

Made-in-Alberta policy protects valuable wetlands

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Source: Government of Alberta news release

The new Alberta Wetland Policy minimizes wetland loss and degradation, while balancing the needs of the environment and continued economic development.

Alberta's wetlands are diverse in form, function, use and distribution across the province. The new policy will conserve, restore, protect and manage wetlands across the province, and the many benefits wetlands provide to the environment.

"A strong and flexible wetlands policy is integral to responsible environmental management and I am proud of the dedication of the many government staff and stakeholders who got us here today. This policy provides the certainty, consistency, and predictability we need to effectively manage wetlands across the province well into the future."

- Diana McQueen, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development

Impacts of Alberta Wetlands Policy

- Wetlands of the highest value will be protected for the long-term benefit of all Albertans.
- Wetlands and their benefits will be conserved and restored in areas where losses have been high.
- Wetlands will be managed by avoiding, minimizing, and if necessary, replacing lost wetland value.
- Wetland management will consider regional context.

The new Alberta Wetland Policy incorporates wetlands of all classes throughout the province, acknowledges the importance of individual wetlands on the landscape, and provides regulatory certainty, clarity, and predictability to better balance development and wetlands protection.

Our government was elected to keep building Alberta, to live within its means and to fight to open new markets for Alberta's resources. We will continue to deliver the responsible change Albertans voted for.

Reducing the Risk: Addressing the Environmental Impacts of the Food System

By: James Stuckey, Caitlin Charman, and Jean-Charles Le Vallee

Centre for Food in Canada

Conference Board of Canada

Every Canadian meal has an environmental footprint— at each stage of the production, distribution, and preparation of food, something is taken from or added to the environment. But while the food system must have some environmental footprint, achieving a food system that is as sustainable as possible is essential to conserve Canada’s environment, and guarantee food security in the years to come.

Reducing the Risk: Addressing the Environmental Impacts of the Food System (August 2013) is a Conference Board of Canada report focused on food-related environmental risks. This report examines the major areas of environmental risk relating to the food system in Canada and what food system stakeholders are doing to address the risks. It also describes a number of key steps to improve environmental risk governance in Canada and the ability of the food system to respond to challenges and opportunities in the years ahead.

The report looks at environmental impacts resulting from the activities of different subsectors of the food supply chain, including the **primary production** (farms), **food manufacturing**, and **retail** subsectors. Among these, primary production tends to have the greatest environmental impact—although manufacturers and retailers also create impacts through their operations, as well as shape the nature of agricultural production through the standards they impose on their suppliers. The report considers impacts in the key risk areas of **water**, **air**, **soil**, and **waste**.

The report recommends the following key steps to help bring about a better-performing environmental risk governance system:

1. Motivate and support improved business environmental performance.

Governments should do more to motivate and support businesses to improve their environmental performance—particularly at the level of primary production, which generates many of the food system’s most pressing environmental impacts.

2. Improve household food waste literacy.

Governments and industry can play a role in reducing food waste in households by fostering improved household food literacy—including skills, knowledge, and behaviours around food purchase and preparation.

3. Develop food eco-labels for retail products.

Governments could lead the way in encouraging the development of food eco-labels at different stages of the food system, and develop environmental performance benchmarks that could provide the basis for food eco-label programs. More widespread use of eco-labels for retail food products would improve consumers’ ability to make environmentally friendly purchasing decisions.

4. Add “green” to agriculture policy and link to income support programs.

Governments should add “green” to agricultural policy by ensuring that it has an integrated and mutually supporting set of objectives and programs across jurisdictions. There is an opportunity to better integrate producer support and environmental objectives.

5. Develop concrete and measurable food sustainability objectives.

Food system stakeholders should develop concrete and measurable food sustainability objectives. It is not enough to speak in the abstract about making the food system “sustainable.” This notion must be made

concrete by setting benchmarks and objectives against which environmental performance can be objectively measured and assessed—and acted upon.

6. Create a Canadian agri-food environmental governance system.

Business and government should improve cooperation around environmental risk governance, adopting a total farm-to-fork approach. Developing an overarching and integrated body to coordinate risk governance functions (including risk assessment, management, and communication) would offer a more effective platform for action than the current abundance of risk governance systems, organized around sector, environmental cause, geographical region, and political jurisdiction.

To read the full report, go to the Conference Board of Canada website: www.conferenceboard.ca

Partner Profile: Potato Growers of Alberta

Submitted by PGA

From its humble beginnings on April 19th, 1966 the Potato Growers of Alberta has today grown to represent over 140 Process, Seed and Fresh growers in the Province of Alberta. Originally known as the Alberta Potato Commission with their office in Lethbridge, the organization has undergone a number of changes over its 48-year history. During a brief period of its history, it was considered a Marketing Board but due to the lack of legislated regulatory abilities, it is now formally recognised as a Commission, known today as the Potato Growers of Alberta. For about 12 years in the late 80's, the office was moved to the Stockman's Centre in Calgary in hopes to spur a greater interest in the fresh market in Alberta. In July of 2000, the Office was officially moved back to Southern Alberta with its home now located in Taber.

The PGA is a not-for-profit organization, governed by a seven member Board and employs a staff of six. Five employees work out of the Taber office and the Seed Coordinator works out of her office at CDC North in Edmonton. Our entire organization is governed by the Potato Growers of Alberta Marketing Regulation, Plan Regulation and Authorization Regulation, which falls under the Marketing of Agricultural Products Act in the Province of Alberta. We follow the same guiding rules and regulations as the other 20 Marketing Boards and Commissions in Alberta.

Alberta grows over 50,000 acres of potatoes annually, with the majority of the production being French fries produced by Lamb Weston-Con Agra, McCain's and Cavendish Farms. PepsiCo-Frito Lay and Old Dutch Foods also produce a large number of the North American potato chip market here in Alberta. Our seed industry is second to none in North America with a large annual export market.

With annual farm gate sales exceeding 150 million dollars annually and the economic spin off of over 1 billion dollars to the Alberta economy, the PGA continues to play an important role in the agricultural industry of Alberta.

The PGA and its growers are very proud of their involvement in the Canada Gap – On Farm Food Safety Program, The Alberta Environmental Farm Plan, The Alberta Agriculture Environmental Sustainability Carbon Footprinting Pilot Project, as well as other North American Sustainability projects. Our growers are very aware of the fact that the food that we produce must be done so in a safe, healthy, conscientious environment, that not only sustains the future of our industry but the future of the environment, our families and the people that rely on the food that we produce. The land and water that we use every day is the future of this business.

We continue to fund research that not only increases production but reduces our need for chemical and fertilizer inputs. Our collaboration with Provincial and Federal researchers, processors and the universities and colleges in Alberta will continue to expand the potato industry both provincially and on a national basis.

We look forward to our next 50 years of being an integral part of the Alberta agricultural landscape. Our opportunity to be a part of the AEPA has been very beneficially to our organization. It allows us networking access to all producer groups in the province and collectively allows all of us the ability to share a table with the Alberta government to talk about the future of agriculture in Alberta and hopefully have some influence as to its place in Alberta.

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