

November 9, 2016

Alberta's Climate Technology Task Force

Online Submission

Dear Task Force Members

On behalf of our partners, the Agri-Environmental Partnership of Alberta (AEPA) would like to offer our advice and recommendations on opportunities with the greatest potential to shift the province to a low-carbon economy.

The AEPA is a diverse multi-stakeholder partnership working together to proactively address agri-environmental issues from a policy perspective. The AEPA includes over 20 industry organizations (crop and livestock), two environmental non-governmental organizations, and three levels of government.

Agriculture is an important renewable and sustainable industry that will continue to generate substantial economic, environmental, and social benefits for all Albertans into the future. These include attributes such as affordable and sustainable food production, cleaner water, flood mitigation, aesthetic landscapes, thriving rural economies, biodiversity, and wildlife habitat. For example, with continuous improvement in land management practices, producers have significantly increased the amount of CO₂ removed from the atmosphere and sequestered in the soil. Many producers have provided these attributes voluntarily because of the management changes they have made over time. The cost of doing so is being shouldered by producers, who are price takers and unable to pass on increased costs.

Advice and Recommendations

- Improve the carbon offset protocol system to increase uptake by the agriculture sector. The current financial value of carbon offsets to individual farms is not significant and often presents an administrative burden with respect to verification and associated transaction costs. A review of the verification process is needed to increase the use of protocols at a practical level. New protocols will encourage adoption and scaling up of new technologies.
- Enhance existing research and extension programs through increased funding. Research and extension are important components of innovation and technology. Extension of research information to crop and livestock producers is critical to increase adoption of best management practices and technologies to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (particularly extension on-farm). Increased funding of existing research and extension programs takes advantage of established linkages, collaborations, and networks.
- Include primary agriculture representation on boards in organizations that fund emissions reduction initiatives. Since the primary agriculture sector is very diverse, complex and highly integrated, knowledge of the industry at the board level is important in order to recognize funding opportunities that reduce emissions. Funding organizations include Emissions Reduction Alberta, Alberta Innovates, and Energy Efficiency Alberta. To assist in the increased participation in funding opportunities, processes should be streamlined to ensure ease of application and timeliness of approval.

- Producers should benefit from their on-farm activities that reduce GHG emissions and sequester carbon. It is essential that producers are integrally involved in developing a strategy that would provide long-term benefits for the agriculture industry. This would help identify issues that may negatively impact long-term competitiveness, economic sustainability, and environmental and social contributions of the agriculture industry. The strategy would also identify opportunities that may have positive impacts, such as increased agriculture productivity using less resources/inputs to produce more, building capacity through relationships, and development of new models/frameworks. This strategy would also help identify investment opportunities for agriculture through the funding organizations.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our suggestions. We encourage consideration of advice and recommendations from our partner organizations and their membership. We would also appreciate ongoing dialogue to ensure opportunities for the agriculture industry that can leverage and contribute insights, innovation and opportunities.

We appreciated the invitation to send a participant to the stakeholder engagement session in Lethbridge on October 19. As the AEPA representative, I thought it was a good opportunity to provide input from the primary agriculture perspective.

If you have any questions regarding our submission, I can be reached at 403-382-0130 or via email at diemen@shockware.com. Alternatively, you can contact Janet Dietrich, AEPA General Manager, at 780-427-3629 or janet.dietrich@gov.ab.ca.

Sincerely,

[signature]

Martin Van Diemen
Industry Co-chair

- cc. Honourable Shannon Phillips, Minister of Environment and Parks (EP)
Honourable Oneil Carlier, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry (AF)
Mr. Eric Denhoff, Deputy Minister, Alberta Climate Change Office, EP
Ms. Bev Yee, Deputy Minister, AF
Mr. Dave Burdek, Assistant Deputy Minister, AF/AEPA Advisory Committee Member
Ms. Ronda Goulden, Assistant Deputy Minister, EP/AEPA Advisory Committee Member
Mr. Sean Royer, Executive Director, AF/AEPA GoA Co-Chair/Advisory Committee Member (Alternate)
Mr. Andy Ridge, Executive Director, EP/AEPA Advisory Committee Member (Alternate)