



Provincial Resolution Session Package

January 7, 2026

Agricultural Service Board Provincial Committee

Table of Contents

Contents

2026 PROVINCIAL RESOLUTION SESSION AGENDA	2
2025 PROVINCIAL RESOLUTION SESSION MINUTES	3
RESOLUTION 1-26: EMERGENCY REGISTRATION OF 2% LIQUID STRYCHNINE FOR RICHARDSON'S GROUND SQUIRREL (RGS) CONTROL	4
RESOLUTION 2-26: EXEMPTION OF AGRICULTURE EQUIPMENT FROM CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT, 1999 EMISSION LIMITS	8
RESOLUTION 3-26: MARKED FUEL PROGRAM REVIEW	10
RESOLUTION 4-26: RURAL WATER DISTRIBUTION AND CONNECTIVITY FUNDING	12
RESOLUTION PC1-26: MODERNIZING ALBERTA'S RAT CONTROL PROGRAM.....	15
RESOLUTION PC2-26: ON-FARM MEAT PROCESSING	20
RESOLUTION PC3-26: LEGAL ENTITY ALIGNED WITH ASBS	25
RESOLUTION PC4-26: URGENT REFORMS TO CFIA AND PMRA.....	27
RESOLUTION E1-26: VACANT BIOLOGICAL CONTROL SCIENTIST POSITION	34

2026 PROVINCIAL RESOLUTION SESSION AGENDA

January 21, 2025

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Resolution Session
4. Welcome and Introductions
5. Activity Report of the ASBPC
6. Amending the Provincial Rules of Procedure
 - a. Motion: Repeal Provincial Rules of Procedure and Replace with Provincial Resolution Process
7. Approval of Committee Fees
8. Consideration of Adding Emergent Resolutions to the Order Paper
 - a. E1-26: Vacant BioControl Scientist Position
9. Consideration of Resolutions
 - a. RESOLUTION 1-26 Emergency Registration of 2 Liquid Strychnine
 - b. RESOLUTION 2-26 Environment and Climate Change Canada and Diesel Exhaust Fluid
 - c. RESOLUTION 3-26 Marked Fuel Program Review
 - d. RESOLUTION 4-26 Rural Water Distribution and Connectivity Funding
 - e. RESOLUTION PC 1-25 Modernizing Alberta's Rat Control Program
 - f. RESOLUTION PC 2-25 On-Farm Meat Processing
 - g. RESOLUTION PC 3-25 Legal Entity Aligned with ASBs
 - h. RESOLUTION PC 4-25 Urgent Reforms to CFIA and PMRA
10. Consideration of Resolutions added to the Order Paper as Emergent
 - a. TBD
11. Adjournment

2025 Provincial Resolution Session Meeting Minutes

Location: Delta Hotel – South Conference Centre, 4404 Gateway Boulevard NW, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5C2

Dates: Tuesday January 21, 2025 & Wednesday, January 22, 2025

Provincial Committee Members in Attendance

Brenda Knight introduced the members of the ASB Provincial Resolutions Committee:

Brenda Knight, Chair, Central

Quinton Beaumont, Secretary, Central

Walter Preugschas, Representative, Northwest

Bob Chrenek, Representative, Peace

Sebastian Dutrisac, Representative, Northeast

Stephen Bevans, AAAF President, South

Kevin Wirsta, RMA Representative, Northeast

Linda Hunt, Executive Assistant, Alberta

Todd Brand, Parliamentarian Advisor

Kerrienne Koehler-Munro, ASB Program Manager, Agriculture Service Boards, GoA

Stephanie Cerny, Recording Secretary, GoA

Ross Bohnet, Alternate Representative, Northwest

Tietsia Huyzer, Alternate Representative Central

Corinna Williams, Alternate Representative, Peace

Gene Hrabec, Alternate Representative, Northeast

John Van Driesten, Alternate Representative, South

Jason Schneider, RMA Alternate Representative, South

Regrets

Rob Siewert, Vice Chair, South

1. **Call to Order**

Chairperson Knight called the meeting to order at enter time 3:12pm

2. **Adoption of the Agenda**

Chairperson Knight presented the agenda for the resolution session.

Addition of Item 9A – Motion to speak to the Top 3 Priorities between item 9-25 and 10-25.

Kathy Rooyakkers presented to the floor that all resolutions be put forth to the Minister during meetings versus the board only choosing the top 3 that they decide on.

Moved: Kathy Rooyakkers – Wetaskiwin County

Seconded: Jackie Watts – Starland County

Motion Carried: 60-43 in favor

By unanimous consent, adopted the agenda as approved as AMENDMENT.

3. Adoption of 2024 Resolution Session Minutes

Motion to Amend by Tietsia Huyzer, Mountainview County as follows:

Motion: Tietsia Huyzer of Mountainview makes a motion to amend E1-24 to PC1-24

By unanimous consent, adopted the Minutes for the 2024 Resolution Session as AMENDMENT.

4. 2024 Report Card on the Resolutions

Chairperson Knight presented the highlights from the 2024 Report Card on the Resolutions.

Northeast Representative Dutrisac announced the ASB Position Statements on Richardson's Ground Squirrel Control and Farm Saved Seeds DRAFT.

5. 2025 Executive Assistant Funding Update

Presented by Chair Knight that the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation's intention to renew the Executive Assistant grant for a three-year term

6. Call for Amendments to the Provincial Rules of Procedure

Chairperson Knight made a call for any amendments to the Provincial or Regional Rules of Procedure.

None, therefore accepted as presented.

7. Review of Provincial Rules of Procedure

Chairperson Knight reviewed the Provincial Rules of Procedure for the Resolution Session.

8. Adoption of Emergent Resolutions

PC1-25, Inflationary Increase of ASB Grants

MOVED: Corinna Williams, Northern Sunrise

That "PC1-25 Inflationary Increase for ASB Grants" be added to the end of the order of resolutions to be presented for vote.

SECONDED: Gene Hrabec, Beaver County

MOTION CARRIED by unanimous consent,

9. Adoption of the Order of Resolutions

Chairperson Knight brought forward a request from Parkland County to amend the order of resolutions to have 10-25 first.

No objection, Order of Resolutions accepted as AMENDMENT.

Motion to approve as AMENDMENT.

10. 2025 Resolution Voting

Resolution 10-25: FARM FAMILY AWARDS

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT

ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST:

Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation and/or the Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies work to ensure an annual Farm Family Awards Program is available for all communities in Alberta with an established Agricultural Service Board.

SPONSORED BY: Parkland County

MOVED: Ben Jespersen, Parkland County

SECONDED: Simon Lavoie, Northern Sunrise County

Chairperson Knight called for (vote/opposition) to the resolution.

MOTION DEFEATED: (60-61) 121 VOTES CALCULATED FOR THIS RESOLUTION

Resolution 1-25 DROUGHT AND LIVESTOCK AGRI-STABILITY

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED

THAT ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST:

AAFC re-evaluate the current weather mapping program and the Drought Monitoring System to include and more heavily weigh data from weather stations within agricultural lands, better acknowledging municipalities straddling the transition from agricultural white zone into forested Crown green zone, coupled with making efforts to capture in these maps the extreme weather events that are now a reality.

FURTHER THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

THAT ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST:

AAFC report back to the Agricultural Service Board Provincial Committee that the recommended improvements to AgriStability as identified and released October 22, 2022, by the Office of Audit and Evaluation of AAFC were put in place, by April of 2024:

1. Identify ways to simplify AgriStability to reduce producer administrative burden;
2. Find ways to make interim and final payments more predictable and to improve the timelines of final payments; and

3. Develop and implement a means to increase access to AgriStability by underrepresented populations.

SPONSORED BY: Yellowhead County & MD of Greenview No. 16

MOVED: Dave Gibbard, MD of Greenview No. 16

SECONDED: Bob Mitchell, Yellowhead County

AMENDMENT: Tyler Airth, Big Lakes County moved to amend the resolution to:

AAFC re-evaluate the current weather mapping program and the Drought Monitoring System to include and more heavily weigh data from weather stations and available soil moisture mapping within agricultural lands, better acknowledging municipalities straddling the transition from agricultural white zone into forested Crown green zone, coupled with making efforts to capture in these maps the extreme weather events that are now a reality.

SECONDED: Dave Kusch, Woodlands County

AMENDMENT CARRIED

Chairperson Knight called for vote to the resolution.

MOTION CARRIED (100-12) 112 VOTES CALCULATED FOR THIS RESOLUTION

Resolution 2-25 LANDOWNERS' RIGHTS FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED

THAT ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST:

That the Alberta Utilities Commission provide landowners with access to legal frameworks, such as the Surface Rights Act, which includes compensation guidelines, environmental protection measures, and land reclamation requirements supported by strong enforcement mechanisms.

FURTHER THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

THAT ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST:

That the Alberta Utilities Commission create an independent tribunal to oversee regulatory compliance and handle disputes related to Renewable Energy projects.

SPONSORED BY: Northern Sunrise County

MOVED: Simon Lavoie, Northern Sunrise County

SECONDED: Dave Berry, MD of Greenview No. 16

Chairperson Knight called for vote to the resolution.

MOTION DEFEATED (31-92) WITH 123 VOTES CALCULATED ON THIS RESOLUTION

Resolution 3-25 Protection of Class 3 Soils In Alberta From Renewable Development

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED

THAT ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST:

That the Government of Alberta include the protection for Class 3 agricultural lands, ensuring that these valuable agricultural areas are not left vulnerable to renewable energy development.

FURTHER THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED

THAT ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST

That the Government of Alberta continue to implement an "agriculture-first approach" by allowing and prioritizing the approval of renewable power plants on already disturbed sites located on crown land before considering productive agricultural land.

SPONSORED BY: Northern Sunrise County

MOVED: Corinna Williams, Northern Sunrise County

SECONDED: Albert Poetker, Birch Hills County

1st AMENDMENT: Margaret Burton, County of Barrhead, moved to amend the resolution to: Resolution 3-25 Protection of Class 3 & 4 Soils in Alberta from Renewable Development

SECONDED: Valerie Ehrenholz, County of Barrhead

AMENDMENT 1 DEFEATED: (47-72) with 120 votes calculated for this resolution

2nd AMENDMENT: Ken Morey, Athabasca County, moved to amend the resolution to:

Resolution 3-25 Protection of All Classes of Agriculture soil in Alberta from Renewable Development

SECONDED:

AMENDMENT 2: not voted on as Corinna Williams, Northern Sunrise County decided to withdraw the resolution and bring it back next year with clearer wording that isn't so controversial. There was no opposition to the motion to withdraw this resolution.

Resolution 4-25: Weed Control in Drainage Canals (Registered Drainage Ditches)

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED

THAT ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST:

That the Government of Alberta – Environment and Protected Areas remove “drainage canal” from the definition of “open body of water” under the Pesticide Sales, Handling, Use and Application Regulation.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED

THAT ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST:

To allow municipalities that have control over maintenance of drainage canals to treat invasive species listed in the Weed Control Act or those species elevated in the respective municipality, as they would control the same species in roadside ditches or under Notice to Remedy Weed Problem.

SPONSORED BY: Municipal District of Smoky River #130

MOVED: Robert Brochu, Municipal District of Smoky River #130

SECONDED: Jim Zabolotniuk, MD of Big Lakes

Chairperson Knight called for vote to the resolution.

MOTION CARRIED: (83-36) 119 VOTES CALCULATED FOR THIS RESOLUTION

Resolution 5-25: CENTRAL CONTACT FOR THE WEED CONTROL AND AGRICULTURAL PEST ACTS

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED

THAT THE ALBERTA AGRICULTURAL SERVICES BOARDS REQUEST

That the Ministers of Energy, Environment and Ag work collaboratively to establish a central point of contact for identifying landholder to send communication to industry and government agencies for matters related to agriculture legislation. This would involve municipalities sending notices and other communications regard the Acts to a central government contact, who would then distribute the information to the respective landholders.

SPONSORED BY: Northern Sunrise County

MOVED: Kristy Belzile, Northern Sunrise County

SECONDED: Tim Chandonnet, Birch Hills County

Chairperson Knight called for vote to the resolution.

MOTION CARRIED: (72-50) 122 VOTES CALCULATED FOR THIS RESOLUTION

Resolution 6-25: RURAL VETERINARY STUDENT SUPPORT

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED

THAT ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST:

That the Ministry of Jobs, Economy, and Trade and Ministry of Advanced Education create a complimentary program to the Northern Alberta Development Program Veterinary Student Bursary, to make bursary funds accessible to veterinary students working in mixed and large animal veterinary clinics throughout rural Alberta.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED

THAT ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST:

That the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation and Ministry of Jobs, Economy and Trade institute a veterinarian student temporary employment program for rural mixed and large animal veterinary clinics to support the attraction and retention of veterinary students throughout rural Alberta.

SPONSORED BY: Lacombe County

MOVED: Barb Shepherd, Lacombe County

SECONDED: Les Stulberg, Stettler County

Chairperson Knight called for vote to the resolution.

MOTION CARRIED: (114-12) 126 VOTED CALCULATED FOR THIS RESOLUTION

Resolution 7-25: ROADKILL CARCASS DISPOSAL

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT

ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST:

Alberta Environment and Protected Areas and Alberta Forestry and Parks to develop formal guidance on the disposal of wildlife carcasses hit by vehicles to minimize disease transmission vectors that may pose a serious economic threat to the livestock industry, such as foot-and-mouth disease.

FURTHER THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

THAT ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST:

That Alberta Transportation amend the Standard Specification for Highway Maintenance to require contractors to maintain controlled access to carcass disposal sites, the composting of roadkill carcasses, and that the site be a minimum of 8 kilometers from an active livestock operation.

SPONSORED BY: Municipal District of Greenview #16

MOVED: Dave Gibbert, Municipal District of Greenview #16

SECONDED: Jason Javos, Northern Sunrise County

AMENDMENT: Margaret Burton, County of Barrhead, moved to amend the resolution to:
Strike “and that the site be a minimum of 8 kilometers from an active livestock operation”

SECONDED: Sandra Eastman, MD of Peace #135

AMENDMENT CARRIED:

Chairperson Knight called for opposition to the amendment. There was no opposition to the resolution as amended so Chairperson Knight called for debate to close and for a vote on the resolution as amended.

MOTION CARRIED: (108-16) 124 VOTES WERE CALCULATED FOR THIS RESOLUTION

Resolution 8-25: COYOTES ELIGIBLE FOR COMPENSATION
THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT

ALBERTA’S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST:

That the Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation under Section 3 of the Agricultural Pests Act of Alberta establish a Federal-Provincial cost shared program to mitigate and compensate producers for confirmed coyote predation on livestock, work with the Ministries of Forestry and Parks and Environment and Protected Areas to utilize Fish and Wildlife staff to confirm the predation and submit confirmation forms to AFSC for payment administration.

FURTHER THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

THAT ALBERTA’S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST:

That the Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation, Forestry and Parks, and Environment and Protected Areas consult with Alberta Lamb Producers and Alberta Beef Producers to adopt their proposed changes to the current Wildlife Predator Compensation Program to provide more fair compensation when predation occurs.

SPONSORED BY: County of Northern Lights

MOVED: Gary These, County of Northern Lights

SECONDED: David Janzen, Clear Hills County

Chairperson Knight called for vote to the resolution.

MOTION DEFEATED: (63-65) 128 VOTES WERE CALCULATED FOR THIS RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION SESSION #1 WAS ADJOURNED AT 5:42PM ON JANUARY 21, 2025

RESOLUTION SESSION #2 WAS CALLED TO ORDER BY CHAIRPERSON KNIGHT AT 2:47PM ON JANUARY 22, 2025

Resolution 9-25 NON-MATCHING FUNDING FOR AGKNOW
THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT

ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST:

That the Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation waive the matching funding requirement through Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership to support AgKnow, Alberta Farm Mental Health Network to ensure that the Farm-Informed Therapy Program for agricultural producers continues to grow and is free of charge in Alberta.

SPONSORED BY: Municipal District of Fairview No. 136

MOVED: Barry Dewitz, MD of Fairview

SECONDED: Sandra Eastman, MD of Peace #135

Chairperson Knight called for vote to the resolution.

MOTION CARRIED: (112-8) 120 VOTES CALCULATED FOR THIS RESOLUTION

Resolution 11-25: AGRICULTURE EDUCATION FUNDING
THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT

ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST:

That the Ministry of Education work collaboratively with the Agricultural Service Boards, Rural Municipalities of Alberta, and Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation to establish a dedicated funding stream aimed for agriculture education.

SPONSORED BY: Lac La Biche County

MOVED: Darlene Beniuk, Lac La Biche County

SECONDED: Garth Shaw, MD of Fairview

Chairperson Knight called for vote to the resolution.

MOTION CARRIED: (109-12) 121 VOTES CALCULATED FOR THIS RESOLUTION

Resolution 12-25: CHARITABLE GAMING POLICIES HANDBOOK
THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT

ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST:

That the Service Alberta and Red Tape Reduction and the Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Commission to amend the Charitable Gaming Policies Handbook so rural nonprofit organizations are allowed to build reserves and generate revenues once again without affecting the ability to use the gaming proceeds.

FURTHER THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

THAT ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST:

That the Service Alberta and Red Tape Reduction and the Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Commission suspend any audits until stakeholder engagements are completed and the amendments to the Charitable Gaming Policies Handbook are adopted.

SPONSORED BY: County of Two Hills

MOVED: Sebastien Dutrisac, Two Hills County No 21

SECONDED: Stacey Hryciuk, Vermillion River County No 24

Chairperson Knight called for vote to the resolution.

MOTION CARRIED:(96-27) 123 VOTES CALCULATED IN THIS RESOLUTION

Resolution 13-25: RESOLUTION LOBBYING INCLUSION

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT

ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST:

That when specific resolutions secure lobbying opportunities for the Agricultural Service Board Provincial Committee, they in turn invite or consult with the sponsoring municipality to verify the resolution is communicated accurately and effectively.

SPONSORED BY: County of Northern Lights

MOVED: Terry Ungarian, County of Northern Lights

SECONDED: Sandra Eastman, MD of Peace #135

Chairperson Knight called for (vote/opposition) to the resolution.

MOTION DEFEATED: (32-91)

Resolution PC1-25: Inflationary increase for ASB Grants

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST:

That the Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation approve a 3%/year inflationary increase for the ASB Grants Program

Sponsored by: ASBPC

AMENDMENT: RD McHigh, Foothills County, moved to amend the resolution to:

That the Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation approve an appropriate annual inflationary adjustment for the ASB Grants Program.

Chairperson Knight called for a vote on the amendment as presented.

AMENDMENT DEFEATED (52-66) 118 votes calculated.

AMENDMENT: John DeGroot, MD of Taber, moved to amend the resolution to:
THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST:
That the Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation approve a Provincial Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) annually to the ASB Grants Program

Chairperson Knight called for a vote on the amendment

AMENDMENT DEFEATED (12-110) 122 votes calculated

AMENDMENT: Kathy Rooyakkers, Wetaskiwin County, moved to amend the resolution to:
THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST:
That the Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation approve an increase for the ASB Grant Program to reflection the inflation annually.

Chairperson Knight called for a vote

AMENDMENT DEFEATED: (40-84) 124 votes calculated

Chairperson Knight called for a vote on the original motion as all amendments had been defeated. There was no opposition to move forward with the vote on the original version of the resolution so Chairperson Knight called for debate to close and for a vote on the resolution as presented.

MOTION CARRIED (72-51) 123 votes calculated for this resolution

10. Motion to Adjourn

Chairperson Knight moved to adjourn the 2025 resolution session at 3:36pm on January 22, 2025.

RESOLUTION 1-26: EMERGENCY REGISTRATION OF 2% LIQUID STRYCHNINE FOR RICHARDSON'S GROUND SQUIRREL (RGS) CONTROL

- WHEREAS** 2% liquid strychnine has proven the most effective tool in managing Richardson's ground squirrels in the prairie provinces since about 1928;
- WHEREAS** to help maintain a level of Richardson's ground squirrel infestation below economic threshold as part of an integrated pest management plan;
- WHEREAS** there is still no other product available that is as effective as 2% liquid strychnine; and
- WHEREAS** when handled and used according to label, the off-target impacts have been minimal.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

THAT ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST

That Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and Health Canada, work with the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) and make 2% liquid strychnine available to farmers/ranchers for the 2026 season and beyond.

SPONSORED BY: Foothills County

MOVED BY: _____

SECONDED BY: _____

CARRIED: _____

DEFEATED: _____

STATUS: Provincial and Federal

DEPARTMENT: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada,
Health Canada,
Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation,
Pest Management Regulatory Agency

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Agricultural Services Boards of Alberta adopted a position statement for the reinstatement of 2% liquid strychnine in January of 2025.

Position 1: Advocacy for the Reinstatement of 2% Liquid Strychnine

'ASB's strongly advocate for the reinstatement of 2% liquid strychnine under strict regulatory oversight to ensure its safe use. Strychnine has been a historically effective single-feed bait, enabling producers to manage infestations cost-effectively and efficiently. While there is evidence of non-target species being impacted, this needs to be considered. Strychnine has been used since 1928 without significant detrimental impacts. Given the lack of equally effective alternatives, its availability would significantly benefit agricultural producers while mitigating severe infestations. Enhanced safety protocols and certified applicator requirements could accompany this reinstatement to minimize environmental risks and non-target impacts.'

<https://agriculturalserviceboards.com/asb-position-strychnine-and-richardsons-ground-squirrel-control/>

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/ground-squirrels-alberta-1.7575688>

An open letter was sent by the Government of Alberta to the Federal Government to appeal for the re-registration of 2% Liquid Strychnine on June 27, 2025 which included the following monetary risk: “In Alberta alone, the annual risk to hay and native pasture exceeds \$800 million.” This number can be found through an open letter sent out on X through RJ Sigurdson.

<https://x.com/RjSigurdson/status/1938713068990799887>

In Foothills County the estimated annual cost to producers as a result of RGS due to the loss of strychnine is \$3,000,000 in crop losses. This estimate does not include losses and injuries to livestock, equipment damages, or damages to other infrastructure. This information was taken from thirteen (13) producers representing about 27,000 acres in Foothills County. Producers are turning to other means of control like firearms and other explosive solutions in an attempt to deal with RGS in the absence of strychnine. These control methods are inherently more dangerous underlining the need for strychnine.

September 12, 2025, letter to John Barlow MP Foothills from Foothills County ASB.

John Barlow, Shadow Minister of Agriculture and Agr-Food collected information from 23 jurisdictions from three (3) provinces on the damages of RGS due to the absence of Strychnine. The briefing document concludes, ‘The growing impact of Richardson’s ground squirrels on Prairie agriculture appears to have been exacerbated by the removal of effective control tools. As such, rural municipalities have claimed an increasing threat to farm viability, rural economies, and livestock health. Various rural municipalities across the prairies are sounding the alarm. In addition to that, agriculture groups like Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) and Agriculture Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS) have asked to reinstate the use of Strychnine along with the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta. Conservatives have called on the government to approve the emergency use of strychnine.’
Briefing Note for the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food on Strychnine

Over the years, numerous resolutions have been presented at ASB Conferences advocating against the deregulation of strychnine. It is considered by every jurisdiction in Alberta to be a very important tool to control RGS. Strict regulatory oversight in conjunction with educational components facilitated by Alberta’s ASBs would ensure continued safe application of 2% liquid strychnine by producers as has been accomplished in the past.

Some responses by the Federal departments have included:

In 2008 Health Canada responded to a Strychnine resolution as follows:

“Health Canada considers the emergency registration of two percent liquid strychnine and its associated conditions of registration to be the best interim approach for addressing the localized high populations of Richardson’s ground squirrels while further research is being conducted to find a more long-term sustainable solution.”

In 2010 the PMRA responded to a Strychnine resolution as follows:

“In addition, the Pest Management Regulatory Agency will continue to consider emergency registration applications for the use of 2% liquid strychnine in areas for which a critical need is identified is such applications are received by the Agency.”

In 2011 the PMRA responded to a Strychnine resolution as follows:

“Recognizing there are limited option in the short term, the emergency registration for 2% LSC was granted on 23 February 2011 under strict conditions. The 2% LSC can only be used in highly infested areas of Alberta until the end of June 2011.”

In 2012 The PMRA responded to a Strychnine resolution as follows:

“The PMRA granted full registration of 2% LSC on 23 February 2012.”

<https://agriculturalserviceboards.com/resolution-archives/>

Health Canada and the PMRA have found Strychnine to be the right solution to the RGS infestation in the past and we are asking them to consider it as a solution to the present RGS infestation.

References

Letter to John Barlow from Foothills County ASB concerning RGS:

September 12, 2025

109 – 4th Avenue SW
High River, Alberta
T1V 1M5

Dear John Barlow MP Foothills

Thank you for your concern on a significant threat to Alberta producers and residents. Richardson Ground Squirrels (RGS) are a significant threat to Agriculture in Foothills County. The damage done by RGS has increased significantly since 2% Liquid Strychnine Concentrate was deregistered by Health Canada on December 10, 2019. They are commonly found in all parts of the County. They have infested acreages, hay land, pasture land, crop land, and towns. They not only damage plants but valuable infrastructure and buildings.

Over the course of the summer of 2025 we have had in depth conversations with 13 producers representing over 27,000 acres of land who have to deal with RGS issues on their farm. Some common points have been:

- Nothing has controlled RGS like Strychnine.
- RGS issues on their farms and with neighbours have gotten worse since Strychnine was deregistered.
- Damage from RGS ranges from negligible (1-3%) to significant (10%) of crops lost.
- Farmers have moved to using shooting as their main control.
- They are also using various other baits like Zinc Phosphide and Rozol.
- Some farmers are using explosives.
- Producers feel unheard in regards to Strychnine.

The County of Foothills is planning to continue to interview farmers to come up with more details on RGS damage in the County.

Currently it is estimated from our surveys that of the approximately 830,000 acres of farmland in the County about 15,000 acres are lost to RGS damage. This represents a loss of about \$3,000,000 annually from County producers. This number is sure to grow without Strychnine as a tool for our producers. These numbers do not include isolated losses like horse injuries or damage and fouling to infrastructure and buildings. This is no longer just a producer issue. It affects everyone in our County.

We look forward to working with you on making Strychnine safe and effective for our County residents.

Thank you

Rob Siewert
Agriculture Service Board Chair
Foothills County

Briefing Notes for the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food prepared by MP John Barlow (added as a separate attachment).

RESOLUTION 2-26: EXEMPTION OF AGRICULTURE EQUIPMENT FROM CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT, 1999 EMISSION LIMITS

WHEREAS Concerns have been raised about the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of current Government of Canada emissions controls on diesel vehicles and machinery, specifically the use of Diesel Exhaust Fluid (DEF);

WHEREAS Producers in Alberta face expensive repairs and more costly down time dealing with Diesel Exhaust Fluid and cold temperatures;

WHEREAS Producers in Alberta need to stay competitive in the international markets; and

WHEREAS The net environmental benefit of DEF is negligible when considering the environmental impact of break downs, down time, and reduced longevity of equipment.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST

That Agriculture and Agri Food Canada, Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation, and Alberta Environment work with the Department of Environment and Climate Change Canada to exempt agricultural equipment and vehicles from emission limits for nitrogen oxides (NOx) so that the waste of maintaining diesel exhaust fluid and selective catalytic reduction systems can be eliminated.

SPONSORED BY: Foothills County

MOVED BY: _____

SECONDED BY: _____

CARRIED: _____

DEFEATED: _____

STATUS: Provincial

DEPARTMENT: Agriculture and Agri Food Canada,
Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation,
Alberta Environment and Protected Areas

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The *Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999* (CEPA) is an act of the 36th Parliament of Canada which outlines how to reduce nitrous oxides in diesel fuel exhaust. Currently nitrogen oxides are transformed into water nitrogen by using diesel exhaust fluid (DEF) in a catalytic converter. This meets the requirements set out in CEPA and thus means every diesel-powered vehicle or piece of equipment must have a DEF system or some other means of reducing nitrous oxides in their exhaust.

Some frequent DEF issues include crystallization and freezing, contamination and quality degradation, sensor and component failures, and storage and handling challenges. These issues ultimately involve a service call and parts where minimum costs run in the thousands of dollars but can easily escalate into tens of thousands of dollars. Speaking with local dealers they cite the cost of DEF, costly repairs, and customers claiming fuel mileage to be better without DEF as major issues with the systems.

Foothills County ASB alone has spent \$70,636 on DEF repairs on 4 tractors from 2021-25. This is about \$3,500 per tractor per year over the past 5 years. The tractors are from 2015, 2017, 2017, and 2018. On each tractor we spent about \$500/ year considering its age. So given that there are about 25,000 (About 16% of the total in the 2021 census) tractors in Alberta with DEF that would mean every year Albertans are spending about \$12.5 million on DEF repairs on just tractors. This expense is not even considering the cost of DEF, decreased fuel mileage, down time, and other equipment using DEF. DEF would also increase the repair time for other issues given that DEF parts are sometimes in the way for more common repairs. This would be a very conservative yearly cost for producers in Alberta.

Agriculture is a vital component of a maintaining a stable Canada. It is the Government of Canada's mission to keep Canadian agriculture competitive, innovative and sustainable. Providing an exemption for agricultural equipment and vehicles from emission limits will aid in keeping our agriculture in Canada competitive, innovative and sustainable.

References

Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999 (CEPA)-

<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/c-15.31/>

Fuel Logic – March 2024

<https://www.fuellogic.net/diesel-exhaust-fluid-problems/>

DLS Fleet Services (Heavy Duty Truck Focus)

<https://www.dlsfleetservices.com/company/articles>

Fluid Life – DEF Issues

<https://www.fluidlife.com/blog-common-def-problems-testing/?srsId=AfmBOoraiadMRPhK8a3J4JeZ7H6e7f1d-wZAZmc0UmJ-g4X9lyTzi6dC>

Rislone - Corrosion from DEF

<https://rislone.com/blog/diesel/diesel-exhaust-fluid-contamination-forms-causes-and-consequences/>

Foothills County expenses involving DEF – 2021-2025 (Information included in the resolution)

Agriculture Canada Mission and Vision – 2025

<https://agriculture.canada.ca/en/department/what-we-do>

2021 Census info on Tractor

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3210022901&pickMembers%5B0%5D=1.10&cubeTimeFrame.startYear=2001&cubeTimeFrame.endYear=2021&referencePeriods=20010101%2C20210101>

Farmers Forum Article March 2, 2023

<https://farmersforum.com/farmers-illegally-dismantle-emissions-system-on-every-single-tractor-insiders-say/>

RESOLUTION 3-26: MARKED FUEL PROGRAM REVIEW

- WHEREAS** the Alberta Farm Fuel Benefit (AFFB) program has long provided essential financial relief to agricultural producers through a provincial fuel tax exemption on marked gasoline and diesel used for farming purposes;
- WHEREAS** the Government of Alberta is currently considering a proposal to eliminate the use of marked fuel under the AFFB and Tax-Exempt Fuel User (TEFU) programs;
- WHEREAS** the proposed changes may introduce increased administrative burdens for agricultural producers, including increased record-keeping, delayed tax refunds, and potential impacts on cash flow; and
- WHEREAS** many producers rely on the current marked fuel system for its simplicity, clarity, and direct benefit at the point of sale, and have expressed concerns about the implications of the proposed changes.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

THAT ALBERTA’S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST

That the Ministry of Treasury Board and Finance continue to administer the Alberta Farm Fuel Benefit Program (AFFB) in its current form.to ensure that no additional administrative or financial burdens affect agricultural producers.

SPONSORED BY: Starland County
MOVED BY: _____
SECONDED BY: _____
CARRIED: _____
DEFEATED: _____
STATUS: Provincial
DEPARTMENT: Treasury Board and Finance

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The AFFB program has been a cornerstone of provincial support for agricultural producers, offering a direct fuel tax exemption on marked gasoline and diesel used in farming operations. This point-of-sale benefit has provided reduced administrative burden and supported operational efficiency across Alberta’s agricultural sector.

The government of Alberta is currently reviewing the AFFB program with a proposal to shift from the existing marked fuel system to a refund-based model applied to clear fuel

purchases. While the intent may be to modernize the program, this change raises significant concerns for agricultural producers.

Changes to the program could result in higher operational costs, which may be passed on to producers or lead to reduced service availability in rural areas. Agricultural producers may ultimately purchase clear full at the full tax rate and apply for refunds after purchase. This delay could negatively affect cash flow, especially during peak seasons when fuel usage is high and financial flexibility is critical.

Producers may need to maintain additional detailed documentation of fuel purchases and usage to support refund claims. This added administrative burden could be particularly challenging for small and mid-sized farms, increasing the risk of errors, missed claims, and lost benefits.

Given these concerns, many stakeholders believe that the current marked fuel system is more efficient, accessible, and supportive of Alberta's agricultural economy. Maintaining the AFFB program in its existing form is essential to ensuring continued stability and fairness for producers across the province.

RESOLUTION 4-26: RURAL WATER DISTRIBUTION AND CONNECTIVITY FUNDING

WHEREAS Alberta is experiencing prolonged drought conditions, leaving both agricultural producers and rural residents without reliable access to water;

WHEREAS Existing federal and provincial programs fund treatment plants and transmission mains but provide inadequate support for the distribution and service connections that directly reach farms and households;

WHEREAS This funding gap creates affordability barriers, leaves regional transmission systems underutilized, and undermines agricultural production, public health, and rural sustainability;

WHEREAS Bridging the gap between funded transmission projects and user connections will maximize the value of federal and provincial investments, reduce long-term operating and maintenance costs, and reduce public health risks associated with private wells of uncertain quality; and

WHEREAS Other jurisdictions have implemented grant or cost share programs to assist property owners with service lateral costs and on lot infrastructure, resulting in improved uptake of centralized services and stronger outcomes for rural residents.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

THAT ALBERTA’S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST

The Government of Canada and the Government of Alberta expand water infrastructure funding to include distribution and service connections for farms, rural residences, and small communities through an equitable cost-sharing program.

SPONSORED BY: County of Stettler No. 6

MOVED BY: _____

SECONDED BY: _____

CARRIED: _____

DEFEATED: _____

STATUS: Provincial and Federal

- DEPARTMENT:** Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation
- Alberta Transportation and Economic Corridors
- Alberta Affordability and Utilities
- Alberta Infrastructure
- Canada Housing and Infrastructure

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Alberta's rural communities are facing an urgent water crisis. Consecutive years of drought, poor runoff, and extended hot weather have depleted surface water reserves and strained aquifers to the point of widespread well failures. Municipalities report critically low levels in dugouts, ponds, and wells. Producers, already facing high costs and operational challenges, are increasingly reliant on municipal truck fills—resulting in lineups, long hauling distances, higher costs, and pressure on local infrastructure. Without sustainable access to water, the viability of Alberta's farms, ranches, and rural businesses—and by extension the province's food supply chain—is at risk.

For rural residents, similar challenges exist. Many live adjacent to regional transmission lines built under Alberta's *Water for Life* strategy, yet remain unable to connect because of prohibitive costs. Federal and provincial programs cover backbone infrastructure such as transmission mains and treatment plants, but do not fund the "last mile" distribution or service laterals. As a result, many rural households face high individual connection costs, leaving publicly funded systems underutilized and residents dependent on private wells of uncertain quality.

While the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable-CAP) offers cost-sharing for wells, dugouts, and cisterns, its funding for tie-ins to municipal systems is limited to \$10,000—far below actual costs (typically an additional \$10,000–\$25,000 above the program limit). The Local Government Fiscal Framework (LGFF) and the Alberta Municipal Water/Wastewater Partnership (AMWWP) support municipal infrastructure but do not address expansion to rural residents or farms. The Water for Life Program funds inter-municipal transmission systems but excludes intra-municipal distribution. Even the new Integrated Water Program launched by Alberta Transportation and Economic Corridors fails to meaningfully address agricultural connectivity.

Other Canadian provinces provide successful models:

Saskatchewan – Rural Pipeline Associations

- Saskatchewan has more than 60 rural pipeline associations that deliver treated water to farms and rural residences.
- Systems were built with a blend of federal/provincial grants and local contributions.
- Some municipalities and associations provided subsidies for service laterals to encourage uptake.
- Outcome: High participation rates, reduced dependence on private wells, and financially sustainable systems.

Manitoba – Rural Water Development Program

- Manitoba operated a Rural Water Development Program, which provided grants covering up to 50% of eligible costs for water pipeline extensions to rural homes and farms.
- This program helped households overcome the steep capital cost of individual service laterals (\$10,000–\$20,000).
- Outcome: Thousands of rural households gained access to safe, reliable potable water, improving public health and farm viability.

Nova Scotia – Municipal & Community Partnership Grants

- Nova Scotia supported municipalities through cost-shared provincial grants to extend water distribution to rural and small-community clusters.
- Some counties implemented connection fee subsidies for low-income residents.
- Outcome: Increased household connections to municipal systems, particularly in areas with poor well-water quality.

Ontario – Bundled Connection Projects

- Under the Clean Water and Wastewater Fund (CWWF) and the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund (OCIF), municipalities were allowed to include local distribution and household connection costs as part of larger water system upgrades.
- Outcome: Economies of scale reduced per-household costs, leading to stronger uptake of connections in rural areas.

Alberta has invested heavily in backbone infrastructure but has not bridged the final gap to farms and homes. Without expanded, cost-shared support for distribution and service connections, both producers and rural residents will remain vulnerable to water insecurity.

Water is the most critical resource for agriculture, households, and rural economies. Coordinated action from both provincial and federal governments is needed to ensure that Alberta's communities can continue to operate, produce, and thrive.

RESOLUTION PC1-26: MODERNIZING ALBERTA'S RAT CONTROL PROGRAM

WHEREAS: the current Rat Program in Alberta was designed in the 1950s and may not fully address the realities of modern pest (rat) management, with emerging challenges both inside and outside the established rat control zone;

WHEREAS: recent years have seen increased rat activity in urban municipalities and regions outside the traditional control zone, with increased and new pathways for rat spread and heightened risk to agricultural and urban infrastructure;

WHEREAS: public awareness efforts, while improved through initiatives like the "Rat on Rat" campaign, require further expansion to ensure both rural and urban Albertans are informed and vigilant;

WHEREAS: an effective provincial strategy depends on the collaborative efforts of the Agricultural Service Boards (ASBs), Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA), Alberta Municipalities (AM), the Alberta Invasive Species Council (AISC), the Government of Alberta (GOA), First Nations and Métis communities (FNM), and the support of surrounding jurisdictions;

WHEREAS: there are identified gaps in training for municipal and pest control staff, particularly regarding rat identification, management, and reporting;

WHEREAS: effective rat management requires current data, including accurate mapping and tracking of high-risk sites such as landfills, recycling facilities, and rail yards, which are currently lacking a comprehensive, province-wide inventory.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

THAT ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST

That the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation perform a full strategic review and modernization of Alberta's Rat Program, ensuring its effectiveness and responsiveness to current and emerging pest management challenges throughout the province;

FURTHER BE IT

RESOLVED THAT ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST

that the Province of Alberta include the creation of a working group composed of members from ASBs, RMA, AM, AISC, GOA ministries, FNM and adjacent jurisdictions to provide direction and recommendations to the GOA for the modernization of Alberta's Rat Program

SPONSORED BY: ASBPC

MOVED BY: _____

SECONDED BY: _____

CARRIED: _____

DEFEATED: _____

STATUS: Provincial

DEPARTMENT: Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation,
Environment and Protected Areas,
Infrastructure,
Transportation and Economic Corridors

Background

Alberta's Rat Control Program, administered by the Alberta Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, has successfully kept the province essentially free of invasive Norway rats (*Rattus norvegicus* and any other rat species or strain derived from the genus *Rattus*) since its establishment in 1950. This makes Alberta one of the few rat-free regions in the world, preventing billions in potential damages from property destruction, crop losses, and disease transmission. The program focuses on prevention, early detection, and eradication along the province's eastern border, relying on legislation, public cooperation, and targeted interventions.

History

The program emerged in response to the westward spread of Norway rats, which originated in China, arrived in North America in 1775 via European ships, and advanced across Canada at about 24 km per year. By the 1920s, they had reached Saskatchewan, and in the summer of 1950, the first confirmed sighting occurred on an Alberta farm near Alsask, Saskatchewan, just across the border.

Key milestones are outlined in the table below:

Year(s) Key Events and Milestones

1942	<i>Agricultural Pests Act</i> passed, empowering the Minister of Agriculture to declare pests and mandate their destruction by landowners and municipalities.
1950	Rats declared a pest; program launched under the Department of Agriculture (shifted from Health). Rat Control Zone (RCZ) established: a 600 km long, 29 km wide buffer along the Saskatchewan border from Cold Lake to Montana. Public education begins with posters, pamphlets, and conferences. Initial infestations: 1 confirmed.
1951–1952	Infestations spread to 30 along 180 km of border, expanding to 270 km by 1952 with penetration up to 50–60 km in some areas. Private firm contracted for poisoning with arsenic trioxide (63,600 kg used on 2,700 farms).
1953–1959	Municipal pest control officers (PCOs) appointed; province funds 50% of border inspectors' salaries from 1954. Spread halted southward at Cypress Hills (1953) and northward at boreal forest near Cold Lake (1958). Education expands via radio (<i>Call of the Land</i>), displays, and enforcement (first conviction in 1955). Infestations peak at 573–637 annually. Key figure: Napoleon Poulin develops "Poulin's Rat Doom" rodenticide and aids early efforts.
1960–1975	Infestations drop sharply post-1959. Provincial funding rises to 60% (1971), 75% (1973), and 100% (1975) of PCO costs. Saskatchewan launches its own program in 1963 for collaboration. Annual inspections: 2,000–4,000 premises.
2002–2007	Infestations reach zero in 2002; only two cases reported through 2007. Alberta declares itself rat-free.
2023–2025	Rare outbreaks at Calgary recycling plants (2023). Program marks 75th anniversary in 2025 with ongoing patrols.

The program's early success was bolstered by Cold War-era rhetoric framing rats as an "invasion from the east," fostering strong public vigilance.

How the Program Works

The RCZ serves as the primary frontline, patrolled year-round by PCOs who inspect farms, barns, grain bins, and straw bales twice annually for signs of rats. Methods include:

- **Eradication:** Use of rodenticides (e.g., warfarin-based), traps, and tracking powders; removal of food sources, harborages (e.g., junk piles), and rat-proofing structures.
- **Prevention:** Public reporting via 310-FARM (in Alberta), email (rats@gov.ab.ca), or photos; education on identification (distinguishing Norway rats from native packrats or roof rats).
- **Legislation:** Rats remain a declared pest; owning pet rats is illegal except for zoos, universities, or research (permits required). Imports and transport of live rats are prohibited.
- **Collaboration:** Municipalities appoint local inspectors; interprovincial ties with Saskatchewan; occasional special measures for border towns like Lloydminster.

The program operates Monday–Friday, 8:15 a.m.–4:30 p.m., with costs rising from \$50,000 (1969–70) to \$350,000 (2006–07), reflecting expanded scope.

Performance

The program's effectiveness is evident in its containment of infestations: from 1 in 1950 to a peak of 637 (1956–1959), then plummeting to 1–5 confirmed annually post-1959, and zero breeding populations since. By 2003, infestations hit absolute zero, with only sporadic single-rat incursions (e.g., via vehicles or grain shipments). Success factors include:

- **Geography and Climate:** Natural barriers like the Cypress Hills, Rockies, and boreal forests limit spread.
- **Public Support:** Grassroots reporting and education have been crucial; farmers like Bryan Skinner note sightings are rare (e.g., 15 years apart).
- **Innovation and Enforcement:** Shift from dangerous arsenic to safer anticoagulants; legal actions ensure compliance.
- **Economic Impact:** Globally, rats cause \$27 billion USD in annual U.S. damages alone; Alberta's status avoids this while protecting agriculture.

Current status remains robust, with no resident populations, though climate change and urban growth pose emerging risks. In 2023, two Calgary outbreaks were swiftly contained. Key figures like "Alberta's Rat Lady" Karen Wickerson continue patrols, emphasizing early detection.

Overall, the program's 75-year track record demonstrates sustained vigilance can maintain ecological and economic safeguards against invasive species. Residents are encouraged to report suspicions promptly to uphold this achievement.

Challenges Facing the Program

Alberta's **Rat Control Program** has maintained the province's rat-free status for **75 years**, but emerging threats require adaptation. Key challenges include:

- **Climate change** — Warmer winters and extended breeding seasons allow more rats to survive and potentially expand westward from Saskatchewan.

- **Urbanization and population growth** — Increasing human density, global trade, and movement of goods (e.g., via vehicles or shipments) heighten introduction risks, especially in cities like Calgary.
- **Evolving public awareness** — New residents may be unfamiliar with reporting protocols or the program's importance.

While no official government report outlines a comprehensive modernization plan (as of late 2025), recent initiatives, expert commentary, and stakeholder resolutions highlight practical recommendations to strengthen the program.

Key Recommendations to Modernize the Program

Recommendations draw from ongoing efforts (e.g., 2024-2025 campaigns), rural municipality advocacy, and analyses of climate/urban impacts:

1. **Enhance Public Education and Awareness Campaigns** Expand outreach to reach newcomers and urban dwellers. The 2024 "Rat on Rats!" campaign, funded by \$110,000 from the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership, uses billboards, outreach materials, and forums to encourage reporting. Continue and digitize this (e.g., social media, apps) for broader reach, emphasizing identification and risks.
2. **Improve Reporting and Early Detection Systems** Modernize citizen reporting with a dedicated mobile app for submitting photos/videos of suspected rats (building on existing email/phone lines like 310-FARM or rats@gov.ab.ca). Integrate AI for preliminary identification to speed responses.
3. **Adopt Advanced Technology for Monitoring** Incorporate tools like GIS mapping for high-risk areas, drone surveillance in the Rat Control Zone, trail cameras, or environmental DNA (eDNA) sampling to detect traces early. These data-driven approaches can optimize patrols and resource allocation.
4. **Strengthen Coordination and Expertise** Maintain or appoint a dedicated Provincial Coordinator for training, rapid response, and collaboration with municipal officers (as advocated in rural resolutions). Increase training workshops on new methods.
5. **Address Urban and Climate-Specific Risks** Expand focus beyond the rural eastern border to urban hotspots (e.g., recycling plants, ports of entry). Promote rat-proofing in new developments, preserve greenspaces to limit habitat, and collaborate on climate adaptation strategies (e.g., monitoring temperature impacts on rat survival).
6. **Sustain Funding and Partnerships** Secure ongoing investment for patrols, rodenticides, and education. Deepen ties with federal programs, Saskatchewan, and groups like the Alberta Invasive Species Council.

These steps build on the program's strengths—vigilance, legislation, and community involvement—while adapting to 21st-century pressures. Swift eradication of rare incursions (e.g., 2023-2025 Calgary cases) shows the current system works, but proactive modernization will help preserve Alberta's unique status amid growing threats. Residents play a key role: report suspicions promptly to keep the province rat-free.

Sources: Alberta.ca, albertainvasives.ca, albertafarmexpress.ca, wildlife.org, ualberta.ca, producer.com

RESOLUTION PC2-26: ON-FARM MEAT PROCESSING

WHEREAS: the On-Farm Slaughter Operation (OFSO) program, introduced in 2020, provides critical opportunities for small-scale livestock producers in Alberta to enhance local food systems, and support economic diversification through direct-to-consumer sales and custom slaughter services for household use;

WHEREAS: regulatory changes implemented on July 2, 2025, including annual slaughter weight limits of approximately 5,000 lbs live weight and restrictions on co-ownership based on animal size, have introduced uncertainty and potential barriers that could reduce viability for small processors by up to 70% in revenue;

WHEREAS: the government's pause on the regulatory changes, following immediate stakeholder concerns about unintended consequences, highlights the program's vulnerability to abrupt policy shifts and the importance of responsive governance in supporting rural agriculture;

WHEREAS: the subsequent online survey and engagement process for OFSO holders and stakeholders, conducted from August 25 to September 22, 2025, aimed to gather input on reducing foodborne illness risks and assessing long-term impacts, but has yet to yield publicly announced outcomes as of December 2025, contributing to ongoing anxiety among small processors;

WHEREAS: the lack of timely updates following the consultation period underscores the need for more transparent and comprehensive evaluations to address persistent red tape, such as stringent licensing prerequisites (e.g., food safety modules, onsite assessments, water testing, zoning compliance, and quarterly reporting), which may disproportionately burden local small processors and hinder their ability to operate efficiently;

WHEREAS: a thorough economic evaluation is essential to quantify the financial impacts of existing barriers and regulatory uncertainties on small processors, including potential revenue losses, investment deterrence, and contributions to Alberta's rural economy, with the explicit goal of streamlining processes, reducing red tape, and fostering sustainable growth in the local meat production sector.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED
THAT ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST**

That the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation initiates a comprehensive, transparent, and timely reviews of the On-Farm Slaughter Operation (OFSO) program—including all regulatory changes, licensing requirements, and enforcement measures—be conducted with meaningful stakeholder input, with the aim of minimizing administrative burdens and financial uncertainty for small-scale processors.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED

THAT ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST

that the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation reduce unnecessary red tape and ensure that regulatory policies do not disproportionately hinder small, rural operators and supports long-term viability, economic sustainability, and growth of Alberta's local meat production while simultaneously meeting traceability and safe food safety requirement.

SPONSORED BY: ASBPC

MOVED BY: _____

SECONDED BY: _____

CARRIED: _____

DEFEATED: _____

STATUS: Provincial

DEPARTMENT: Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation,

Background

Opportunities of the Alberta On-Farm Slaughter Operation (OFSO)

The OFSO licence, introduced in 2020, allows eligible producers to perform uninspected slaughter on their farms for direct-to-consumer sales or custom slaughter services, with meat restricted to personal household use. This program has created several key opportunities, particularly for small-scale and remote livestock operations, by addressing gaps in Alberta's meat processing infrastructure.

- **Enhanced Access to Local and Ethical Meat Markets:** It enables farmers to sell live animals or provide slaughter services directly to consumers, bypassing long wait times and backlogs at commercial abattoirs. This supports local food systems, reduces animal transport stress, and appeals to buyers seeking "ethical" meat produced with humane, on-farm methods.
- **Economic Diversification and Farm Viability:** Small operations can invest in infrastructure (e.g., processing sheds, coolers) and skills training (e.g., butchery courses), fostering business growth, job creation in rural areas, and stable incomes through direct sales. Demand for OFSO licences surged after 2021 rule changes allowing whole-animal purchases, highlighting its role in market expansion.
- **Operational Efficiency and Sustainability:** By easing pressure on centralized facilities—exacerbated by closures like the Pigeon Lake poultry plant—OFSO reduces trucking costs and supports resilient supply chains, especially amid disruptions like COVID-19. It promotes community food security and long-term program sustainability through stakeholder-driven improvements.

Obstacles and Challenges

Despite these benefits, the OFSO faces significant hurdles, including recent regulatory shifts as of mid-2025, which have sparked farmer anxiety and calls for reform. These stem from food safety concerns, enforcement inconsistencies, and broader industry dynamics.

- **Regulatory Uncertainty and Limits:** In July 2025, the government proposed annual uninspected slaughter caps (e.g., ~2,250 kg or 5,000 lbs for new licensees, equivalent to 2–4 cows), aiming to curb overuse beyond the program's "small-scale, household" intent. A subsequent pause eased immediate fears but left operations in limbo, with no clear timeline for consultations—potentially slashing sales by 70% for some farms and undermining investments.
- **Food Safety and Compliance Risks:** Uninspected outdoor slaughter raises contamination concerns (e.g., E. coli, Salmonella), with growing complaints about illegal sales, inhumane practices, and improper disposal. Enforcement varies by inspector, leading to arbitrary audits, while the program's lighter standards (vs. inspected facilities) invite scrutiny amid broader public health worries, like a 2023 Calgary E. coli outbreak.
- **Structural and Economic Barriers:** High fixed costs for outsourcing to consolidated abattoirs (dominated by a few large firms) persist as a core issue, with exemptions offering limited relief—applying only to direct sales of whole animals, not cuts or broader supply chains. Supply management quotas in related sectors and black-market activities further erode margins for ethical producers.

Aspect	Opportunities	Obstacles
Economic	Direct sales boost incomes; infrastructure investments create jobs	Proposed limits threaten viability; high outsourcing costs
Operational	Reduces transport/backlogs; supports ethical practices	Inconsistent inspections; contamination risks in outdoor settings
Regulatory	Fills processing gaps; enables diversification	Uncertainty from 2025 changes; narrow exemptions limit scope

Overall, while OFSO empowers small farmers in Alberta's evolving livestock sector, its future hinges on balancing safety with flexibility—potentially through enhanced training, targeted enforcement on illegal ops, and expanded exemptions to counter industry consolidation. For tailored advice, especially for operations like Semi Sweet Acres, consulting Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation is recommended.

Key Regulatory Changes to Alberta's On-Farm Slaughter Operation (OFSSO) Program in 2025

In 2025, the Alberta government introduced and then paused significant changes to the OFSSO program, primarily aimed at addressing food safety concerns from uninspected slaughter. The program, launched in 2020, allows licensed producers to conduct uninspected on-farm slaughter for direct-to-consumer sales (live animals) or custom services, with meat restricted to household use only.

Proposed Changes (Effective July 2, 2025)

- **Annual Slaughter Weight Limits:** A cap of approximately **2,250 kg (5,000 lbs) live weight per year** was imposed. This equated to roughly 2–4 cattle, or a mix with smaller animals like pigs or poultry.
- **Applicability:**
 - Applied immediately to **new licensees** (applications after July 2, 2025) and certain pending ones (classified as "Group B" or "Class B" holders who hadn't completed all prerequisites like payment, quizzes, water testing, and assessments).
 - Existing licensees ("Group A") were grandfathered without limits until licence renewal (valid for 5 years).
- **Rationale:** Government assessments showed some OFSSOs slaughtering far beyond the program's "small-scale, household" intent, increasing risks of foodborne pathogens (e.g., E. coli, Salmonella) due to less stringent standards compared to inspected abattoirs. Rising complaints about illegal sales, inhumane practices, and waste disposal also factored in.
- **Other Requirements:** Quarterly reporting of slaughter activities remained mandatory, even if none occurred. Per-customer annual limits (based on reasonable household consumption) stayed unchanged.

These changes sparked backlash, with farmers reporting potential 70% revenue cuts and threats to business viability.

Pause and Current Status (as of December 14, 2025)

- **Pause Announced:** In mid-July 2025 (around July 10–15), the government **paused enforcement** of the new weight limits after hearing concerns about "unintended consequences."
- **Reason for Pause:** To allow further consultation and balance public health with program sustainability.
- **Consultation Process:**
 - An online survey for OFSO holders and stakeholders ran from **August 25 to September 22, 2025.**
 - Focused on proposed requirements to reduce foodborne illness risks and assess long-term impacts.
- **Updated Technical Guide:** A June 2025 version incorporating the changes was published but later removed pending engagement outcomes.
- **No New Implementation:** As of now, the weight limits remain paused. No firm timeline for resolution or new rules has been announced.

Aspect	Pre-July 2025	Proposed July 2025 Changes	Current (Paused) Status
Annual Limit	No cap	5,000 lbs live weight (new/pending licensees)	Paused; no enforcement
Existing Licensees	Unlimited	Unlimited until renewal	Unlimited
New Licensees	Unlimited	Capped	Currently unlimited (pause)
Reporting	Quarterly required	Quarterly required	Quarterly required

The government emphasizes commitment to public safety while supporting local meat production. Alternatives suggested during consultations include enhanced inspections, mandatory food safety training, or targeted enforcement on illegal operations rather than broad caps. For the latest official details, check the Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation website (alberta.ca/on-farm-slaughter-operation-licence) or contact the Ag-Info Centre at 310-FARM. If you're operating under your farm, monitor for updates, as future changes could affect planning or renewal.

Sources: alberta.ca, medicinehatnews.com, thebrooksinstitute.org, cbc.ca, northeastnow.com, facebook.com, minburn.ab.ca, hotminutecalgary.com

RESOLUTION PC3-26: LEGAL ENTITY ALIGNED WITH ASBS

WHEREAS: the Agricultural Service Boards (ASBs) in Alberta have supported numerous not-for-profit initiatives, such as Coop Extension and AgKnow, which align with ASB mandates but the initiatives struggle with establishment and sustainability due to the lack of a perfectly aligned entity to collaborate with the province on operational funding;

WHEREAS: Alberta has a higher number of not-for-profits per capita compared to other provinces, leading to inefficiencies from duplicated operational costs across these organizations and fragmented advocacy efforts in agriculture;

WHEREAS: governments worldwide, including Alberta, have shifted since the 1970s from direct service providers to enablers focused on policy, regulations, and allocating tax dollars for civil society responses, limiting direct support for operational costs in agricultural initiatives;

WHEREAS: Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation's budgets are predominantly tied to Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) agreements, restricting the department's ability to provide ongoing operational funding for ag and rural related activities and necessitating innovative approaches to leverage provincial investments;

WHEREAS: the Agricultural Service Board Provincial Committee (ASBPC) currently lacks legal entity status, resulting in a lack of ability in assisting in the growth of Alberta's agricultural and rural needs as well as their own activities.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST

the Agricultural Service Board Provincial Committee (ASBPC) investigate options for establishing a formal legal entity that aligns with the duties and mandates of ASBs that is empowered to work with industry and government on activities resulting from ASB advocacy and resolutions.

SPONSORED BY: ASBPC
MOVED BY: _____
SECONDED BY: _____
CARRIED: _____
DEFEATED: _____
STATUS: Provincial
DEPARTMENT: Agricultural Service Board Provincial Committee

Background

Cooperative Extension Pilot (Ag Extension Alberta)

This ASB-initiated effort aimed to create a scalable, province-wide agricultural extension model (similar to U.S. systems) for knowledge transfer, education, and support to producers.

- As of mid-2024, the initiative (now branded **Ag Extension Alberta**, under leadership including an Executive Director hire) was actively working through the funding process to secure support for a **full pilot**.
- Progress included stakeholder surveys, strategy development, and website planning (launch anticipated Fall 2024), but explicit mentions of ongoing funding hurdles for launching the full pilot persist.
- No indications of closure or end—it's advancing, though reliant on grant navigation and partnerships (e.g., via ARECA networks). Broader context in Canadian ag extension highlights historical declines due to challenges proving ROI and securing consistent government funding.

AgKnow (Alberta Farm Mental Health Network)

This producer-led initiative (housed under ARECA) provides farmer-specific mental health resources, therapist networks, suicide prevention training, and free sessions.

- It has faced **inconsistent and urgent funding gaps**, with leaders noting that project-based grants jeopardize year-round service delivery during farm crises.
- In 2024, AgKnow issued urgent appeals to ASBs and stakeholders for bridge funding; community/donations raised over \$180,000 to maintain momentum.
- Specific programs (e.g., free counselling pilot) have paused while replenishing funds.
- Past support includes a 2023 Sustainable CAP grant (\$388,500 via ARECA) for awareness/research and earlier CAP funding (\$524,500 in 2022), but calls continue for **sustainable, consistent provincial funding** to ensure long-term viability (e.g., via ASB resolutions in 2024 urging government action).
- Current efforts rely on memberships, partnerships, donations, and targeted grants.

Both initiatives reflect common Alberta ag non-profit challenges: heavy dependence on competitive/project grants (e.g., Sustainable CAP/SCAP) with limited core operational support.

ASBPC Executive Assistant Position

The ASBPC's official Terms of Reference explicitly note that the committee has authority to hire an Executive Assistant, but this is contingent on need and availability of funding. This phrasing clearly indicates that funding for the EA position is not guaranteed or ongoing—it's dependent on available resources, which can create instability or limitations in maintaining the role consistently.

Unlike local ASBs (which receive dedicated limited provincial grants for operations, including hiring Agricultural Fieldmen), the provincial-level ASBPC operates as an advisory committee without a similar stable funding stream mentioned in public documents.

RESOLUTION PC4-26: URGENT REFORMS TO CFIA AND PMRA

WHEREAS: during a meeting with the Alberta Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation, it was noted that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) are not legally enabled to respond to feedback from Canadians, leading to a lack of accountability in their decision-making processes;

WHEREAS: provincial discussions are underway regarding the potential relocation of CFIA and PMRA from Health Canada back to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to better align with agricultural needs and improve responsiveness;

WHEREAS: verifiable case studies from Agricultural Service Boards (ASBs), including examples from poultry and cervid sectors, demonstrate how CFIA's delays in depopulation decisions cause significant business disruptions, increased anxiety among farmers and workers, and animal welfare concerns without consideration for practical on-farm impacts;

WHEREAS: the Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) Working Group on Pesticides Management report explicitly states that PMRA is not legally able to respond to industry feedback, and there are recommendations under discussion at the FPT level for improving CFIA operations;

WHEREAS: in the beekeeper sector, independent peer reviews of CFIA risk assessments revealed biases that were disregarded as "out of scope," while paradoxical policies allow imports of diseased bees from jurisdictions like Italy, New Zealand, and Australia, but restrict disease-free imports from the United States, highlighting the need for mechanisms to address industry concerns and ensure practical, evidence-based mandates;

WHEREAS: a thorough economic evaluation is essential to quantify the financial impacts of existing barriers and regulatory uncertainties on small processors, including potential revenue losses, investment deterrence, and contributions to Alberta's rural economy, with the explicit goal of streamlining processes, reducing red tape, and fostering sustainable growth in the local meat production sector.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST

That the Government of Canada to urgently implement changes to the mandates, processes, and accountability structures of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA), including enabling legal authority to meaningfully consider and respond to feedback from industry stakeholders and Canadians;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED

THAT ALBERTA’S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST

that the Government of Canada immediately move CFIA and PMRA from Health Canada back under Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to restore alignment with agriculture and improve responsiveness, and that both agencies be legally required to factor in practical on-farm realities, business disruptions, animal welfare, and scientific evidence when making decisions.

SPONSORED BY: ASBPC

MOVED BY: _____

SECONDED BY: _____

CARRIED: _____

DEFEATED: _____

STATUS: Provincial, Federal

DEPARTMENT: Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Health Canada, Prime Minister’s Office

Background

PMRA Limitations on Responding to Industry Feedback

The 2024 Report to Agriculture Ministers from the FPT Working Group on Pesticides Management (published by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada) explicitly notes challenges with PMRA's regulatory framework. While it doesn't use the exact phrase "not legally able to respond," it highlights that PMRA cannot legally consider socio-economic costs/benefits in risk acceptability decisions, and emphasizes the need for earlier, meaningful engagement with provinces and producers. The report led to 5 recommendations (endorsed by FPT ministers in 2024) to improve pesticide management, including better data access, transparency, and consideration of pesticide "value" in PMRA work (though not in core risk decisions). An action plan is underway, with updates planned for 2025 FPT meetings.

This supports your point on PMRA's constraints and the push for improvements via FPT processes.

CFIA Improvements and FPT Discussions

FPT ministers have ongoing collaborations with CFIA on issues like interprovincial trade barriers, emergency management, and sector resilience. While no public sources confirm "30-50 specific recommendations" for CFIA reforms, there are related efforts:

Accelerated pilot projects for interprovincial meat trade (in cooperation with CFIA).

Enhanced client service for small/medium businesses.

Renewed FPT Emergency Management Framework for Agriculture.

These align with broader calls for CFIA to be more responsive and practical.

Beekeeper Case Study (Honey Bee Imports)

CFIA's ongoing risk analysis (initiated 2023, updated through 2025) on importing honey bee packages from the U.S. concluded a 100% probability of introducing hazards (e.g., resistant Varroa mites, American foulbrood) without sufficient mitigation. Stakeholder proposals (including industry mitigations) were evaluated but deemed inadequate to reduce risks to acceptable levels, leading to no change in the import ban.

On the paradox: Canada allows queen bees (and some packages) from places like Italy, New Zealand, and Australia (certified mite-free), but restricts U.S. packages due to higher assessed risks. Independent peer reviews or biases in assessments have been raised by stakeholders, but CFIA maintains decisions are science-based per WOA/WTO guidelines. This provides verifiable evidence of rigid risk assessments disregarding some industry input.

Practical On-Farm Impacts (e.g., Depopulation Delays)

CFIA's "stamping-out" policy for highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) requires rapid, humane depopulation to protect animal health, trade, and the industry (over 11 million birds affected since 2021). Sources acknowledge depopulation is distressing for farmers, causing emotional and economic impacts, but emphasize it's necessary for containment. Delays or issues (e.g., contractor problems in

B.C.) have been noted in audits/reports, leading to farmer anxiety, business disruption, and animal welfare concerns—directly mirroring your poultry/cervid examples.

Relocation of CFIA/PMRA

No current public discussions or proposals found to relocate CFIA or PMRA back to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. Historically, CFIA was created in 1997 by consolidating programs from multiple departments (including Agriculture), and PMRA was established in 1995 under Health Canada for health/environment focus. A 2013 shift moved some CFIA oversight to Health, but no recent momentum for reversal.

RESOLUTION 6-24a: IMPROVING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF CANADIAN APICULTURE THROUGH BEE PACKAGE IMPORTS

Notice to Industry by CFIA dated August 6, 2025 states:

After careful evaluation of all input received, the CFIA concluded that no feasible, scientifically-supported mitigation measures are currently available to bring all identified risks within acceptable levels.

As a result, Canada will maintain its current import restrictions and will not permit the importation of honey bee packages from the United States at this time.

Altogether, the strong risk assessment concluded that the probability of entry, exposure and establishment of any of the 4 hazards of concern on at least one receiving hive in Canada over a period of one year was 100%. The overall, national-scale impact of projected importations would be moderate, with immediate and significant impacts within importing provinces and potential dissemination of all hazards within the Canadian honey bee industry. The risks identified in the risk assessment are above Canada's acceptable level of risk. Therefore, risk mitigation measures are required in order to determine if honey bee packages can be imported from the US.

It is now up to the industry to foot the bill for the development, and approval of mitigation strategies before this issue can be re-evaluated. The same process that would have to happen to get 2% Strychnine reregistered for Gophers (Richardson's Ground Squirrels) or 10/80 for predator control. Nearly impossible for small markets like Canada to attract innovated investment needed to scale that mountain.

According to Statistics Canada "<https://agriculture.canada.ca/en/sector/horticulture/reports/statistical-overview-canadian-honey-and-bee-industry-2024#s4.2.1>" Statistical overview of the Canadian honey and bee industry, 2024, Alberta contributed to 42% of the overall Canadian honey production. Canada is 12th producer of honey by volume contributing 2.5% globally.

Line graph illustrating the value of honey produced in various Canadian provinces over time, highlighting a

significant increase in the value of Alberta-produced honey surpassing \$100 million in 2023."
class="wp-image-5281"/></figure>

Despite some municipalities in the Peace declaring agriculture disasters in 2024 due to winter kills and poor hive performance, some estimating 60-90% losses, Alberta continued to dominate the Canadian Honey supply. 63% of Canada's exports go to the US, 33% to Japan and all other exports are less than 2%.

<https://agriculture.canada.ca/en/sector/horticulture/reports/statistical-overview-canadian-honey-and-bee-industry-2024>

<https://agriculture.canada.ca/en/sector/horticulture/reports/statistical-overview-canadian-honey-and-bee-industry-2024>

<https://inspection.canada.ca/en/about-cfia/transparency/consultations-and-engagement/completed/honey-bee-packages-united-states> target="_blank" rel="noopener">From the CFIA website:

Risk mitigation options for the importation of honey bee packages from the United States: Closed consultation

This consultation was open from November 7, 2024, to January 31, 2025.

As part of our consultation on risk mitigation options for the importation of honey bee packages from the United States (U.S.) to Canada, we looked to gather feedback from industry, governments, the public, and other organizations or individuals with an interest in matters related to honey bee health. This will help determine if identified risks can be mitigated to an acceptable level to allow importation of U.S. honey bee packages into Canada. In response to feedback and requests from stakeholders, the CFIA extended the deadline to January 31, 2025, for receiving proposals.

Importation of honey bee packages from the U.S. have been restricted since 1987 due to unacceptable levels of risk to the health of the Canadian bee population. Subsequent import risk analyses were conducted in 2003 and 2014 which concluded that importation of honey bee packages from the U.S. into Canada would lead to unacceptable risks of introduction, establishment and spread of hazards. As a result, Canada does not currently allow honey bee package imports from the United States. Restrictions for importing bees into Canada are in place to help protect the Canadian bee population.

About the risk analysis

In 2023, a new import risk analysis for honey bee packages from the U.S. was initiated to determine if the importation of approximately 50,000 (25,000 to 75,000) honey bee packages per year from the continental U.S. could be allowed into Canada. The risk analysis is being conducted based on guidelines provided by the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) and the World Trade Organization Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures agreement, and includes hazard identification, risk assessment for the identified hazards and risk management.

The 5 following hazards (pathogenic agents that can cause disease or pests that can lead to negative effects) were identified within the hazard identification assessment that can pose a risk to the Canadian honey bee population:

- *Apis mellifera scutellata* hybrid (Africanized honey bees)
- *Paenibacillus larvae*; (American foulbrood)
- *Melissococcus plutonius*; (European foulbrood)
- *Aethina tumida*; (Small hive beetle)
- *Varroa destructor*; (Varroa mite)

A quantitative risk assessment was then conducted for four of the identified hazards (excluding European foulbrood) by evaluating:

The probability of entry of each hazard through importation of honey bee packages

The probability of exposure of Canadian honey bees to these hazards and

The consequences of that exposure on the Canadian honey bee population

There is currently a lack of scientific information on resistant forms of European foulbrood in Canada or the United States. Without this information, it is not possible to conduct a risk assessment for European foulbrood, which would be necessary to justify the implementation of import measures that would go beyond what is currently applied for interprovincial movements in Canada.

Altogether, the risk assessment concluded that the probability of entry, exposure and establishment of any of the 4 hazards of concern on at least one receiving hive in Canada over a period of one year was 100%. The overall, national-scale impact of projected importations would be moderate, with immediate and significant impacts within importing provinces and potential dissemination of all hazards within the Canadian honey bee industry. The risks identified in the risk assessment are above Canada's acceptable level of risk. Therefore, risk mitigation measures are required in order to determine if honey bee packages can be imported from the US.

Who was the focus of this consultation

All comments were welcome from Canadian stakeholders including industry, governments, the public, and other organizations or individuals with an interest in matters related to honey bee health and the United States Department of Agriculture Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA-APHIS).

Related information

- <https://inspection.canada.ca/english/reg/jredirect2.shtml?heasana>>Health of Animals Act

- <https://inspection.canada.ca/en/animal-health/terrestrial-animals/biosecurity/standards-and-principles/honey-bee-producer-guide>">Honey Bee Producer Guide to the National Bee Farm-level Biosecurity Standard
- <https://inspection.canada.ca/en/about-cfia/transparency/consultations-and-engagement/completed/honey-bee-packages-united-states/notice-industry-2025-08-06>">Notice to Industry – Release of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's decision on risk management related to the importation of honey bee packages from the United States
- <https://inspection.canada.ca/en/about-cfia/transparency/consultations-and-engagement/honey-bee-packages-united-states/risk-management-framework>">Risk management framework on the importation of honey bee packages from the United States

Sources: yukon.ca, newswire.ca, Canada.ca, inspections.canada.ca, torontotelegraph.com, discovermosejaw.com, publicsafety.gc.ca, miragenews.com, agriculture.canada.ca, fda.gov, news.gov.bc.ca, science.gc.ca

RESOLUTION E1-26: VACANT BIOLOGICAL CONTROL SCIENTIST POSITION

WHEREAS: In 2008 the Canadian Food Inspection Agency estimates the economic cost of invasive plant species in Canada is \$2.2 billion annually.¹

WHEREAS: In 2022 the Alberta Invasive Species Council updated estimated the cost of invasive species to Albertans at \$2.1billion annually.²

WHEREAS: Biological control is a critical tool for managing established invasive plants, particularly in natural landscapes or where chemical and mechanical controls are impractical, cost-prohibitive, or ineffective.

WHEREAS: The Lethbridge Research and Development Centre houses a state-of-the-art quarantine facility specifically designed for rearing and evaluating biocontrol agents.

WHEREAS: The recent retirement of the Weed Biological Control Entomologist Research Scientist, working at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Lethbridge Research and Development Centre has left this pivotal position vacant, halting Canada’s capacity to evaluate and approve new weed biological control agents.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED
THAT ALBERTA’S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST**

That Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to immediately fill the vacant Research Scientist - Weed Biological Control position at the AAFC Lethbridge Research and Development Centre, to restore Canada’s critical capacity for biocontrol research and protect producers and land managers from the impacts of invasive species.

SPONSORED BY: Municipal District of Ranchland No. 66

MOVED BY: _____

SECONDED BY: _____

CARRIED: _____

DEFEATED: _____

STATUS: Provincial

DEPARTMENT: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

EMERGENT ISSUE: This resolution is brought forward as an emergent issue as awareness of this critical situation only came to our attention after the regular submission timeline had closed. This event has created an immediate national crisis, halting all new biocontrol development, and requires an urgent response.

SUMMARY: The recent retirement of Dr. Rosemarie De Clerck-Floate, a leading Research Scientist for weed biological control at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's (AAFC) Lethbridge Research and Development Centre, has left a critical expertise and leadership gap. This vacancy idles the specialized weed biocontrol program at the Lethbridge facility, which is a primary national centre for this work. This creates a severe bottleneck, halting the development of new weed biocontrol agents for producers and land managers.

ISSUE: The AAFC weed biocontrol program provides sustainable, cost-effective, and environmentally sound solutions to invasive species³, earning wide acceptance from agricultural producers and land managers. This vital work now faces a critical bottleneck.

- **Halted Research Pathway:** The pre-approval research process for a single new agent is extensive, requiring "10+ years research"⁴. While other AAFC facilities also conduct biocontrol importation, the Lethbridge scientist led key national weed biocontrol files. Without this dedicated expertise, the research and development of new weed agents at this primary facility cannot proceed.
- **Idle Federal Infrastructure:** The AAFC Lethbridge Research Centre houses a "state-of-the-art insect-microbial containment facility"⁵ built specifically designed for rearing biocontrol agents and testing them against invasive and native plant species to ensure host specificity and environmental safety. This specialized infrastructure is unique and irreplaceable. Without this scientist in place, the significant federal investment in this facility cannot fulfill its intended purpose of developing and approving new agents, leaving this vital "long-term investment in scientific capacity" and infrastructure is "integral in driving research results"⁶ and risks sitting idle without qualified scientific staff.
- **Blocked Provincial Partnerships:** The Alberta Invasive Species Council has convened the Alberta Biocontrol Consortium, a broad coalition of provincial/municipal governments, industry, and NGOs, which is actively mobilizing resources to support biocontrol initiatives. These efforts and partner investments are now blocked, as they depend on this federal position to lead the research and unlock the regulatory pathway.

LINKS TO GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Filling this position directly supports key federal objectives:

- **Supporting Canadian Farmers and Producers:** Biocontrol is a critical tool as producers face mounting challenges, including invasive species and pesticide resistance.
- **Protecting Environmental Sustainability:** As a world leader in biocontrol research¹, this AAFC program is a key tool for managing invasive species and addressing environmental challenges related to "climate change"¹.
- **Upholding Federal Mandates:** AAFC's success is built on "long-term investments in... scientific expertise"⁴. Staffing this position is essential to delivering on the core federal activity of developing "methods to address biological threats to the agriculture and agri-food chain"¹.

RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada take immediate action to prioritize and fill the vacant Research Scientist, Weed Biological Control Entomologist position at the Lethbridge Research and Development Centre.

RATIONALE FOR RESOLUTION

The cost of inaction is high. Every month this position remains vacant, Canada's capacity to deliver new biocontrol solutions diminishes, allowing costly invasive species to spread unchecked.

This single vacancy has created a critical gap that:

1. Leaves producers and land managers without vital, long-term tools to combat invasive species and reduce pesticide reliance.
2. Renders "state-of-the-art" federal infrastructure effectively idle.

Filling this position is the critical step needed to clear this research bottleneck, ensure the federal investment in the Lethbridge facility delivers tangible benefits, and provide real solutions for producers and ecosystems across the country.

RATIONALE FOR EMERGENT:

1. We were not aware of the issue until after the regular timeline for submission at our regional conference had closed.
2. We believe that this is an emergency Issue of provincial significance because it essentially halts all new biocontrol development. The AAFC Lethbridge Research Centre houses a state-of-the-art insect-microbial containment facility built specifically designed for rearing biocontrol agents and testing them against invasive and native plant species to ensure host

specificity and environmental safety. This specialized infrastructure is unique and irreplaceable.

3. Further, the federal government recently announced plans to reduce the number of federal employees, increasing the possibility that this position may not be filled in the future. It's easier to lobby for the federal government to fill a vacant position than to create a new one.
4. The Alberta Invasive Species Council has convened the Alberta Biocontrol Consortium, a broad coalition of provincial/municipal governments, industry, and NGOs, which is actively mobilizing resources to support biocontrol initiatives. These efforts and partner investments are now blocked, as they depend on this federal position to lead the research and unlock the regulatory pathway. If the federal government does not fill this position soon all the work gone into forming the Alberta Biocontrol Consortium and work done by members to this point will be lost. It would be difficult rebuild the current level of support and commitment in the future if everything done to date is lost.

References

1. Canadian Food Inspection Agency, (2008). *Invasive Alien Plants in Canada, Summary Report*. Retrieved from https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2008/inspection/A104-64-2008E.pdf?utm_source=
2. Alberta Invasive Species Council, (2022). *Update to the Cost of Invasive Species in Alberta*. Retrieved from <https://abinvasives.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Update-to-the-Costs-of-Invasive-Species-In-Alberta-2022-FINAL-1.pdf>
3. Mason, P. G., & Gillespie, D. R. (Eds.). (2024). *Biological Control Programmes in Canada, 2013-2023*. Retrieved from <https://www.cabidigitallibrary.org/doi/10.1079/9781800623279.0000>
4. Government of British Columbia. (2025). *Invasive Plant Pest Management Plan for Provincial Public Lands in Northern British Columbia*. Retrieved from https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/plants-animals-and-ecosystems/invasive-species/pest-management/pmp_northernbc_25-30_final_402-0692-25-30.pdf
5. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. (2009). *BIOCONTROL – USING NATURE TO CONTROL AGRICULTURAL PESTS*. Retrieved from https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2009/agr/A72-67-2009E.pdf
6. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. (2017). *Evaluation of Science 2.1.1: Science Supporting an Innovative and Sustainable Sector*. Retrieved from <https://agriculture.canada.ca/en/departement/transparency/audits-evaluations/evaluation-science-211-science-supporting-innovative-and-sustainable-sector>