



Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP)

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

Changes made to the CAP program earlier this year will remain in effect for the remainder of the CAP program, which expires on March 31, 2023. There is a focus on agri-food and agri-processing, on-farm innovation and technological advancement, and public trust in agriculture. More information is available online at www.cap.alberta.ca.

CAP producer programs currently accepting applications relate to the following topics:

- ▶ Efficient Grain Handling
- ▶ Farm technology
- ▶ Water

CAP programs that are *now closed* for the remainder of CAP include:

- ▶ Environmental Stewardship and Climate Change - Producer Program
- ▶ Environmental Stewardship and Climate Change - Group Program

Environmental Farm Plan (EFP)

Both the Efficient Grain Handling and Farm Technology programs require a current EFP. Producers can work on their EFP while their project is in progress; however, the EFP needs to be complete by their project end date. To be current, an EFP needs to be less than ten years old.

Renew or start a new EFP at www.albertaefp.com.

The counties' sustainable agriculture program coordinator can assist you with the EFP process and CAP program applications. Contact the coordinator at **780-387-6182**.

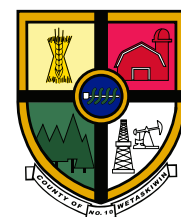
Provincial and federal drought response

Support for Alberta farmers and ranchers

There are a number of resources available to help support Alberta farmers and ranchers who are experiencing problems because of this year's drought.

- ▶ The Ag-Info Centre:
310-FARM (3276)
- ▶ Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC):
www.afsc.ca
 - ▶ 2021 Canada-Alberta Livestock Feed Assistance Initiative
 - ▶ Business risk management programs

- ▶ Livestock tax deferral: Leduc County and County of Wetaskiwin are among many prescribed regions:
www.agriculture.canada.ca
- ▶ Alberta Agriculture:
www.alberta.ca/farming-in-dry-conditions.aspx
- ▶ Water pumping program:
www.alberta.ca/water-pumping-program.aspx
- ▶ Extreme heat resources to assist with animal care (Alberta Farm Animal Care):
www.afac.ab.ca/resources/emergency-preparedness



ALUS Wetaskiwin-Leduc

ALUS projects increase nature on your farm in areas that are environmentally sensitive, difficult to farm or not agriculturally productive.

The below project examples feature a variety of local ALUS projects in Leduc County and the County of Wetaskiwin.

Riparian pasture fencing

Clean water is important for the health of livestock. Fencing along creeks and other waterbodies to manage livestock access will help keep water clean and protect shoreline health. This allows the riparian area (the vegetated area adjacent to the water) to flourish and function as a buffer to slow water run-off, help control erosion and filter out sediment and debris. With the water source protected, a solar water system, for example, can provide clean drinking water for livestock.

Tree planting

Trees offer numerous environmental benefits. They provide bank stabilization along watercourses and a food source and habitat for wildlife. Trees take carbon dioxide from the air and release oxygen during photosynthesis.



An eco-buffer is a planned, diverse grouping of native trees, shrubs and/or flowering plants planted together to buffer ecologically sensitive areas. These high-density groupings work to

provide many ecosystem services, such as shelter, habitat, soil conservation, water quality protection, nutrient and water management.

We will work with you to achieve your planting goals by considering the site characteristics, planting design, appropriate site preparations and a maintenance plan to ensure the best chance of success.

Native pollinator habitat

Pollinators are small, but mighty! Bees, butterflies, beetles and birds aid flowering crop production. Almost three-quarters of all the flowering plants in the world rely, at least to some degree, on pollinators to play this role.



By planting native plants such as saskatoon, lowbush cranberry and red raspberry, you will attract pollinators and be able to enjoy tasty fruit. Other example varieties include trembling aspen, prickly rose, or wild gooseberry. Choose a variety of species that bloom at different times throughout the spring, summer and fall to provide a long foraging season. Planting habitats for pollinators along the edges of cropland can also help increase crop yields.



Wildlife habitat

Habitat for deer, moose and other large animals may simply be the existence of essential elements such as tree cover (shelter), food and water. You can create habitat for birds and bats by installing a bird or bat house. Did you know the Little Brown Myotis bat is an endangered species in Canada? Although rarely seen, Alberta has at least nine species of bats and some of their favourite foods include insects that are pests to our forests, crops and even ourselves!

Enhanced wetland buffer and grassed waterways

Wetlands in Alberta cover approximately 20 per cent of the landscape. In the past, wetlands were perceived as a nuisance and hindrance to development, which led to infill, draining, destruction and removal. Today, we recognize the value and importance of these ecosystems for water quality, storage and flood control, as well as aquatic and terrestrial habitat. Did you know that peatland is a type of wetland, and is one of the greatest carbon storage sources? By restoring or simply protecting our wetlands, we can provide a very important ecological service. Another project is grassed waterways, which prevent soil erosion and gully formation.



Adaptive Grazing and Grazing Management

Sean McGrath, Round Rock Ranching/Ranching Systems

Adaptive grazing is about adjusting to conditions that exist on your own farm or ranch and using resources available to match plants and animals together over the course of the season. The outcomes of adaptive grazing are more important than the pathway taken to achieve them. Flexibility is key.

Conversely, overgrazing is the enemy and rest is the superhero. Plants want to grow – and managers want them to grow. Overgrazing occurs when a plant is grazed again before it has recovered from a previous grazing.

Think about pasture management like hay management. Farmers would never cut hay on June 1 and then come back again to cut it on June 10. McGrath says, “How do we park cows the way we park a hay bine?”

It comes back to observation, which is critical. Start livestock in the paddock in best condition – then move when another paddock is in better condition than what cattle are in. Always choose the best paddock. The time needed to recover will depend on time of year and weather conditions.

More tools are needed with adaptive grazing, but there are many benefits to the practice which counterbalance the additional time and infrastructure needed. After a season like this one, who can argue the benefits of improved forage production and extended grazing

seasons that can come with this type of management?

Fencing allows for smaller paddocks and will give plants more time to recover. Use the landscape and natural features to control cattle movement and move grazing pressure. For example, a 90-acre grazing cell divided into 21 paddocks averaged three days grazing per paddock. This allowed for 60 days worth of recovery from the first-to-last paddock grazed. Moving salt/mineral and the water source are other ways to distribute animals and use pasture space more evenly.

Alright, how is this all put into practice? Before turning animals into pasture, a grazing plan should be developed. First, the plan should define your goals and objectives like profitability measures, time and lifestyle choices, and biological outcomes such as soil health, forage production, ecosystem impacts and animal performance. Perhaps that 90-acre grazing cell with 21 paddocks and average three-day moves will not work for you with an off-farm job, but 10 paddocks with an average of six-day moves would.

Grazing management is a featured topic on the Beef Cattle Research Council website with links to resources for planning, development and/or modification of your grazing system. Learn more at www.beefresearch.ca.

McGrath also talked about drought and had some good points to consider. Having a drought plan is especially important. “By creating and sticking to a good plan, the worst thing that will happen is you get rained out!” The following details were discussed:

- ▶ It does not always rain, but drought planning should start when it is raining
- ▶ Litter and organic matter are our rain barrel. They act like a sponge and help retain moisture.
- ▶ Slow down grazing, give plants longer to recover. This feeds back to the observation component of adaptive grazing.
- ▶ Shut the gate - do not let cattle access all the plants, control movement.
- ▶ Drought can be a fantastic opportunity to clean up cow herds. Have trigger dates. Trigger dates should be written down and firm. If you do not have access to forage by your trigger dates, activate your marketing hit list.
- ▶ Marketing hit list:
 - ▶ Open cows
 - ▶ Yearlings
 - ▶ Temperament/productivity
- ▶ If you start marketing cows and the rains come – there are other good cows out there for replacements.

Ag Forward: managing on-farm plastics

Agricultural Plastics Recycling Group (APRG) is made up of more than 20 organizations in Alberta. It was granted funding in 2019 for a three-year pilot program to recycle grain bags and twine. Cleanfarms is managing the program.

Cleanfarms and APRG began publishing a series of information articles on agricultural plastic management this summer. In the August issue, they review how ag

plastic recycling works in Alberta, along with challenges and opportunities. A common theme throughout their monthly series will be an exploration of how used agricultural plastics can be recycled and returned to the economy where they can be remanufactured into new products.

View published and upcoming editions at cleanfarms.ca.

Kim's corner

The past few seasons have been similar to the 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' children's story. It has been too wet or too dry, but unfortunately, there has been little of 'just right.'

When driving around the countryside this summer, the only green areas were around wetlands and creeks, which visually highlights their importance and function more than in a year with average rainfall.

The 1970s and 80s were a time when agricultural water management often meant drain and develop. Knowledge has changed, but it can take attitudes longer to adapt, so wetlands are still considered waste lands by many. Droughts reaffirm the value of wetlands in recharging groundwater sources, as back-up surface water supplies and wildlife habitat. People can have a love/hate relationship with beaver, but during drought, beaver ponds might be the only source of livestock water left on the landscape.

Agriculture and nature can co-exist in the same system. Maintaining natural spaces within your agricultural operation provides many benefits to you and society in general. Those benefits add resilience and help mitigate the weather swings we are seeing more often.

Dan Liddle, a local producer and ALUS participant, spoke with Global News about the importance of wetlands during drought. Watch the video at <https://bit.ly/39bfWJV>.

Stay connected

Leduc County

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

County of Wetaskiwin

Do you want to receive email/text message updates directly to your phone from the County of Wetaskiwin about agricultural services including mowing, spraying, the ALUS program, weeds, pest control and so much more?

To sign up, visit www.county.wetaskiwin.ab.ca/list, enter your email address, scroll down to News Flashes and select the letter(email) or phone(text) icon next to Agricultural to subscribe. For assistance contact 780-361-6220.



Environmental Farm Plan Workshop

JOIN US VIRTUALLY

SEPTEMBER 22 1 PM - 3 PM	OCTOBER 19 9 AM - 11 AM
NOVEMBER 24 9 AM - 11 AM	DECEMBER 14 1 PM - 1:30 PM

Register: info@albertaefp.com
587-200-2552

Funded by the Government of Canada and the Government of Alberta through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership.



EFP Webinar Series

Join us on Zoom to learn more about the Alberta Environmental Farm Plan program, and why you would want to have an EFP for your farm.

	October 13, 2021 2 pm - 2:30 pm
	November 16, 2021 9 am - 9:30 am
	December 7, 2021 1 pm - 1:30 pm

REGISTER
INFO@ALBERTAEFP.COM
587-200-2552

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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 or visit www.county.wetaskiwin.ab.ca
- ▶ Leduc County Agricultural Services: 780-955-4593 or visit www.leduc-county.com

