

STARLAND AG TALK

Volume 6, Issue 1

IN TUNE...IN PROGRESS

January 2009



Events to Keep in Mind

Verified Beef Production Workshop ~ Olds College, January 14th @ 3pm

Agri-Trend Agronomy Information Workshop ~ Delia Community Center, January 19

FarmTech 2009 ~ Mayfield Inn and Suites, Edmonton, January 28-30th

C-2000 Annual General Meeting ~ Delia Community Center, February 6th

AgChoices 2009 -What's the Big Idea? ~ Capri Center, Red Deer, February 11th

Environmental Farm Plan Workshops ~ Morrin Firehall, February 9th

Funding Program Updates:

AFRP II ~ Participation in this program closed as of December 31, 2008. For producers who are participating in the program, you have until January 31, 2009 to submit your Statement of Compliance Form.

Canada Alberta Farm Stewardship Program ~ Expired

Verified Beef Production Livestock Equipment Funding~ Expired December 31, 2008

Alberta Farm Water Source Program ~ Application Deadline January 15, 2009 (Projects had to be completed between January 1, 2008 and December 31, 2008)

Watershed Projects in Starland County

Starland County Agricultural Service Board is getting involved with several different water related projects that are aligned with the provincial Water For Life Strategy. The projects to be undertaken by the A.S.B. for 2009 include a Riparian Health Inventory (in partnership with Cows and Fish—Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society), Surface Water Quality Testing, Water Well Management Workshop and other watershed education events.

As we are currently in the planning stage for these projects, more information will be supplied in the coming months. We welcome your suggestions for any watershed related projects or educational events!

IT'S HERE.....

Breaking Disc

The Starland County Agricultural Service Board has purchased an Ezee-On 1375 14' Breaking Disc to add to the rental equipment options. The disc has 12" spacing and heavy 28" x 3/8" notched blades.



Photo: Ezee-On



RFID Tag Reader

Starland County Agricultural Service Board has a Gallagher RFID tag reader available to Starland County producers.

Note: As of January 1, 2009, all cattle born after January 1, 2009 MUST be age verified under the Animal Health Act. Feedlots that feed more than 5,000 animals a year are also required to report all move-in and move-out information (except for animals going to slaughter or another feedlot) to the CCIA (Canadian Cattle Identification Agency) database within seven days

Delia C-2000 Club Farm Profit Workshop

Friday February 6th, 2009

Delia and District Community Center

9am - 4pm

Keynote Speakers:

- **Mike Jubinville**, editor of Pro Farmer Canada will give us his view of the current commodity situation as it pertains to agriculture and offer strategies to help you maximize your on farm profitability.
- **Andy Sirski**, grain news columnist and editor of Stocks Talk will outline investment strategies which will help you protect and grow your investments as well as generate extra income.

Trade Show

Registration Fee \$20.00
Includes Lunch & Door Prizes
Please Pre-register by February 4

For registration or further information please contact Alan Hampton at 772-3793 or Barry Mason at 364-2129

Sponsored By: AFSC, FCC, Syngenta, Dow Agro Sciences, Louis Dreyfus, Heartland Equipment, Starland County and more...

Animal Health Act, disease control regulations come into force January 1, 2009

New legislation reflects current needs of livestock industry

Edmonton... The *Animal Health Act* (AHA), Alberta's primary animal disease control legislation, will come into effect on January 1, 2009, along with three new regulations.

The AHA reflects the needs of today's livestock industry, Alberta's reliance on access to international markets and the need for animal disease control and surveillance.

It replaces the *Livestock Diseases Act*, which was established in 1946. The AHA provides for a rapid and effective response to an animal disease outbreak, and enhances market access, public health and food safety through rigorous disease control measures.

The three new AHA regulations being enacted on January 1, 2009, are:

- Traceability Livestock Identification Regulation;
- Traceability Premises Identification Regulation; and,
- Reportable and Notifiable Diseases Regulation.

The Traceability Livestock Identification and Traceability Premises Identification regulations provide a method for tracking the current and historical location of an animal or group of animals from one point in the supply chain to another. The regulations, which also address **mandatory age verification for cattle born on or after January 1, 2009**, are designed to ensure an appropriate response to an animal health emergency.

Reportable diseases are those that may pose a significant public or animal health risk and require immediate action to control or eradicate. Diseases designated as notifiable are monitored for trade purposes or to understand their cause and control.

For a list of reportable and notifiable animal diseases and additional information on the *Animal Health Act*, visit Ropin' the Web at www.agric.gov.ab.ca and click on Alberta's Reportable and Notifiable Diseases under Livestock and Meat Industry.

~ Courtesy of Government of Alberta

AgChoices 2009: What's the Big Idea?

Wednesday February 11, 2009
8 am to 5 pm
Capri Center, Red Deer

When you attend Ag Choices 2009, you'll benefit from these four distinct types of information:

~ Big picture views from veteran agribusiness industry professionals

~ Learn how shifting global markets are changing the role that farmers and ranchers play. Hear how climate change, health care, energy and water are shaping the industry of today and tomorrow.

~ Farm gate perspectives from some of Alberta's most innovative and successful producers. Discover how these producers overcame tough challenges and found new ways to prosper.

~ Fast facts on key farm opportunities and management issues. Select from a variety of topics at the Ag Info Market concurrent sessions and connect with specialists to find quick answers on what matters most to you.

For more information or to register, please visit Ropin' the Web or contact the Ag Info Center.

Starland Ag Talk is published by Starland County Agricultural Service Board four times annually. If you have an article suggestion or questions on the topics you see here feel free to contact Alan Hampton or Lindsay Cherpin.
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Alberta Launches New Season of Environmental Farm Plan Workshops

Edmonton, Alta., January 7, 2008: Alberta farmers and ranchers who want to complete an Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) can now sign up for EFP workshops. A new season is underway.

An EFP is designed to help agricultural producers identify environmental strengths and weaknesses in their operations. Attending a one-day workshop is the first step in the EFP process. Participation is free and as simple as calling the program toll-free line to register.

"Many Alberta farmers and ranchers have already completed an Environmental Farm Plan since the program's introduction in 2002," says Mike Slomp, executive director of the Alberta Environmental Farm Plan Company (AEFP), which delivers the program in the province. "Interest continues to grow as interest in agricultural sustainability grows."

The EFP process is a straightforward one. The EFP workshop introduces the planning process and reviews the main planning tool, the EFP workbook provided to all participants. Producers complete the sections in the workbook that apply to their operations and complete their actual farm plans on their own time at home.

One of the real benefits of participation in the EFP program is access to qualified Technical Assistants (TAs), says Slomp. "TAs help EFP participants understand the technical details of the EFP process in the workshop setting and are also qualified to help producers make environmental changes on their own operations."

Once completed, participants submit their EFPs to the workshop TA and District Program Coordinator, who make comments and recommendations on the plan and, if necessary, suggest additional options for addressing specific risks. Once the plan has been reviewed and returned, the producer receives an application for a farm gate sign and certificate, acknowledging their participation and interest in making agriculture more environmentally sustainable.

"Something new this year is that we've introduced a CD version of the workbook," says Slomp. "Workshop participants will have the choice of using the workbook, the CD, or both."

To date, over 12,000 producers across Alberta have attended an EFP workshop with over 8,000 farmers and ranchers, representing 14.5 million acres of land, going on to complete their own farm plans.

More information on EFP workshops is available by calling the AEFP office toll-free at 1-866-844-2337. General information is available on the AEFP Company Web site at www.AlbertaEFP.com.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada has provided major funding and technical support to the EFP program in Alberta, with Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development providing additional in-kind support services to help the agricultural sector develop and implement EFPs.

Support has also been provided by the Agriculture and Food Council of Alberta, through the Agricultural Environmental Stewardship Initiative, the Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture (AESAs) Program and various ministries of the Government of Alberta.

Agronomy Information Workshop

Neil's Agri Coaching Inc.
January 19, 2009
9:30—5pm
Delia Community Center

Agenda Items Include:

Using soil maps, GPS referenced probing locations and multi-depth soil tests to gain good fundamental soil information for your farm that will be needed when you make the move to precision nutrient management

How to design a Precision Nutrient Management Process for your farm that will make economic sense, based on sound agronomic information, a soil audit, infrared aerial photography, yield maps and other tools.

Fertilizer Band and Starter Fertilizer Placement and how it affects seedling nutrition and yields.

The First 30 Days—Growing Roots. Phased Nutrition, Balancing Plant Nutrition

Growing nutrient enriched Grains and Oilseeds

Finding new markets for your grain. Growing grain and oilseeds for specific markets.

Carbon Credit Update. Value of soil sampling as it pertains to carbon sequestration values going forward.

Stories about farming in Mongolia

To register for this **FREE** workshop, contact:

Neil Clark 403-820-3685
Barry Mason 403-364-2129
Starland County 403-772-3793

January 2, 2009

Additional staff help livestock producers meet new requirements

Field staff assist producers comply with components of the Animal Health Act

Edmonton... More than 30 additional staff from Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development and 30 part-time staff from Livestock Identification Services (LIS) will continue helping livestock producers meet traceability requirements.

The extra staff began in September and were contracted to assist producers with age verification and premises identification until the end of 2008. Under the Alberta Farm Recovery Plan II, producers meeting these requirements by December 31, 2008 will be eligible for a second benefit. As part of the Government of Alberta's commitment to reinvigorate the industry, the extra field staff will continue assisting producers until March 31.

Traceability initiatives, including age verification and premises identification, are now mandatory under the Animal Health Act. Feedlots that feed more than 5,000 animals a year are also required to report all move-in and move-out information (except for animals going to slaughter or another feedlot) to the CCIA (Canadian Cattle Identification Agency) database within seven days.

The additional staff will provide assistance over the phone or in person. Interested producers can contact the Ag-Info Centre, toll-free at 310-FARM, for their closest field representative.

LIS is an industry-owned not-for-profit company that provides a broad range of valued services to the livestock industry in Alberta.

The Alberta Livestock and Meat Strategy and its initiatives are part of the Government of Alberta's plan to help industry achieve a competitive and sustainable future.

~ Courtesy of Government of Alberta

AFSC Deadlines for Perennial Crop Programs

LAST DAY OF FEBRUARY

- Deadline to **apply** for Perennial Insurance
- Last day to **make changes** to crops and elected options for the current year
- Last day to **make changes** to your current year's billing
- Last day to **cancel** your insurance
- Last day to **add and delete** rented acres to your current year's billing



Come out to our Open House to view the **Final Draft** of the Red Deer River State of the Watershed Report. New information has been incorporated into this last and final draft.

January 26 Red Deer

The Chalet, Westerner Park, Red Deer
Open for public review from 4:00 – 6:00 pm

January 27 Sundre

West Country Centre, 104 2nd Ave NW, Sundre
Open for public review from 4:00 – 6:00 pm

January 28 Drumheller

Best Western Jurassic Inn, 1103 Highway 9 South, Drumheller
Open for public review from 4:00 – 6:00 pm

For more information contact the Red Deer River Watershed Alliance office at 403-340-7379, check our website www.rdrwa.ca or email info@rdrwa.ca.

ATTENTION LIVESTOCK PRODUCERS: Premises Identification Program (PID)

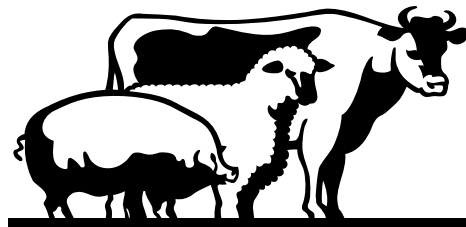
Program Description

The Premises Identification Program is being established in order to track the location of animals in case of an animal disease occurrence, a public health related emergency such as a natural disaster affecting animals and people. Regulations requiring **premises identification will become law after January 1, 2009** as part of the Animal Health Act.

The Premises Identification application form, including schedule A for your home quarter, is required to register a livestock operation in Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development's Premises Identification Program. A home quarter means the premises on which the applicant's main animal operation is located.

~ Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development

The application form for the Premises Identification Program can be obtained by visiting Ropin' the Web—Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development website; calling the Ag-Info Center at 310-FARM or contacting Starland County.



ENVIRONMENTAL FARM PLAN WORKSHOP

February 9, 2009

Morrin Firehall

9am—3pm

To register, please contact Lindsay Cherpin, Technical Assistant, at 403-772-3793. 2009 Workshops offer the Environmental Farm Plan by workbook and/or CD format.

PFRA Prairie Shelterbelt Program

Applications will be accepted until March 15, 2009 for the 2009 planting season.

Applications can be obtained online at www.agr.gc.ca/shelterbelt or by contacting Starland County. Availability of trees for the 2009 planting season is as follows:

OUT OF STOCK FOR SPRING 2009

- Snowberry
- Aspen
- Cottonwood

SHORT OF STOCK FOR SPRING 2009

- Oak
- Dogwood
- Hawthorn
- Maple
- Colorado Spruce
- Scots Pine
- Siberian Crab
- Siberian Larch
- Silverleaf Willow
- Villosa Lilac
- White Spruce

Delivery of seedlings is generally around the end of April, first week of May. Starland County has a tree planting program in place to assist landowners with larger scale plantings. A tractor, tree planter and staff can be supplied to plant trees on a prepared site. Starland County also has a mulch applicator available for applying plastic mulch to the shelterbelts. "Mulches are an effective alternative to herbicides and mechanical cultivation for protection of tree and shrub seedlings from competition with weeds for moisture and nutrients. Placed on the soil around the seedling, they improve

growth and survival by preventing other plants from germinating or growing.

Mulches protect plants from dry conditions by trapping moisture beneath them and minimizing evapotranspiration.

Mulches reduce wind erosion in tree rows and prevent crusting of the soil surface." ~ PFRA Shelterbelt Center Publication

It is the responsibility of the landowner to order the plastic mulch.

Contacts for plastic mulch suppliers in Alberta include:

Bio-Way Gardens
c/o Vern Bretin
Ph. 780-986-1067
Email vsbretin@hotmail.com

Innovative Plastics Marketing
Ph. 1-877-765-9776

Packaging for Trees and Shrubs

Trees and shrubs are now being shipped in new white polyethylene bags. The new bags improve survival of the seedlings and are recyclable, making them more environmentally friendly. A variety of bag sizes are being used to best fit the seedlings.

Peat moss is no longer being used in the packaging of seedlings. Prior to packaging, seedlings roots are dipped in a fine hydrogel to maintain moisture. When planted, the hydrogel draws moisture from the soil to the seedling roots helping to improve establishment success. Hydrogel may not be compatible with organic farming standards. If you are an organic grower, contact your organic council to determine if hydrogel complies with their standards.

Applied Agronomy Conference

February 17, 2009

Olds College Alumni Center

"The only conference for CCA's by CCA's"

8:30 am to 3:20 pm

5 CEU's available

Agenda includes:

- Herbicide resistant weeds
- Fertility Management Challenge
- Seed Health Investigations
- Building Blocks for Prescription Mapping
- Dissecting Insect Pest Issues
- Integrated Crop and Weed Management

Registration:
\$75 + GST for CCA's
All others \$100 + GST

Registration deadline February 3, 2009

Phone 1-800-661-6537 ext 4677
Or 403-556-4677 & ask for Nancy

For more information, visit
www.prairiecca.ca



HOME ENERGY EVALUATION

Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) is offering an energy evaluation service to Canadians who improve the energy efficiency of their homes. Under the ecoENERGY Retrofit Program, homeowners who sign up for the evaluations can qualify for federal grants worth hundreds or, in some cases, thousands of dollars.

How does the program work?

You hire an NRCan-certified energy advisor to conduct a detailed onsite assessment of your home's energy use. The advisor then provides you with a customized written report, which includes a checklist of recommended retrofits to improve the energy efficiency of your home and, in some cases, reduce your water use. The report also indicates the grant amounts, for each eligible upgrade, you can receive by carrying out these energy-saving improvements. Once you have carried out one or more of these upgrades, the energy advisor conducts a follow-up assessment and submits, on your behalf, a grant application to NRCan.

What types of retrofit projects are eligible and what size of grant can I receive for undertaking them?

A wide range of retrofits are eligible under the following categories: heating, ventilation, and cooling systems; insulation (attic, exterior walls and basements); air sealing; doors, windows and skylights; and water conservation. A flat amount is calculated for each qualifying upgrade, with those offering the greatest energy sav-

ings having the highest value. For a complete list of eligible upgrades/grants, check the NRCan brochure.

What size of grant can I expect to receive?

The total grant depends on which and how many retrofits you undertake; the maximum available is \$5000 per house. Of all the grants awarded in Alberta to date, the average rebate is \$1000 with greenhouse gas savings of three tonnes and natural gas reductions of 60 GJ which translates into approximately \$600 annual energy savings.

What does the energy assessment involve?

A certified energy advisor will do a thorough, initial assessment of your home's energy use, from attic to basement, including a "blower door" test to find air leaks. You will be given a printed report that shows where your energy dollars are going and what you can do to improve your home's energy efficiency. This report includes an energy efficiency rating, on a scale of 1 to 100, which compares your house with others in the region. After you have undertaken retrofits, a follow-up assessment will be done to confirm which grants you are eligible for and provide you with an updated energy efficiency rating.

How much does the energy assessment cost?

Depending on which NRCan-certified energy advisor you choose, the combined pre- and post-retrofit assessments should

cost around \$400.

Where can I find a certified energy advisor?

For a list of NRCan-certified advisors in your area, visit www.climatechangecentral.com.

Are upgrades I've already completed or started eligible?

No. All renovations started prior to obtaining a pre-retrofit energy evaluation are not eligible for a grant.

~ Article courtesy of Climate Change Central

For more information on this program or other climate change information, visit www.climatechangecentral.com.

If all Alberta drivers reduced their idling by five minutes per day, we'd reduce provincial greenhouse gas emissions by more than 225,000 tonnes a year.

Here are a few things you can do to reduce your idling:

- Turn the engine off after 10 seconds of idling, except in traffic. For example, turn your vehicle off when doing things such as waiting to pick up passengers, waiting in drive-through lineups, stopping to talk to someone, waiting for a freight train to pass, or running in to buy groceries.
- Minimize use of remote-car starters - These devices encourage you to start your car before you're ready to leave, which means wasteful idling.
- Use a block heater to warm up your engine in winter - A block heater, plugged in for no more than two hours (use a timer) will improve fuel efficiency and reduce exhaust fumes.

~ Courtesy of Climate Change Central