

Rural Alberta is home to a large agriculture industry that has supported Alberta's economy for generations. There is a broad range in the types and size of farming operations in Alberta; from small family operations to large-scale facilities. This results in a diverse industry with different regulatory and operating challenges, and is also impacted significantly by global market influences as well as unpredictable weather and climate fluctuations.

What is the AAMDC's position on the importance of having a municipal perspective in the agriculture industry?

- Agriculture is a vital industry in Alberta and supports the sustainability of our rural communities.
- As the voice for rural Alberta, the AAMDC advocates for the need to protect and promote the agriculture industry to ensure it remains a contributor to Alberta's economy.
- Due to its unique nature, regulatory changes may have unintended consequences on the agriculture industry. As such, it is vital that the Government of Alberta thoroughly consult with agriculture stakeholders and producers prior to making changes that may impact their operations.

What financial considerations do rural municipalities have with respect to the agriculture industry?

- The agriculture industry requires consistent support to promote industry sustainability and enable value-added options that will contribute to a diversified local and provincial economy.
- Agricultural income is vulnerable to extreme market fluctuations and natural disasters. Federal and provincial programs that provide assistance for producers, should be designed to support the industry and address diverse conditions experienced.
- The AAMDC appreciates federal support through programs, such as Growing Forward 2, that reflect the important economic role of agriculture by promoting innovation and enabling the use of new technologies.

- The AAMDC supports the need to improve programs that encourage next-generation entrants into the agriculture industry.
- In some areas of Alberta, intensive agriculture operations cause significant strain on municipal road and bridge infrastructure. It is important that rural municipalities have the autonomy to address this in a way that does not compromise the sustainability of the agriculture industry.

What collaborative relationships are essential to rural municipalities in agricultural development?

- Agricultural producers in Alberta work with multiple levels of government in a variety of capacities. This includes working with municipal governments for land use planning decisions, the provincial government for income support and insurance and federal funding programs.
- Municipalities and agriculture producers work with provincial and federal regulatory bodies, such as the Natural Resources Conservation Board, on the approval process regarding operations.
- Where compliance with provincial and federal legislation requires specific expertise not typically available within municipalities, the regulating government should provide financial or capacity support to municipalities to assist them in gaining the necessary expertise.
- The AAMDC collaborates with the Provincial Agricultural Services Board and jointly advocates on mutual areas of interest to strengthen the rural voice.

What does the AAMDC believe is needed to continue to support the sustainability of the agriculture industry?

- Incorporating innovative technologies and educational advancements encourages competitiveness and supports the viability of the industry.
- To promote the longevity and sustainability of the industry, generally accepted agricultural operations should be protected in legislation and should not be subject to onerous environmental assessment requirements that were designed for other industrial activities.
- To promote positive environmental practices, provincially coordinated and economical programs need to be developed to enable the recycling of plastics, such as grain bags, used in the agricultural industry.
- Agriculture and food production support Alberta's economy and contributes to the availability of quality food within Alberta and across Canada. A positive and collaborative relationship between the provincial government, federal

government, and producers is needed to support a sustainable agriculture industry.

What current agriculture-related issues are impacting rural Alberta?

Enhanced Protection for Farm and Ranch Workers Act

- The *Enhanced Protection for Farm and Ranch Workers Act* serves an important purpose in ensuring that paid agricultural workers have the same rights and protection as other workers in Alberta. It is important that this legislation does not unfairly compromise the ability of agricultural producers to operate sustainably.

Agriculture Disaster Declarations

- In recent years, agriculture producers have experienced drought and excessive moisture conditions impacting agricultural production and crop yields. These conditions have resulted in municipalities and the province declaring states of agriculture disasters.
- In collaboration with the Government of Alberta and the Agriculture and Financial Services Corporation, the AAMDC developed *A Guide for Declaring Municipal Agricultural Disasters in Alberta* to guide the municipal decision-making process. Supported by data, these declarations can help to inform governments, industry and residents regarding developing situations.

Land use

- Competing demands for land-use in a growing province have impacts on the agriculture industry. The Land-use Framework acknowledges the impacts of urban sprawl and seeks to address the fragmentation and conversion of agricultural lands but stronger land-use planning practices are needed to promote infill and consider the preservation of valuable agricultural lands.
- The sterilization of large tracts of agricultural lands can have significant impacts on the ability of agriculture producers to maximize the full potential of Alberta's agriculture resources (ex. caribou protection areas).

Pests

- The AAMDC values the importance of protecting the agricultural industry from potentially damaging infestations of pests (ex. *Fusarium graminearum*, Norway rat) that could have significant economic impacts for producers.
- The *Agricultural Pests Act* is a valued piece of legislation that identifies threats and enables producers, inspectors and local authorities to deal with native and introduced pests and nuisances which affect agricultural production.

Rail

- Moving products to market is vital to the sustainability of the agriculture industry. With a recent increase in the use of rail transportation in a variety of industries, the availability of track and rail cars for the movement of agricultural products needs to be prioritized. It is vital that all levels of government collaborate on establishing a long-term solution to grain by rail backlogs.

For more information, visit www.aamdc.com for a searchable **Resolution Database** which includes information on all active resolutions and emerging issues related to agriculture.

AAMDC resources specifically related to the position statements identified in this document include:

- ***[A Guide for Declaring Municipal Agricultural Disasters in Alberta](#)***

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