

Four crop commissions are launching FarmSustainability.ca

Submitted by Manager Government and Industry Affairs | Alberta Canola

As supply chains and multinationals continue to expand globally seeking lower costs and greater production capacity they are exposed to a widening array of risks. This is especially true when companies expand into developing countries. Our farmers can relate to many of these risks, like supply disruption, cost volatility, compliance with local laws and regulations, and even brand reputation.

Companies like Walmart, General Mills and MacDonald's are looking to source sustainable ingredients to meet the growing expectations from their stakeholders to be more responsible for their suppliers' social, ethical and environmental practices.

Sustainability was just coming onto our radar back in 2015, and the four crop commissions – Alberta Wheat and Barley, Alberta Canola and Alberta Pulse – collaborated on a pilot project that looked at sustainability certification on grain farms. We learned that Alberta farmers are using a lot of beneficial management practices on their farms and that agriculture has great stories to tell, but we needed to be more proactive to help our farmers provide the proof in a way that wasn't too onerous.

So, we've continued to work together, forming the Alberta Farm Sustainability Extension Working Group with the four commissions and staff from Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, and together, we are proud to launch farmsustainability.ca, a hub for advancing sustainability within Canada's cropping sector.

Our working group contracted Groupe Ageco to build this platform, which focuses on increasing farmers' readiness to supply sustainable ingredients. The website provides information about what sustainability is, and addresses the drivers behind sustainable sourcing and sustainability certification.

The tool itself serves as a platform for farmers to voluntarily complete an online self assessment that was created from a hybrid checklist of three international sustainability standards: the International Sustainability and Carbon Certification PLUS (ISCC PLUS), the Sustainable Agriculture Initiative (SAI) Farmer Self- Assessment 2.0, and Unilever's Sustainable Agriculture Code (ULSAC).

The farmer-friendly format makes it easier to understand what the sustainability standards are requiring for compliance. When we reach a critical mass of users, then the tool can also make it easier to understand how their farm compares to industry averages.

In February, several directors went online and completed the tool as part of a pilot project to ensure the tool was fully ready for launch. With a full launch anticipated shortly, who should visit farmsustainability.ca and complete the tool? Our new platform is for farmers who are open to learning more about their operations and who may be considering a sustainability certification program on their farms sometime in the future.

Watch for farmsustainability.ca to become operational very soon.

Questionnaire

ECONOMIC VIABILITY

- 1 Legality and integrity
- 2 Financial viability
- 3 Operations
- 4 Product safety and quality

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

QUESTIONNAIRE ON Economic Viability

Assess your performance in regards to business management and economic viability indicators.

PROGRESS 1/3

Legality and integrity

AWARENESS OF LAWS

1 – Which of the following services do you regularly rely on to ensure legal compliance of your activities and to identify changes in legislation? (Check all that apply)

- Access to legal advisors (e.g. lawyer)
- Access to the resources of commodity associations
- Access to farm/business advisors
- Participation in workshops, training sessions or meetings on regulatory issues
- Access to government (federal, provincial or municipal) resources including websites
- Subscription to newsletters or magazines on regulatory issues
- Other
- I do not use specific services

Tips and Advice

PREVIOUS **SAVE & EXIT** **NEXT**

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