



Canadian Agricultural Partnership

www.cap.alberta.ca | 310-FARM (3276)

On farms, work is constant and quick decisions are often necessary; however, when harvest is done and the cows are home, thoughts turn to next season and plans for spring.

Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) programs may support your future plans. Winter is an ideal time to submit CAP applications because the review process can take many weeks. An application is required for most programs before a project starts.

A current Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) is required for some CAP programs. Winter is also a great time to work on your EFP. You can learn more about how to renew or start an EFP at www.albertaeefp.com.

The CAP program lists nine programs relevant to farmers and ranchers. Kim Barkwell, Leduc and Wetaskiwin counties' sustainable agriculture program coordinator, can assist you with applications and the EFP process. Contact her at kimb@leduc-county.com.

Team Alberta's three-year grain conditioning study

Last year was the first of a three-year study commissioned by Team Alberta to assess on-farm energy consumption and efficiency of different grain drying methods.

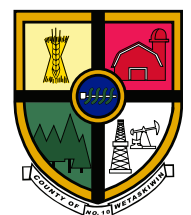
Talk about timing! Harvest was difficult last fall and most crops came off wet. An article in the July 23 Alberta Farmer

Express highlighted that first-year data from the study already provided some surprises. One of those was the high degree of variability in the efficiency of Natural Air Drying (NAD) fans aided by supplemental heat. The article can be found at albertafarmexpress.ca.

The Canadian Agricultural Partnership's Efficient Grain Dryer program was developed to off-set 50 per cent of energy efficient component cost over standard set-ups. The payoff is seen in reduced energy costs over time, energy conservation and reduced carbon emissions. The program is closed to applications; however, producers can subscribe to email updates regarding the program and can be notified when the program opens again. Subscribe here: cap.alberta.ca/CAP/subscribe.

The Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute (PAMI) features crop storage solutions and fact sheets on their website, including a fact sheet on supplemental heating: pami.ca/crops/storage/

Team Alberta is made up of Alberta Barley, Alberta Canola, Alberta Pulse Growers and the Alberta Wheat Commission. The organizations represent more than 20,000 farms across Alberta.



Supporting producers' mental health

Local producers have faced many challenges this year. In the spring, soil was still saturated from last year's heavy rains, and then our region received record amounts of rainfall, leading Leduc County to declare a Local State of Agricultural Disaster on July 23. The weather-related challenges resulted in economic uncertainties and financial stress for many producers.

Producers are used to working in challenging conditions. They work long hours, often alone, under significant financial pressure. These factors – especially when combined with this year's challenges – can lead to stress and feeling overwhelmed.

Stress can lead to anxiety, depression and even suicide. An important step in mental health is watching out for each other. Producers will bend over backwards to help their neighbours, whether it be to help with equipment or to assist someone who is injured. Helping those who need mental health support is just as important.

If you notice any of the following signs in your neighbours in the agricultural community, it may be time to reach out and offer to help:

- ▶ feeling sad or hopeless
- ▶ finding it hard to concentrate or focus
- ▶ being constantly exhausted
- ▶ increasing irritability

Always call 9-1-1 in an emergency.



Mental health resources

As producers, there are many stressors that are out of your control. If the stress becomes overwhelming, it's important to know how to get support. There are a number of online resources available related to mental health and agriculture, including:

- ▶ Farm Credit Canada: fcc-fac.ca/en/community/wellness
- ▶ Do More Agriculture Foundation: domore.ag
- ▶ Canadian Agricultural Safety Association: casa-acsa.ca/en/topic/mental-health-stress
- ▶ Leduc County Family and Community Support Services (FCSS): **780-979-2385**

Provides free one-to-one support to encourage people to cope and be resilient. Hosts workshops to promote positive mental health strategies.

- ▶ 211

Call **2-1-1** for information on social supports 24 hours per day, seven days a week. You can also text 211 and type INFO to chat live with a support team.

- ▶ Access 24/7: **780-424-2424**

Provides 24/7 telephone support, in-person assessment, crisis outreach and patient stabilization.

- ▶ Mental Health Help Line: **1-877-303-2642**

Provides 24/7 confidential, anonymous service, crisis intervention, information about mental health programs and services and referrals to other agencies if needed.

- ▶ Distress Line: **780-482-4357 (HELP)**

Provides 24/7 confidential, non-judgmental and short-term crisis intervention, emotional support and resources to people in crisis or distress. Provides support to family, friends and caregivers of people in crisis.

Biological control of Canada thistle

Trials and anecdotes from the field

Canada thistle stem-mining weevils and Canada thistle stem-gall flies are two biological control methods for Canada thistle. They provide an option for controlling thistle, particularly in areas where herbicides are not recommended.

These agents are seasonally available through the West Central Forage Association. Contact Jessica at conservationag@westcentralforage.com or **780-621-8670** for more information on ordering and availability.

Trials

Season three – Canada thistle stem-mining weevil project between County of Wetaskiwin and Grey Wooded Forage Association (GWFA)

This project has been featured in previous editions of the ASB News and Views newsletter. In fall 2017, Canada thistle stem-mining weevils were released at a riparian area along Big Stone Creek as part of a five-year trial.

In mid-June this year, thistle stem damage and larvae were observed in the trial site. The estimated thistle count in the entire 4 x 4 metre patch has been reduced to less than half the amount found in 2017. The weevils appear to be working!

Local perspective

Leduc County residents, the Beaudins, have been ordering weevils for many years; they wanted to avoid using herbicide control methods. Overall, they are satisfied with the results; the most difficult aspect has been acquiring the weevils. Demand often outweighs supply and sometimes not all

orders are met. Delivery and cost were also noted as points of concern. Regardless, they have seen large thistle patches nearly eradicated over a few years and plan to keep using weevils on their property.

A County of Wetaskiwin resident has been using stem-gall fly to control thistle in large patches along a wetland riparian area comprised of native willow, aspen and balsam poplar. Flies have been released in several spots and thistle number has reduced in some patches. The resident said, "I would usually spray out thistle but won't do that in this sensitive area. Watching for stem-gall fly activity and over-wintering galls is a lot more fun than hand-pulling thistles."



Larvae and stem damage

Amendments to the meat inspection regulation

On July 29, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry announced amendments to the meat inspection regulation.

The new regulation allows a consumer to buy an animal directly from a farmer and have it slaughtered on-farm, with the resulting meat products going to that consumer only. Meat from animals slaughtered on-farm is uninspected, not for re-sale and is for that consumer's household only.

A licensed mobile butcher can perform the slaughter, or the farmer can obtain an uninspected slaughter operation

licence.

The expectation is the ability to slaughter on-farm will increase farm-direct sales of animals.

Another amendment is ante-mortem (before death) inspection. Meat and Dairy Inspection Section (MDIS) inspectors will be able to perform ante-mortem inspections remotely using video technology for animals that are unfit for transport or emergency situations. The resulting carcass must be transported to a licensed abattoir within two hours to complete the

slaughter and post-mortem inspection. Afterwards, inspected products can be sold into regular channels.

The change supports the humane treatment of animals unfit for transport and decreases food waste. This system is due to come into effect on January 31, 2022. The delay to 2022 allows for more testing of the technology involved.

A set of fact sheets outlining the amendments is available online at <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/meat-inspection-regulation-amendments>.

Wetaskiwin-Leduc ALUS habitat structures

Delivered to farmers and ranchers in the County of Wetaskiwin No. 10 and Leduc County through the Sustainable Agriculture Program

One way ALUS participants can enhance their projects is by adding habitat structures, such as nest boxes, to the project area. This spring, Wetaskiwin-Leduc ALUS teamed up with Leduc County Parks and Recreation for a virtual mountain bluebird nest box-building project.

Families pre-registered and picked up box kits. They built the boxes on their own or followed along on a Zoom

webinar. Families brought boxes to the ALUS participant's farm for installation by appointment. Although the boxes are meant for mountain bluebirds, other native cavity nesters such as tree swallows may be attracted.

An appreciation of nature and farming often go hand and hand. Enhancing their ALUS projects with habitat structures is another way ALUS participants provide nature's benefits to all.

If you are interested in the ALUS program, call **780-387-6182** or email kbarkwell@county10.ca.



Watering systems for beef cattle

The Beef Cattle Research Council has a webpage focused on water systems for beef cattle: www.beefresearch.ca/research-topic.cfm/water-systems-for-beef-cattle-104.

Although the emphasis is on beef cattle, much of the information is relevant for all grazing livestock.

The sustainable agriculture program promotes in-direct watering systems because cattle can have a negative impact on natural water sources.

A great aspect to this management shift is it benefits more than just the natural

environment. Water is an essential nutrient; water quality and intake will affect cattle growth and performance — providing a cleaner, more reliable source of water can have production benefits.

Many producers mention decreased incidence of foot rot when cattle no longer drink directly from wetlands, creeks or dugouts. Riparian areas (the ribbon of green around natural waterbodies) are excellent sources of forage and can be particularly important in dry years.

An alternative watering system needs to fit a farm's unique situation. Although

the concept of off-site watering is universal, it is important to design the system to suit the operation. It does not have to be expensive or complicated. The Beef Cattle Research Council watering system webpage even provides a water systems calculator to compare the economics of different options.

Further, watering systems are a funded project under the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP). Farmers and ranchers can apply to the program before purchase and receive some financial support. Learn more at <https://cap.alberta.ca/CAP/Programs/role/Primary%20Producer-Farmer-Rancher>

Kim's corner

Call it naïve, optimistic or a combination of both, but in March, I expected things to be 'back to normal' by fall. Obviously, this is not the case and our COVID-19 collective circumstances remain up in the air.

In the meantime, I will continue sharing online opportunities provided by our partners and other organizations.

The sustainable agriculture program continues to provide support for CAP applications and the Environmental Farm Plan process.

If you're curious about the Alternative Land Use Services program (ALUS), winter is a great time to plan an ALUS project proposal. Connect with the sustainable agriculture coordinator by calling **780-387-6182**.

Looking for more?

If you have any questions or wish to bring a matter to the attention of your Agricultural Service Board, please contact your county's Agricultural Services department.

- ▶ County of Wetaskiwin No. 10 Agricultural Services: 780-361-6226
- ▶ Leduc County Agricultural Services: 780-955-4593

Visit the county websites for more information:

- ▶ www.county.wetaskiwin.ab.ca
- ▶ www.leduc-county.com

Stay connected

Sign up for Ag Matters, Leduc County's monthly agricultural e-newsletter. Subscribe at www.leduc-county.com/agriculture