



Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
4-H Branch

www.4h.ab.ca

ALBERTA 4-H PROJECT MANUAL



Senior Project: Environmental Farm Plans



The Alberta Environmental Farm Plan Company
Progressive Stewardship

MEMBER GUIDE

The 4-H Motto

"Learn to Do by Doing"

The 4-H Pledge

I pledge

*My **Head** to clearer thinking,*

*My **Heart** to greater loyalty,*

*My **Hands** to larger service,*

*My **Health** to better living,*

For my club, my community, and my country.



The 4-H Grace

(Tune of Auld Lang Syne)

*We thank thee, Lord, for blessings great
on this, our own fair land.*

*Teach us to serve thee joyfully,
with head, heart, health and hand*

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For more information about Environmental Farm Plans:

The Alberta Environmental Farm Plan Company

801, 4445 Calgary Trail

Edmonton AB T6H 5R7

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www.albertaEFP.com

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INTRODUCTION

The public demands high quality food that is produced in a clean environment. As in other industries, agricultural production practices are under scrutiny. The public is having a greater say in how the agriculture industry produces food. In spite of agricultural producers' efforts in environmental stewardship, governments and industry are facing a number of pressures to protect the environment. A comprehensive environmental program is required to ensure continued public confidence in the industry's environmental stewardship.

The first step in a comprehensive environmental program is an Environmental Farm Plan (EFP). The environmental farm plan is a voluntary self-assessment checklist that a producer uses to identify and create awareness of environmental risks and opportunities on their farm. Once potential risks are identified, additional resource materials, such as beneficial management practice manuals, nutrient management resources, etc. are used to develop an action plan to reduce risks. The environmental farm plan program is delivered by an industry led mechanism. This educational, voluntary approach to reducing environmental risk fits into the overall provincial and national strategy of environmental protection.

Several environmental farm plan programs (e.g. Ontario, Atlantic Canada and US models) and other industry environmental management audit programs were investigated to determine the best model for Alberta. The industry has selected the Ontario model to adapt to Alberta. This enhances consistency in Environmental Farm Plans across Canada, which is one of the objectives of the Ontario program, and is consistent with the Federal Government's vision for a national environmental program.

For Youth

Youth are the future of agriculture and EFPs will be part of that future. This senior project will provide 4-H members an introduction to EFPs within the context of a real, working farm/ranch. Members can learn from their parents and other farm managers what considerations are needed to complete an assessment and develop a practical plan. Together these actions will reduce agriculture's impact on the environment.

FIRST YEAR PROJECT

In the first year, members will complete the Environmental Farm Plan Workbook. This will be done at local EFP workshops. Members will be encouraged to do the project as a farm family project, involving parents and perhaps other siblings and other members of the farm team. The EFP process is covered in 2 Workshops (I and II), with some work at home. The time at home will depend on the complexity of the farm; experience indicates that it can take from 5 to 24 hours.

One farm family, one club, a group of clubs, or a district council, etc. may undertake this project.

To complete the first year project, members should undertake one change as identified in their *Our Farm Plan*. Members will participate in regular club achievement day activities.

Ideas for achievement day activities:

- Develop a display or demonstration:
 - To market EFPs
 - About an environmentally beneficial management practice.
 - To discuss the value of farm planning
 - On how to develop great farm map(s), etc.

SECOND YEAR PROJECT

In the second year of the project, members will begin by reviewing the plan that they developed in the first year. Update both the risk assessment and *Our Farm Plan* if there have been minor/major changes on the farm.

Submit the completed plan anonymously to the regular local review committee.

Once reviewed, the member can incorporate any recommendations from the review committee. Members of the farm family should discuss the recommendations provided.

Take one action, monitoring or compensating factor in the deemed appropriate *Our Farm Plan* and develop a more detailed plan to address the risk issue. Members will follow through with the detailed plan or plans. All steps will be documented.

Idea for action, monitoring or compensating factor:

1. Risk issue: no grazing plan in place for pasture

- A. Action/Monitoring/Compensating Factor: develop a grazing plan - action
 - i. Identify and address barriers to taking action:
 - 1. Time:
 - a. Schedule time to do the project
 - b. Wait until spring or a 'slow' season to start
 - 2. Money:
 - a. Research and apply for incentives or grant
 - b. Save a portion of all sales to contribute to project
 - 3. Skill:
 - a. Learn from a reputable book/manual
 - b. Attend a local workshop/conference dealing with grazing management
 - c. Take a course at a local college
 - d. Contact a local specialist for advice
 - ii. Develop detailed written plan with timeline and costs to fully understand the tasks needed. Determine what success looks like – to be evaluated at the end of the project.
 - iii. Carry out the plan.
 - iv. Mark completion of the item in *Our Farm Plan*.
 - v. Evaluate the success of the project.
 - vi. Proceed to next action, monitoring or compensating factor that is identified as a priority.

Achievement day activities as usual.

THIRD YEAR PROJECT

Third year project will include reviewing the plan and updating both the risk assessment and *Our Farm Plan*, if there have been minor/major changes on the farm.

Check off and date any actions, monitoring or compensating factors that are complete.

Members should continue dealing with the actions, monitoring or compensating factors that environmentally enhance the farm operation. Target the completion of those with a two-year timeline.

Another component for the third year is a 'Review Committee Member – in – Training' element. Member would be nominated to the local review committee. Review Committee training would be provided along with the opportunity to function as a review committee member for part or all of the year.

Member may also be trained to make EFP presentations to other 4-H clubs in their area. Training and practice sessions available from AEEP Head Office.

Achievement day activities as usual.

REFERENCES

To learn more about EFPs and when a local workshop is in your neighbourhood, visit the website of the Alberta Environmental Farm Plan Company:

www.albertaEFP.com

To find out about local workshops or field days that deal with environmental issues contact:

1. Local Rural Extension Staff: http://www.aesa.ca/new/staff_rural.cfm
2. Local Agricultural Fieldman: <http://www.aaaf.ab.ca/>
3. Check out the Coming Events listing at Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development: <http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/general/comevent.nsf>
4. Consult with local Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada staff: look in the Federal Blue pages of your phone book OR www.agr.gc.ca
5. Ask your neighbour or friends about what tours and meetings they find most educational or practical.

Books

Beneficial Management Practices: Environmental Manual for:

1. Hog Producers in Alberta
2. Feedlot Producers in Alberta
3. Poultry Producers in Alberta
4. Dairy Producers in Alberta
5. Cow/Calf Producers
6. Alberta Farmsteads

All manuals are available from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development Publications Department – 1-800-292-5697 OR From your local commodity organization:

Alberta Pork: 780-474-8288

Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association: 1-800-363-8598

Alberta Chicken Producers: 1-877-822-4425

Alberta Milk: 1-800-252-7530

Alberta Beef Producers: 403-275-4400

Alberta Turkey Producers: 780-465-5755

Alberta Egg Producers: 403-250-1197

Alberta Hatching Egg Producers: 780-434-8414

EVALUATION

Complete all evaluation forms as provided in the local EFP workshops.

Members and leaders are requested to provide comments regarding the success or usefulness of this senior 4-H project. Call 1-866-844-2337 or email (info@albertaEFP.com) to provide feedback.

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