

On Common Ground: Messages from the Agri-Environmental Partnership of Alberta

The Agri-Environmental Partnership of Alberta (AEPA) 2012 Update

In this first year of implementing our new 2012-15 strategic plan, the Agri-Environmental Partnership of Alberta (AEPA) has achieved solid progress on our three updated strategic priorities.

Strategic Priority 1: To engage in land-use, water, and agri-environmental policy development processes.

AEPA updated and refined key messages on land-use planning, ensuring they are current, concise and relevant. AEPA also developed key messages and information sheets on water allocation and wetland management. Documents were printed, distributed, and posted on the AEPA website.

AEPA also provided input on the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (SSRP) Regional Advisory Council's advice. Representatives participated in the consultation sessions and in a stakeholder discussion session regarding SSRP surface water and air quality management frameworks.

Strategic Priority 2: To provide policy input on innovations and business models that will help the agriculture industry achieve AEPA-desired outcomes.

The Board received updates on Growing Forward 2, a federal-provincial-territorial agricultural policy framework, and representatives provided agriculture's perspectives at two consultation sessions.

As well, AEPA jointly sponsored an environmental footprinting forum. This workshop included presentations ranging from sustainability in product chains, to local scale examples of producers and processors who are finding value in sustainability.

Strategic Priority 3: To engage and build understanding with members and industry partners to enable the agriculture industry to be a credible partner in agri-environmental policy development.

AEPA hosted a Fall Forum that provided participants with an update on land-use and water policy issues, and an opportunity to engage with speakers on these issues. AEPA also held the 'Workshop for Agricultural Representatives on Water Partnerships'. The workshop looked at how to develop a stronger communications network with the representatives of the agricultural sector on multi-stakeholder partnerships, including Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils.

AEPA also implemented its new three-year communications plan. The new plan enables the AEPA to communicate more effectively in ways that are focused, cost-effective, flexible and adaptable.

Looking Forward

AEPA aims to keep current and engaged in developing Land-use Framework and water policy processes in 2013. This will include participating in the provincial conversation on water, providing feedback into the SSRP draft plan, and hosting the AEPA Ecosystem Services Forum.

Critical to the continuing work of AEPA has been the involvement and participation of the AEPA member organizations. These groups have been actively involved both at the Board and project team levels.

For more information on AEPA, visit our website: www.agpartners.ca.

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Minister Olson: Thoughts on 2012

The Honourable Verlyn Olson, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, conducted a series of short interviews on Call of the Land with his thoughts on 2012. The links to these interviews are found below:

- **December 17:** Minister Olson, who was appointed to the portfolio in May, says it's been both interesting and fascinating (1:15 minutes)
[http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/newslett.nsf/all/cotl20303](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/newslett.nsf/all/cotl20303)
- **December 18:** One of Minister Olson's priorities was to raise the profile of agriculture and rural development (1:44 minutes)
[http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/newslett.nsf/all/cotl20306](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/newslett.nsf/all/cotl20306)
- **December 19:** The Next Generation Advisory Council, two new commissions, and status of broadband internet (3:00 minutes)
[http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/newslett.nsf/all/cotl20312](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/newslett.nsf/all/cotl20312)
- **December 20:** More highlights from 2012 – including move to an open market for wheat and barley (1:56 minutes)
[http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/newslett.nsf/all/cotl20316](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/newslett.nsf/all/cotl20316)
- **December 21:** Minister Olson's message for rural Albertans (1:25 minutes)
[http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/newslett.nsf/all/cotl20328](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/newslett.nsf/all/cotl20328)

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Partner Profile: Alberta Pork

Submitted by Alberta Pork

Alberta Pork works diligently in representing the interests of 350 producers across the province. From family farms to large scale production groups, our producers vary in size, scope and structure, but they share a common vision: To produce safe, high quality pork in a sustainable environment while working with industry partners and government to ensure that the Alberta pork industry is a viable economic driver in the province.

In doing so, they create jobs and a substantial economic boost for their communities, paving the way for the next generation of producers to carry the torch.

As a not-for-profit organization governed by an eight member Board of Directors, Alberta Pork's role is to support producers in reaching their goals. As an entity created by producers, elected by producers and funded by producers through a levy system, our mandate is to promote the many benefits of Alberta-grown pork to consumers while advocating for producers with all levels of government.

The regulations governing our organization are established through the Alberta Pork Producers Marketing Plan, which is enabled by the Marketing of Agricultural Products Act in the Province of Alberta. This is the same act that allows the establishment and existence of more than 16 Marketing Boards and Commissions in Alberta.

While our producers face a number of challenges to their viability, many of the key ingredients for a prosperous and growing hog industry are right here in Alberta: Excellent genetics, sound infrastructure, access to export markets and one of the smallest hog densities in the world.

With more than \$400 million in farm gate sales, Alberta's pork industry is a global player in the food industry and a key contributor to the economy.

Over the past two years, Alberta Pork has moved forward on a number of the key objectives and goals as outlined in our strategic plan, which was presented at our 2011 Annual General Meeting:

- I. Create an Environment of Profitability for Producers*
- II. Develop the Most Informed and Engaged Industry*
- III. Build Strong Relationships with Industry Partners*
- IV. Corporate Excellence*

Against this backdrop, Alberta Pork directors and staff remain committed to serving our members with the same integrity, pride and passion that empowers producers as they seek to build a better future for themselves, their families and their communities.

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National Water Program 2012 Strategy: Response to Climate Change

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced last month the release of the final *National Water Program 2012 Strategy: Response to Climate Change* following a public comment period. This document sets out long term goals and specific actions that are EPA's contributions to national efforts to prepare for, and build resilience to, the impacts of a changing climate on water resources. The EPA National Water Program looks forward to working with state, tribe, and local governments, as well as other partners to implement actions that address climate change challenges in key areas. The strategy focuses on protecting water infrastructure, coastal and ocean waters, watersheds and wetlands, and water quality.

For the complete *2012 Strategy*:

http://water.epa.gov/scitech/climatechange/upload/epa_2012_climate_water_strategy_full_report_final.pdf