

Some Highlights from 2009

One of the AEPA's most important roles is to provide agriculture's viewpoints in the development of policies, programs and initiatives. In 2009, the AEPA set out recommendations on four key agri-environmental issues.

When the AEPA decides to tackle a specific issue, it begins by creating a project team with representatives from agencies that have an interest in the issue. The team investigates the issue and, through consultation and dialogue, it develops draft recommendations for the AEPA Board to consider. The Board members take the recommendations back to the agencies they represent, so all agencies can have input. Then the Board discusses the input with the goal of reaching consensus on the recommendations. The AEPA provides its final recommendations to the appropriate organizations such as Government of Alberta departments, agriculture industry groups and other agencies.

Here are a few highlights from the reports on the four issues addressed in 2009:

- Ecosystem Services (ES):** ES are environmental outcomes provided by healthy ecosystems. ES from agri-ecosystems include food production as well as ecosystem processes that sustain our air, soil, water and biodiversity, and benefit human health and quality of life. The AEPA's recommendations on ES involve several interacting policies and actions to encourage and reward producers for providing ES in working agricultural landscapes. The recommendations focus on: engaging the agriculture industry in identifying and providing ES; collecting scientific information on ES in agricultural landscapes; and working with the Institute for Agriculture, Forestry and the Environment (IAFE) in proposing an ES policy framework to the Government of Alberta.
- Environmental Market Opportunities (EMO):** EMOs are market-driven opportunities related to the provision of sustainable ecosystem services. The AEPA believes participation in the "green" marketplace should be voluntary. It recommends producer organizations work with Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development to investigate specific eco-branding and eco-labeling opportunities. It also recommends steps for creating a strong science-based foundation to verify environmental performance and build EMOs. As well, the AEPA provides recommendations on working with the IAFE and the Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency to ensure infrastructure is in place, policy is aligned and barriers are removed so EMOs can be captured.
- Manure Nutrient Market:** Manure enhances soil quality and provides nutrients for crops, but these benefits can be overshadowed by disadvantages like high transportation costs. The potential of a manure nutrient

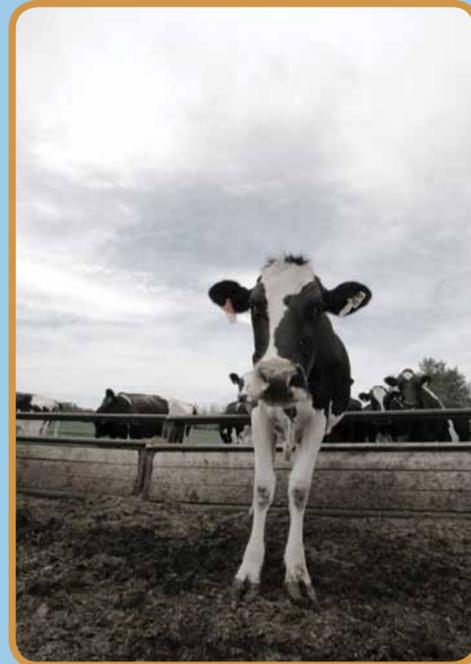


PHOTO CREDIT: David Fairless

market depends on such factors as: competitiveness with fertilizer nutrients, reliable technologies, cost of application and transportation, nutrient use efficiency, and regulatory/policy effectiveness. The AEPA's recommendations address information gaps and barriers to a manure nutrient market, steps to facilitate market development, opportunities to improve manure management efficiency, and issues such as phosphorus loading in the soil.

- Bioenergy Clusters:** A bioenergy cluster is a facility that produces green energy from multiple bio-feedstocks and/or produces several energy outputs. For instance, a cluster could capture biogas energy from livestock manure plus bio-wastes from local communities. A cluster provides mutual benefits to the partners involved in the cluster, such as reduced costs or increased investment opportunities. The AEPA's recommendations focus on opportunities for streamlining and improving policies, regulations, extension and investment to increase the production of green energy through a viable, rural community-based, bioenergy industry. The AEPA will monitor and evaluate potential opportunities and policy barriers related to bioenergy clusters in 2010.

The full reports on these four issues are available on the AEPA's website (www.agpartners.ca).

AEPA Board Members, 2009

The members of the AEPA's Board of Directors and their alternates are committed to two-way communication between the agencies they represent and the Board, to enable the AEPA to develop a unified voice on priority issues.

Board Member/Alternate	Agencies Represented
LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY GROUPS	
Glenda Elkow/Diana O'Hara	Alberta's 7 diversified livestock organizations (Alberta Elk Commission, Alberta Goat Breeders Association, Alberta Reindeer Association, Alberta Whitetail and Mule Deer Association, Bison Producers of Alberta, Horse Industry Association of Alberta, Ostrich Association of Alberta)
Tim Hofstra	Alberta Milk
Jurgen Preugschas, Co-Chair/Will Kingma	Alberta Pork
John Richter/Martin Van Diemen	Alberta's 4 poultry organizations (Alberta Chicken Producers, Alberta Egg Producers, Alberta Turkey Producers, Alberta Hatching Egg Producers)
Rich Smith/Bryan Walton	Alberta Beef Producers, Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association
CROP INDUSTRY GROUPS	
Graham Caskey/Ward Toma	Alberta Canola Commission
Tom Jackson/Sheri Strydhorst	Alberta Pulse Growers
Wayne Tuck/Rick Istead	Alberta Winter Wheat Commission
John Wozniak/Darcy Kirtzinger	Alberta Barley Commission
ENVIRONMENTAL NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS	
Kim Schmitt	Ducks Unlimited Canada
GOVERNMENTS	
Bob Barss	Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties
Ernie Hui/Janet Mclean	Alberta Environment
Colin Jeffares, Co-Chair/Carol Bettac	Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development
Dan Wilkinson	Alberta Sustainable Resource Development
LIAISON	
Rodney Dlugos	Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Terry Young/Jurgen Preugschas	Institute for Agriculture, Forestry and the Environment

Contact the AEPA

For more information about the Agri-Environmental Partnership of Alberta, please contact the AEPA Secretariat:

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Or visit the AEPA's website, www.agpartners.ca

PHOTO CREDIT: David Fairless

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AGRI-ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNERSHIP OF ALBERTA

2009 ANNUAL REVIEW

ABOUT THE AGRI-ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNERSHIP OF ALBERTA

The Agri-Environmental Partnership of Alberta (AEPA) is an inclusive partnership of the agriculture industry, government and environmental stakeholders. This diverse group provides a unique forum for developing balanced policies and programs to encourage a vibrant, profitable agriculture industry and a healthy, sustainable environment.

The AEPA grew out of a need identified by many agricultural organizations for a transparent partnership between government and the agriculture industry and for a collaborative approach to resolving agri-environmental issues. The AEPA was formed near the end of 2007, and its Board of Directors was established in January 2008.

The AEPA provides a unified voice on agri-environmental issues in Alberta. The 15 members of its Board of Directors and their alternates provide direct communication links to numerous organizations including crop and livestock agencies, federal, provincial and municipal government agencies, and an environmental non-government organization.

The Board is jointly chaired by a representative of Alberta's agriculture industry and a representative of the Government of Alberta. The AEPA Secretariat carries out administrative functions for the AEPA.

Using a consensus-based approach, the AEPA identifies its agri-environmental priorities, sets broad policy directions and coordinates resources to address priority issues. It takes a strategic, pro-active approach to achieving its three goals, which are:

- Agricultural producers in Alberta are recognized as good stewards of the environment.
- Alberta has a growing, profitable agriculture industry.
- Environmental health in the agricultural areas of Alberta shows measurable improvement.

By working together, the AEPA aims to ensure a balance between a healthy environment and a viable agriculture industry in Alberta.

This report reviews the AEPA's activities and accomplishments in 2009.

VISION

Alberta's agriculture industry is profitable, thriving, accountable and recognized for its pro-active, responsible environmental stewardship.

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FROM THE AEPA'S INDUSTRY CO-CHAIR

JURGEN PREUGSCHAS

Pork producer and delegate with Alberta Pork

Involvement in the AEPA has been extremely rewarding for me. It has allowed me to watch and be part of a process that brings together different sectors of agriculture along with environmental groups and three levels of government to develop solutions for common concerns and issues.

It is not always easy to accept that there are other views on particular issues varying from our own, but to move ahead requires accepting that knowledge and then debating and building with consensus a solution which will be workable and beneficial for all. What this process and the AEPA has taught me is that this is not about winning or losing, but about finding what is best for all of us in the long-term vision and then planning for our industry and our province.

To a certain degree, I believe we are already achieving this, but as this is a long-term process, the real success will only be visible as we look back years from now. The foundations for decision-making and the processes we are developing will assist the AEPA in the years ahead in coming up with solutions to many controversial issues.

We can be proud of how much the AEPA has already accomplished in its short existence. We have achieved credibility within the agriculture industry and we've become the go-to organization when the Government of Alberta is looking for advice on issues relating to land and the environment. This is a huge step in achieving the influence we had envisioned when we joined together to form the AEPA. For instance, we were asked to recommend who should be agriculture's representatives on the Board of the Institute for Agriculture, Forestry and the Environment. We also continue to be consulted on Alberta's Land-use Framework, and we're being asked for input into key planning efforts, like the new Regional Advisory Councils and regional land-use plans. Our ongoing involvement in the development of government strategies is essential to crafting well thought-out and practical solutions.



PHOTO CREDIT: KerriAnne Koehler-Munro

Besides the dedication of our commodity groups and those who represent them, we are fortunate to have a solid commitment from the Government of Alberta where it is truly a partner at the table. I thank Colin Jeffares, who served as our first Government Co-chair until November 2009, for his hard work and the broad outlook he brought to our discussions. And I appreciate the dedication, work ethic and vision that our new Co-chair, Carol Bettac, brings to the table in her continued involvement in the AEPA.

Also Carrie Selin, our first Executive Manager, was key in getting the AEPA through its formative years. Many thanks to Carrie for all she has done for us and the passion she has shown both for the agriculture industry and the environment. In 2009, we welcomed Janet Dietrich as our new Acting Executive Manager. She has done a superb job of continuing Carrie's good work.

As well as a great staff, working with the Board has been a true pleasure. Most important has been our open, frank and diverse ideas and discussions. Although we don't agree on all the issues, it is essential that all sectors bring to the table all their concerns and that we are able to arrive at solutions which will ultimately benefit the industry and the country.

It has been a privilege to serve as the AEPA's Industry Co-chair in the past year and I know, with the dedication of everyone involved, our vision will be achieved.

FROM THE AEPA'S GOVERNMENT CO-CHAIR

CAROL BETTAC

Director, Agri-Environmental Integration and Engagement, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development

As the Government of Alberta Co-chair for the Agri-Environmental Partnership of Alberta, I believe we made some real progress and certainly accomplished a number of important tasks in 2009.

Through forthright and honest dialogue, we have built a better understanding and reached agreement around a number of critical policy issues. The importance of working in this collaborative partnership to provide a unified approach on priority issues has been recognized by government, and has been demonstrated through the relationships established with groups like the Alberta Land Use Secretariat. The AEPA has created a mechanism for meaningful, authentic dialogue with stakeholders, allowing us to find common ground, and to move forward in a more informed and unified way.

The AEPA represents a unique approach – bringing agriculture industry representatives, three provincial departments, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, municipal government, and environmental non-government organizations to one table to identify priorities, focusing on strategy and policy, and coming to consensus. This approach delivers a powerful message to the policy makers.

The Land-use Framework has been the AEPA's major priority in 2009, as it will be again in 2010. An AEPA working group has already made great strides in developing key messages regarding the agriculture industry's priority land use issues to inform the Regional Advisory Councils and the Land Use Secretariat.

As the AEPA goes into 2010, we have reconfirmed that our partnership is a strong forum to move agri-environmental policy forward collaboratively, and that there are many significant issues that must be addressed. Adjustments to process and governance may be required, but it is clear the approach has gained credibility and support. With an

ongoing commitment to continuous improvement, it will be important to check in to re-evaluate board membership, partner support and engagement as the decisions that are moved forward continue to effect change. Having diverse partners at the table is vital in building a broad understanding and a strong knowledge foundation that result in strong, credible recommendations and messages.

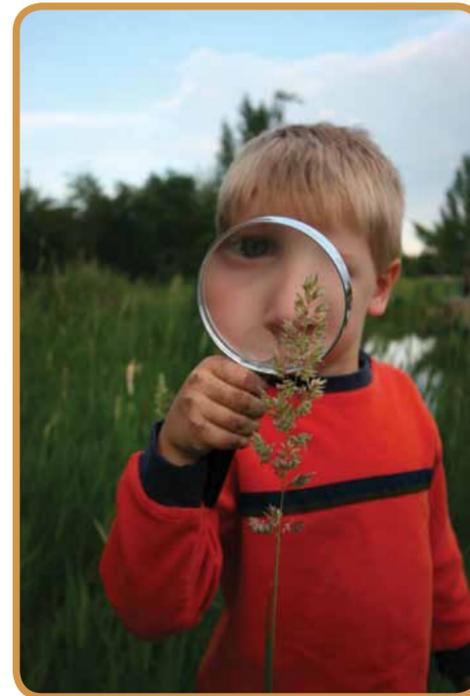


PHOTO CREDIT: David Fairless



PHOTO CREDIT: Linda Jabs



PHOTO CREDIT: Gwen Doran



PHOTO CREDIT: Claudette Lacombe

Finding Common Ground on Land-use

Some of the AEPA's most challenging tasks in 2009 were related to Alberta's new land-use policy.

Land-use decisions can be complicated and contentious, sometimes splitting communities apart. In recent years, rapid population growth and strong economic activity have placed considerable pressure on Alberta's landscapes. Oil and gas, forestry, mining, agriculture, recreation, housing and infrastructure - all compete to use the land.

To create a better balance among economic, social and environmental interests in the land, the Government of Alberta released the Land-use Framework (LUF) in December 2008. The legislation that gives legal authority to LUF, called the *Alberta Land Stewardship Act*, came into effect in October 2009.

LUF provides a comprehensive approach to planning and management of private and public lands in Alberta. LUF's aim is to sustain a healthy economy, healthy ecosystems and people-friendly communities.

Under LUF, the Government of Alberta has divided the province into seven regions. A long-term land-use plan will be developed for each region based on LUF's principles. Each region will have a multi-stakeholder Regional Advisory Council to provide input to Government on the development of the region's plan. By December 2009, two regions had established their Regional Advisory Councils and started work on their regional plans.

Alberta's agriculture industry has a crucial role to play in the development of the LUF regional plans – the industry is a cornerstone of Alberta's economy, it manages much of the private land in Alberta, and its overall goals are aligned with LUF's.

The AEPA wants agriculture's role in LUF to be as effective as possible, and it focused on this initiative through much of 2009.

A STRATEGY TO ENGAGE IN LUF

The AEPA's first step was to create a project team in early 2009 to develop a strategy for the AEPA and agriculture to engage in LUF. The strategy's purpose is to ensure that agriculture's perspectives are put forward strongly, consistently and in a timely manner as the LUF regional plans are developed.

This strategy, called the *Land-use Framework Engagement Strategy*, was completed at the end of May 2009. Its goals include: providing input to assist the Regional Advisory Council members from the agricultural sector, developing relationships with these councils and other key players in land-use planning and decision-making, and developing a common understanding within the agricultural sector about the process for providing input to the LUF regional plans.

The strategy also provides a set of possible actions and suggestions for how to accomplish its goals.

SEEKING A PATH FORWARD

The AEPA immediately began implementing the *Engagement Strategy*, by creating the LUF Advisory Team in June 2009. This team's task is to provide support for the agricultural members on the Regional Advisory Councils and to oversee implementation of the *Engagement Strategy*.

The Advisory Team is composed of representatives from Alberta's livestock and crop sectors and the Government of Alberta. The team is expected to operate until 2012, by which time all regional plans should be completed.

One of the main ways the AEPA wants to assist the agricultural members on the Regional Advisory Councils is by developing key messages on priority issues so those members will have a clear, consistent agricultural viewpoint to bring forward.

The AEPA and the Advisory Team have identified five priority land-use issues to address:

- **Fragmentation and conversion of agricultural land:** Fragmentation occurs when agricultural land becomes divided into separate fragments isolated from each other by non-agricultural land-uses like residential, oil and gas, and so on. Conversion of agricultural land is change from an agricultural to a non-agricultural land-use.
- **Cumulative effects management:** This refers to land-use decision-making that considers the potential impacts of all activities within an area, rather than the impacts of development on a project-by-project basis. The cumulative effects approach is one of LUF's basic principles.
- **Conservation and stewardship tools:** These are methods to encourage and reward environmental stewardship in agriculture. Some examples are conservation easements and transfer of development credits.
- **Surface and ground water quantity and quality concerns:** Agricultural concerns around water are diverse, ranging from farm water conservation, productivity and efficiency, irrigation, wetlands, water supply access and storage.
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These five issues are complex, and opinions about them are diverse, even within the agricultural community.

For each issue, the Advisory Team explores and discusses the topic, with information being provided by guest speakers and other sources. Then the team prepares draft key messages for the AEPA Board. The Board gathers input on the draft messages from agricultural groups and then it finalizes the key messages into a form that all stakeholders

can live with. It seeks consensus, recognizing that this may not be possible in all situations.

In developing the key messages, the Advisory Team operates with the following guiding principles:

- Minimize any negative impact or unintended consequences to the agriculture industry.
- Maximize the benefit to both the industry and the environment.
- Respect individual business decisions and private landowner property interests.
- Maintain sensitivity to social issues, alongside the position that agriculture can co-exist with development and conservation.
- Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the public and private sectors.
- Offer innovative and practical solutions, incorporating fresh and creative processes, systems, technology, approaches and thinking.

In 2009, the Advisory Team developed proposed key messages for the AEPA priority issues which included: outcomes for Alberta's agriculture sector; fragmentation and conversion of agricultural land; cumulative effects management; and conservation and stewardship tools. The Advisory Team will be working on the remaining issues in early 2010, which include surface and ground water quantity and quality concerns, and landowners providing ecosystem services.

As the Board discusses and develops consensus on the key messages, they will be posted on the AEPA website (www.agpartners.ca). This website also has information about the *LUF Engagement Strategy*. For details on Alberta's Land-use Framework, visit www.landuse.alberta.ca.



**Agri-Environmental
Partnership of Alberta**

2009 Annual Review

AGRI-ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNERSHIP OF ALBERTA

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Here are a few highlights from the reports on the four issues addressed in 2009:

- **Ecosystem Services (ES):** ES are environmental outcomes provided by healthy ecosystems. ES from agri-ecosystems include food production as well as ecosystem processes that sustain our air, soil, water and biodiversity, and benefit human health and quality of life. The AEPA's recommendations on ES involve several interacting policies and actions to encourage and reward producers for providing ES in working agricultural landscapes. The recommendations focus on: engaging the agriculture industry in identifying and providing ES; collecting scientific information on ES in agricultural landscapes; and working with the Institute for Agriculture, Forestry and the Environment (IAFE) in proposing an ES policy framework to the Government of Alberta.
- **Environmental Market Opportunities (EMO):** EMOs are market-driven opportunities related to the provision of sustainable ecosystem services. The AEPA believes participation in the "green" marketplace should be voluntary. It recommends producer organizations work with Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development to investigate specific eco-branding and eco-labeling opportunities. It also recommends steps for creating a strong science-based foundation to verify environmental performance and build EMOs. As well, the AEPA provides recommendations on working with the IAFE and the Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency to ensure infrastructure is in place, policy is aligned and barriers are removed so EMOs can be captured.
- **Manure Nutrient Market:** Manure enhances soil quality and provides nutrients for crops, but these benefits can be overshadowed by disadvantages like high transportation costs. The potential of a manure nutrient

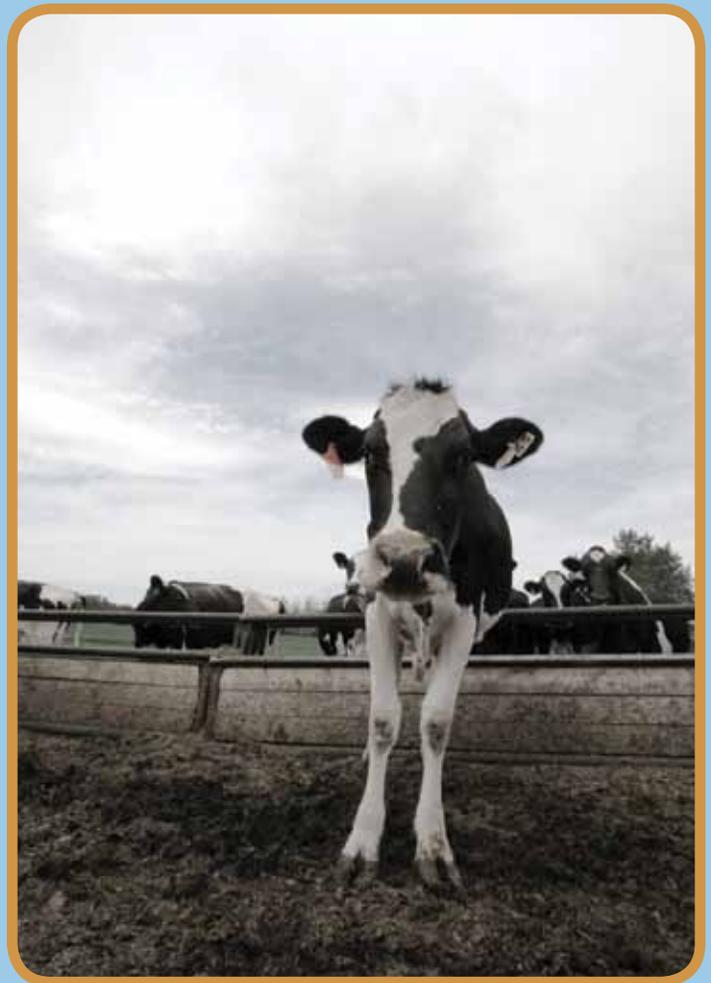


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market depends on such factors as: competitiveness with fertilizer nutrients, reliable technologies, cost of application and transportation, nutrient use efficiency, and regulatory/policy effectiveness. The AEPA's recommendations address information gaps and barriers to a manure nutrient market, steps to facilitate market development, opportunities to improve manure management efficiency, and issues such as phosphorus loading in the soil.

- **Bioenergy Clusters:** A bioenergy cluster is a facility that produces green energy from multiple bio-feedstocks and/or produces several energy outputs. For instance, a cluster could capture biogas energy from livestock manure plus bio-wastes from local communities. A cluster provides mutual benefits to the partners involved in the cluster, such as reduced costs or increased investment opportunities. The AEPA's recommendations focus on opportunities for streamlining and improving policies, regulations, extension and investment to increase the production of green energy through a viable, rural community-based, bioenergy industry. The AEPA will monitor and evaluate potential opportunities and policy barriers related to bioenergy clusters in 2010.

The full reports on these four issues are available on the AEPA's website (www.agpartners.ca).

AEPA Board Members, 2009

The members of the AEPA's Board of Directors and their alternates are committed to two-way communication between the agencies they represent and the Board, to enable the AEPA to develop a unified voice on priority issues.

Board Member/Alternate	Agencies Represented
LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY GROUPS	
Glenda Elkow/Diana O'Hara	Alberta's 7 diversified livestock organizations (Alberta Elk Commission, Alberta Goat Breeders Association, Alberta Reindeer Association, Alberta Whitetail and Mule Deer Association, Bison Producers of Alberta, Horse Industry Association of Alberta, Ostrich Association of Alberta)
Tim Hofstra	Alberta Milk
Jurgen Preugschas, Co-Chair/Will Kingma	Alberta Pork
John Richter/Martin Van Diemen	Alberta's 4 poultry organizations (Alberta Chicken Producers, Alberta Egg Producers, Alberta Turkey Producers, Alberta Hatching Egg Producers)
Rich Smith/Bryan Walton	Alberta Beef Producers, Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association
CROP INDUSTRY GROUPS	
Graham Caskey/Ward Toma	Alberta Canola Commission
Tom Jackson/Sheri Strydhorst	Alberta Pulse Growers
Wayne Tuck/Rick Istead	Alberta Winter Wheat Commission
John Wozniak/Darcy Kirtzinger	Alberta Barley Commission
ENVIRONMENTAL NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS	
Kim Schmitt	Ducks Unlimited Canada
GOVERNMENTS	
Bob Barss	Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties
Ernie Hui/Janet Mclean	Alberta Environment
Colin Jeffares, Co-Chair/Carol Bettac	Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development
Dan Wilkinson	Alberta Sustainable Resource Development
LIAISON	
Rodney Dlugos	Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Terry Young/Jurgen Preugschas	Institute for Agriculture, Forestry and the Environment

Contact the AEPA

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Or visit the AEPA's website, **www.agpartners.ca**

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