadian Turf and Forage Seed Convention, Grande Prairie - [March 4 & 5](#)

Canadian Crops Convention: Navigating our Future, Edmonton - [March 4-6](#)

Alberta Invasive Species Council 12th Annual Conference, Olds - [March 5 & 6](#)

Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership Value-Added Grant Program Overview, virtual - [March 6](#)

Farmer Pesticide Certificate Course, Daysland - [March 12](#)

Save the Date - Watershed Management in Land Use Planning: Guide for Local Governments - [March 14](#)

Advancing Women Conference West 2025, Calgary - [March 16-18](#)

2025 Pesticide Applicator Workshop, virtual - [March 20](#)

ASB Regional Liaison contacts

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	Khalil Ahmed	Gayah Sieusahai
NORTHWEST	Trevor Wallace	Shawn Elgert
NORTHEAST	Dillis Pelletier	Hannah McKenzie
CENTRAL	Kellie Jackson	Vacant
SOUTH	Alan Efetha	Joe Harrington

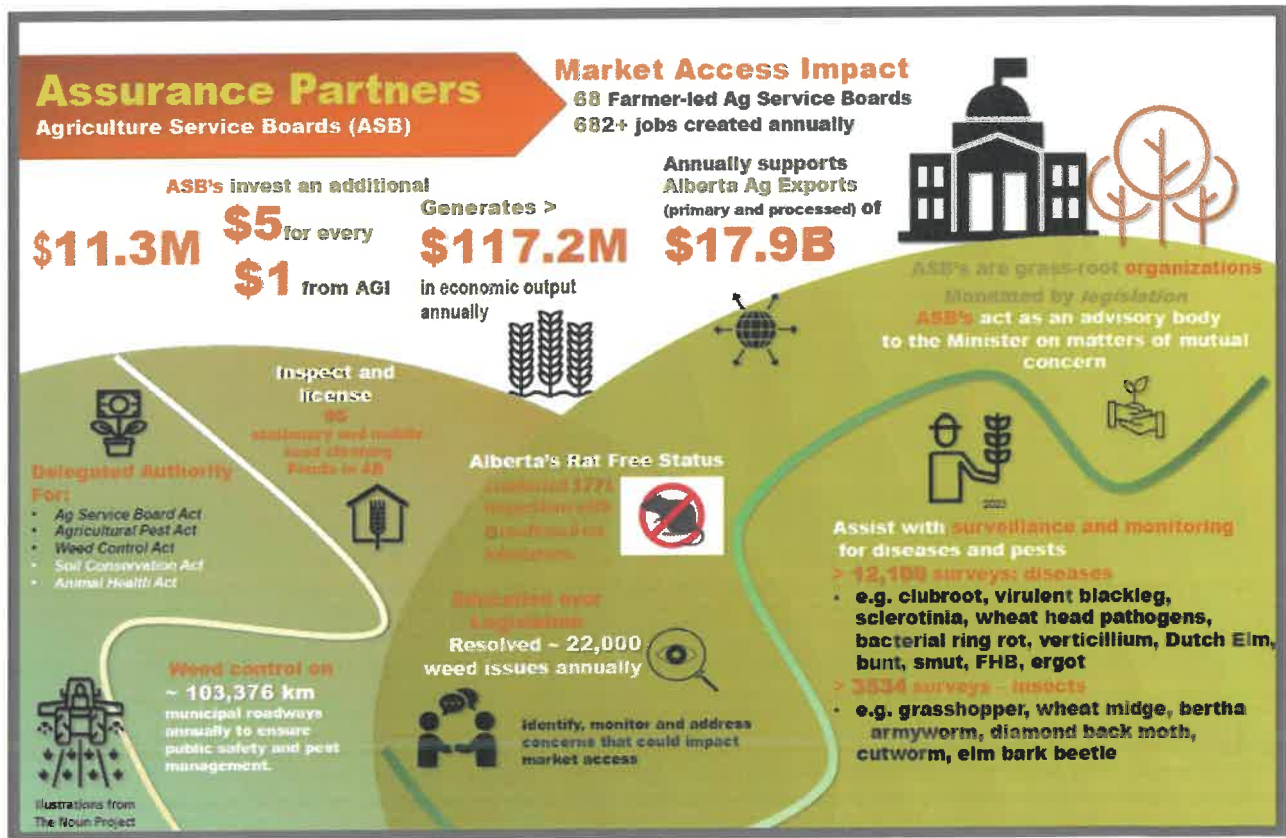


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Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation is on Instagram as [@AlbertaAgriculture](https://www.instagram.com/AlbertaAgriculture). Follow along to stay informed on the latest updates from the Ministry and see highlights from rural communities across Alberta.

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

Agriculture Service Board Program



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Agricultural Service Boards website

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Agriculture Service Boards Program

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