Growing Forward funding opportunities on horizon

Happy New Year. I hope everyone had a great Christmas and here is to a great New Year. I know that I am pleased to get going with the New Year and leave the 2017 exactly where it belongs, in the past.

This year will no doubt give us many challenges to overcome, as well as opportunities to seek out. We are offering a farmer pesticide applicator course this year; see page 2 for more information. Page 3 discusses the criteria needed to nominate a farm family for the BMO Farm Family Awards. There is an insect forecast that offers producers a forecast as to what to watch for regarding insect pests this year. The Growing Forward 2 Program is almost over and extension staff across the province are eager to see what will be coming down the pipe in regards to funding opportunities. I do know that the next program is called the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP). CAP will be a five-year program and the federal, provincial and territorial governments will be investing $3 billion into the program. The program plans to simplify and streamline programs and services for easier access. Also, it will offer key enhancements to programs that help farmers manage risks that threaten the viability of their farm and are beyond their capacity to manage. The Environmental Farm Plan will play an even bigger role in future funding.

The Environmental Farm Plan was launched in Alberta in 2003, and now changes are coming to align our province with the rest of the country. As of right now Alberta is the only province or territory that does not have a renewal period for their farm plan. And we do need to align with the other provinces because there are some efforts to create a national environmental farm plan, harmonize the content, harmonize some of the delivery and harmonize some of the terms around it. There’s a bit of a push from outside to have a renewal period.

What that means for the producers in Alberta is, until now, if you’ve done a farm plan, you simply could produce your certificate and get some Growing Forward funding. When the renewal period comes in there will be an expiry date to the farm plan, and you’ll have to renew. The upside of that is we now have a very good online tool, so if you do your farm plan online what that means is if the version changes or the content changes we’ll have all of your content in the online tool and you can go in and make whichever changes you need. The renewal period will be quite a bit easier for producers using the online tool.

Concerns over incomplete action plans have been a common worry for many of us associated with EFPs.

We’ve agreed to harmonize on content across Canada so that when a producer in Canada does an environmental farm plan, to the outside world that will mean we’ve done a specified amount. It won’t be everything to everyone, but having a farm plan will mean that every producer in Canada meets some level of the standards that are required by international sustainable sourcing requirements.

By and large, farm plans are all based off of what they did in Ontario about 25 years ago now, and they haven’t really diverged very much. So we cover all of the same things, and in some ways that’s not surprising. Farming is farming, and the risks associated with farming practices are fairly uniform across the country. There have been some regional differences that are important, and will stay as regional differences. For example, we have a large predator chapter for producers that are near the Rockies, and it’s geared towards bears, wolves, coyotes, things like that. Saskatchewan has a drought mitigation chapter.

The renewal we’re planning to roll out for April 1, 2018. And the harmonization will take a little longer than that. We’re in discussions amongst the various delivery agents and governments on how to harmonize the environmental farm plans across Canada. That will not be a very rapid process as there will be some logistic things to look after. Estimates are that it could take 2 – 4 years.

I am an EFP Technician, so if you have any questions please feel free to call Dwayne Rogness at (403) 380-1598.

Lethbridge County Agriculture Service Board
#100, 905-4th Avenue South Lethbridge, AB, T1J 4E4
Phone: 403-732-5333 Picture Butte ■ Fax: 403-732-4328

Gary Secrist
Agriculture Fieldman
Dwayne Rogness
Rural Extension Specialist (RES)
403-380-1598
Terry Mrozowich, ASB Foreman
Kevin Virostek, Foreman/Weed Inspector
Present Training for:

ALBERTA FARMER PESTICIDE APPLICATOR CERTIFICATE

Will cover the Core Modules and the optional Pest Control in Stored Grain

Lethbridge, AB at the Hamman AG Research Farm

Thursday, February 8th or Thursday, March 15th, 2018

REGISTRATION FEES:

1. FARMER PESTICIDE APPLICATOR CERTIFICATE COURSE (1 Day) includes hot lunch - with multiple choice exam at end of the day or following morning - **$100 With Manual (+ GST)**

2. RECERTIFICATION ONLY … Certificates expire after 5 years - **$50 No Manual (+GST)**

To Register call Bill Hamman at 403-308-4099 or email: whamman@shaw.ca
2018 BMO Farm Family Awards

The Calgary Stampede has a long tradition of bringing people together to celebrate the successes and the unique spirit of the community. We strive to engage Albertans in the celebration of western heritage and values, as well as are proud to showcase Alberta to the world. At this time, we would like to invite each Southern Alberta Agricultural Service Board to nominate a farm or ranching family within your Municipal District, who makes their living through this means. We look forward to highlighting and celebrating those families who still practice this western lifestyle today.

The nominees will be hosted at a recognition program during the 2018 Calgary Stampede. As special guests, they will enjoy a daylong itinerary of Stampede events, including brunch and tickets to the rodeo. We also invite one representative and a guest from your municipality to take part in this celebration.

Upon receipt of the application form from your office, we will contact the family directly and gather additional background information. This information will assist us to develop a program for the awards ceremony and promote the event through press releases and other materials.

PURPOSE:
- Promote a relationship between urban and rural people,
- Focus on agriculture at the Calgary Stampede, and
- Increase awareness of the high ideals of the way of life in agriculture and the many opportunities of rural citizenship.

OBJECTIVES:
- Recognize, on an annual basis, outstanding Southern Alberta farm families (in or south of Township 34) who best typify the value of the family farmer to our rural communities and society in general, and
- Honour these families at the 2018 Calgary Stampede.

SELECTION COMMITTEE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL:
Agricultural Service Board

GUIDELINES FOR SELECTION:
Please select a family deserving of recognition for both agricultural and community involvement. The farm family must be active in primary agriculture, have agriculture as the main source of income and have members residing on the farm (agribusiness not eligible).

The method of selection is up to the individual Agricultural Service Board. It is important that the family selected be the representative of the municipality from which they are chosen. It is also important to keep in mind that this program focuses on recognizing the contribution to the enhancement of quality of life as a family unit, not necessarily the business of farming.
Insect Forecast

**Insect survey results - 2017 Lethbridge**

Report created by Scott Meers, Insect Management Specialist, Pest Surveillance Section, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry

Three insect forecast maps have just been added to Alberta Agriculture and Forestry’s website. “We put out the wheat stem sawfly and wheat midge maps this time of year because producers are making varietal decisions,” Scott Meers, insect management specialist, Agriculture and Forestry.

“This year we’ve also released the pea leaf weevil maps early because a lot of producers are seed-treating for that pest,” says Meers. “Having these maps in their hands now gives producers more time to see what the pests did this year, and gives them better information to make business decisions for the upcoming growing season.”

In Lethbridge County there was a single wheat midge larva found in one of the 3 dryland fields and none in the 3 irrigated fields surveyed. Wheat midge does not pose a significant risk in Lethbridge but could build up in irrigated wheat if lots of wheat is grown in successive years in an area. Of the 3 bertha armyworm sites in Lethbridge none were above the first warning level of 300 moths. Trapping will continue to be very important to watch for a possible build-up in the population. Wheat stem sawfly numbers appear to be low in Lethbridge County but were present in all of the fields surveyed. Expect an increase in sawfly if the dry summers continue. Pea leaf weevil damage was fairly high in Lethbridge County in the survey we conducted in late May—early June. They will continue to be a perennial problem. High numbers were discovered just outside Lethbridge county in Willow creek and Vulcan.

**Pea leaf weevil (PLW)**

Experience has shown us that high numbers of pea leaf weevil adults in fall will likely mean significant infestation levels in the following spring. The timing and intensity of spring damage is strongly related to the onset of warm conditions (>20°C) for more than a few days in April or May. The earlier the weevils arrive in fields the higher yield loss potential. Extended cool weather delays weevil movement into the field. Yield impact is lower if the crop advances past the 6 node stage before the weevils arrive.

Surveying is done by assessing the feeding damage on 10 plants in 5 locations in a field.

**Wheat midge (WM)**

Wheat midge is an insect that increases in numbers in wet years. Numbers can vary drastically from field to field and we try to sample wheat adjacent to the previous years’ wheat in order to pick up populations if they are present. There is no definitive way to know exactly the risk in any given field so field scouting when the wheat comes into head is critical. Individual fields will have a different risk. These numbers are generated by taking soil samples from wheat fields after harvest using a standardized soil probe.
Insect Forecast

Insect survey results
2017 Lethbridge

Diamondback moth (DBM)
It is generally accepted that diamondback moth adults don’t overwinter in the prairies and that most infestations occur when adult moths arrive on wind currents in the spring from the southern or western United States or northern Mexico. In mild winters there is suspicion that diamondback moth do overwinter in Alberta. To assess the population, a network of 37 monitoring sites has been established across the province. This network is meant to act as part of an early warning system for diamondback moth and should be used in conjunction with crop scouting.

Cabbage seedpod weevil (CSPW)
In southern Alberta, including all counties south of and touching Highway 1, the earliest flowering canola crops will be at the highest risk from cabbage seedpod weevil and should be monitored very closely. Cabbage seedpod weevil overwinters as an adult so the risk of infestation is further indicated by the adult population of the preceding fall. Winter condition also appear to have an impact on populations with mild winter favoring build-up of populations and expansion of their range. These numbers are generated from sweep net samples (180 degree sweeps). We track the population of other insects in these sweeps as well. These go into long term data sets that will help us research their population trends over time. from individual fields. Cabbage seedpod weevil were generally lower compared to most years but there were still some samples that were near or above economic threshold and one sample was extremely high. Cabbage seedpod weevil will continue to be a potential problem every year. We also had a diamondback moth trap in Lethbridge County which had moderate levels of moths caught during the trapping period. As we know there was an outbreak later in the season. This is likely due to the extremely warm and dry conditions we experienced in 2017. We have seen that in the past but in previous years the population collapsed before any serious damage happened later in the season (unlike this year).

Bertha armyworm (BAW)
Bertha armyworm is very cyclical. In order to catch outbreaks and help producers minimize losses it is necessary to maintain a good monitoring system using pheromone traps. The number of moths caught in the traps informs us of the risk of damaging populations with a 3 to 5 week lead time. These numbers are generated from paired pheromone traps in individual fields, except in the Peace River region where only 1 trap is used to reduce impact on native pollinators.
Insect Forecast

Insect survey results - 2017 Lethbridge

Report created by Scott Meers, Insect Management Specialist, Pest Surveillance Section, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry

Bertha armyworm (BAW)

Bertha armyworm populations are normally kept in check by such factors as weather and natural enemies. Potential damage may be more or less severe than suggested by the moth count data depending on weather and crop conditions and localized population dynamics. Research has clearly shown that very few fields are ever affected in an area with moth catches less than 300. Even at higher moth counts field scouting is critical for pest management decisions because experience has shown that field to field and even within field variations can be very large.

Wheat stem sawfly (WSS)

The percent of stems cut by sawfly gives an indication of the number of reproductive adult sawflies that will emerge in late June through early July. Winter conditions have very little impact on sawfly populations and a high proportion of wheat stems cut in the fall will produce adults. It is possible that population hot spots still exist in areas of lower risk, individual producers need to be aware of the potential risks in their own fields.

These numbers are generated by counting the number of wheat stems, both cut and not, in 1 meter length of row in 4 locations in a field.

Cutworm

These are reports of cutworms from agrologists and producers using our online reporting tool. Cutworms are very difficult to predict and are often in only one field or parts of a field. We do not have really good forecasting tools for this insect pest. In our experience cutworm outbreaks last two years.

The purpose of the reporting tool is to alert the industry of active cutworm issues in particular areas. We are encouraging more extensive use of this reporting tool. For more insect information and forecasts go to the Alberta Insect Pest Monitoring Network website.
Effective April 1, 2018, producers will need to have an EFP completion letter dated within the last 10 years to be considered current and eligible for cost-share funding with the Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change programs of the Canadian Agriculture Partnership (CAP). That means, for example, if you apply in September 1, 2018, your EFP will need to have been approved on or after September 1, 2008 to be considered for current funding.

I’m sure the first question you’ll ask after reading the title is “Why?”. There has been a movement to harmonize EFPs nationally to make EFPs more useful to sustainable sourcing programs, and Alberta is the only province without a renewal period; therefore, we are doing it to make EFPs useful to sustainable sourcing programs across Canada.

I’m sure the next question is “How often?”. The Alberta EFP program has a Stakeholder Advisory Committee (an industry advisory group) that set the renewal period at 10 years. We are waiting to see if the renewal period becomes part of the harmonized national standard. If it does, we anticipate we will need to move the renewal period to 5 years or less in the future.

What does this mean for producers?
- If you want to apply for Growing Forward/CAP grants, you will need a current EFP.
- If a sustainable sourcing program requires it (e.g. the potato sustainability initiative), you will need a current EFP.
- If your completion letter is older than 10 years, you will need to do a new workbook and action plan.
- If you cannot find your completion letter, you will need to start and complete a new EFP to be considered current, regardless of the completion date; unless your EFP is online.
- Technicians cannot give out completion letters without doing a full review of a new EFP (both workbook and action plan).

Producers should use the online workbook! ~ Why?
- The online workbook does many of the calculations for you and carries data forward to other parts of the online workbook where needed.
- Future renewals will be easier. The data are stored online on a secure virtual private server accessible only to ARECA staff entrusted to deliver the EFP Program.
- When the next version change comes, your data will be migrated to the newest version, making updates easier and simpler.
- If available, you should use your original binder as a reference for your EFP renewal. Producers who have done this have told us putting the paper version online takes a few hours.
- If you cannot renew online, then you need to complete a new binder of the latest version.

How do I Renew?
- You can register to be assigned a technician in your area by following this link: http://www.albertaefp.com/start-an-efp or call Dwayne Rogness at Lethbridge County (403) 380-1598.
Confined Feeding Operations (CFO) Extension Services

CFO Extension Specialists with Alberta Agriculture and Food (AF) provide technical expertise to livestock producers, consultants, municipalities, and other interested parties. CFO extension services ensure Alberta’s livestock industry grows in a competitively and environmentally sustainable manner.

Working in cooperation with the Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB), Approval Officers and Inspectors, AF CFO Extension Specialists provide clients with information and tools to support the NRCB application process. They also provide clients information on the regulatory requirements of the Agricultural Operation Practices Act (AOPA) and other relevant legislation.

What services are available?

Extension services are available to anyone requiring information about the technical requirements and application process for existing, new and expanding CFOs in Alberta.

For producers and their consultants, additional services will be provided specific to the application process.

Extension staff assist clients with the following:

- Assist with determining if a permit is required.
- Understanding the application process and regulatory requirements.
- Collecting information to determine potential site risks and initial site evaluation.
- Providing information on management options to meet regulatory requirements and address potential site risks.
- Directing clients to information and tools to help complete the application process.

Referral service

CFO Extension Specialists can refer clients to people with other areas of expertise to help them make decisions about their operation.

How can services be accessed?

AF CFO Extension Specialists provide services across the province and are located in Morinville, Red Deer and Lethbridge.

CFO Extension Specialists with Alberta Agriculture and Food (AF) provide technical expertise to livestock producers, consultants, municipalities, and other interested parties. CFO extension services ensure Alberta’s livestock industry grows in a competitively and environmentally sustainable manner.

What services are available?

Extension services are available to anyone requiring information about the technical requirements and application process for existing, new and expanding CFOs in Alberta.

For producers and their consultants, additional services will be provided specific to the application process.

Extension staff assist clients with the following:

- Assist with determining if a permit is required.
- Understanding the application process and regulatory requirements.
- Collecting information to determine potential site risks and initial site evaluation.
- Providing information on management options to meet regulatory requirements and address potential site risks.
- Directing clients to information and tools to help complete the application process.

Referral service

CFO Extension Specialists can refer clients to people with other areas of expertise to help them make decisions about their operation.

How can services be accessed?

AF CFO Extension Specialists provide services across the province and are located in Morinville, Red Deer and Lethbridge.