



Agri-News

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Strengthening Rural Communities and Regions

Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development recently initiated two new grant programs totalling \$24 million for rural communities and regions facing economic, environmental and social challenges.

“While Alberta’s economy is strong, this funding will help rural communities adapt to changing circumstances,” says Agriculture and Rural Development Minister George Groeneveld.

Alberta received \$104 million in funding from the new \$1 billion national Community Development Trust – monies for provinces and territories to assist communities, organizations and workers move toward greater economic self-reliance. Almost \$30 million has been directed towards initiatives to strengthen rural and regional economies. Agriculture and Rural Development received \$24 million for two new rural development grant initiatives, while Alberta Finance and Enterprise is providing \$4.9 million to 12 rural-based Regional Economic Development Alliances.

Alberta Agriculture’s **Rural Community Adaptation Program**, worth \$15 million, will help communities to transition and adapt, resulting in greater resilience and new, more diverse economic opportunities. The program targets rural communities that are facing some economic hardship as a result of global economic volatility, environmental events or reliance on a single industry for employment.

The **Rural Connections: Community Broadband Infrastructure Pilot Program** has \$9 million to increase access to high-speed broadband in rural and remote communities, and projects that extend learning and practices to create a culture of broadband use. Priority will be given to community-led broadband infrastructure projects where

communities have limited or no access to broadband. Projects related to broadband applications and skill training are also eligible for funding.

A rural community is defined as any Alberta community outside of the seven urban centres of Calgary, Edmonton, Fort McMurray, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat or Red Deer.

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Project grant funding may range from \$10,000 to a maximum of \$500,000. Program funding will expire on March 31, 2011, or earlier depending on availability of funds.

More information on program criteria and the application process can be obtained at www.rural.alberta.ca or by calling the rural development division at 780-427-2409.

For more information and news on these two grant programs, visit Alberta Agriculture's website at www.agriculture.alberta.ca.

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Tips For Handling Turkey

From the farm gate to the grocery store shelf, producers and retailers adhere to strict standards to assure consumers top quality turkey products. Once the product is in the home; however, it's up to the consumer to handle it correctly. Alberta Turkey has plenty of safe handling tips and preparation suggestions on its website at www.albertaturkey.com under *Tips, Health and Nutrition*.

Like all raw meat, turkey can spoil quickly. When planning a seasonal feast that includes turkey and all the fixin's remember:

- Fresh turkey must be stored in the refrigerator and cooked within two to three days of purchase. Select meat packages that are cold and well wrapped.
- Labels on fresh turkey must indicate the year, month and day of packaging. If you are buying fresh poultry, select those packaged on the day you are in the store. Turkey labelled 'previously frozen' must be kept refrigerated and used within 48 hours of purchase.
- Fresh, unfrozen turkey should be stored in the coldest part of the refrigerator, loosely covered with wax paper or in its original wrapping.
- Leave frozen turkey in its original wrap and thaw in the refrigerator or in cold water, never on the counter at room temperature. When using the refrigerator method, place the turkey on a tray to prevent juices from the thawing bird dripping into other foods. Allow 10 hours per kilogram (five hours per pound) of turkey. Or completely cover the turkey with cold water and change the water regularly. Allow two hours per kilogram (one hour per pound). Once thawed, refrigerate immediately and cook within 48 hours. Never refreeze uncooked turkey.
- It is important to ensure the turkey is completely thawed or the roasting and cooking times will need to be extended.
- Washing/rinsing meat and poultry prior to cooking is not necessary and may promote cross-contamination to other foods. If you choose to rinse raw poultry, be sure to wash sink and tap areas well with hot, soapy water and disinfect with a bleach solution.

- Wash utensils, dishes and cutting board used for preparing or cutting turkey with hot, soapy water. Then sanitize with a mixture of 5 mL (1 tsp) bleach for 1 L (4 cups) of water. Rinse thoroughly with hot water.
- Always wash hands in hot soapy water before and after handling turkey.

Contact: *Alberta Turkey*
www.albertaturkey.com

Fitness Needs of Performance and Pleasure Horses

Core training is one of the hottest physical fitness regimens to hit the sports world. The idea of a strong 'core' doesn't just apply to humans – horses need to be fit, too, whether they are competing in a performance discipline or being ridden for pleasure.

Activate Your Horse's Core is one of the presentations that will be made at the 2009 Horse Breeders and Owners Conference. Dr. Hilary Clayton, chair of equine sports medicine and professor of large animal clinical sciences at the College of Veterinary Medicine, Michigan State University, will be discussing the importance of flexibility and muscular strength in performance and pleasure horses, and demonstrating how to engage a horse in core training exercises to enhance performance and reduce injuries.

"We are thrilled to have Clayton on our speaker panel for the next HBOC," says Teresa van Bryce, manager, Horse Industry Association of Alberta, Airdrie. "Clayton's research interests are in the area of equine sport science, especially biomechanics and conditioning of sport horses, and the interaction between rider and horse. Her research uses sophisticated equipment and computer programs to analyze the horse's gaits and movement patterns. She has published six books and many scientific manuscripts and magazine articles on these topics."

Clayton, who trains dressage horses and competes at the Grand Prix level, is one of the 16 international presenters on the agenda at the 27th annual HBOC. She will be sharing her knowledge and experience with participants at the conference, being held in Red Deer on January 9 to 11, 2009. The conference is organized by the Horse Industry Association of Alberta and the horse industry section of Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development.

Each year, the conference invites equine experts to speak on issues, current topics and subjects that are of specific interest to Albertans who breed or own horses, work in the equine industry in some capacity, or are simply horse enthusiasts.

In addition to the educational aspect of the conference, event sponsors will be on-hand for the weekend to exhibit and talk

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about their equine products and services. Saturday night features the awarding of the prestigious Alberta Horse Industry Distinguished Service Award.

“The conference offers information on a variety of topics and is designed to appeal to horse breeders and owners no matter their equine interests,” says Les Burwash, manager of horse programs with Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, Airdrie.

Conference pre-registration is \$95 per person and cost for additional individuals registered at the same time from the same farm is \$80. Registration at the door will be \$95 per person. Registration includes a copy of the conference proceedings.

For more information about the 2009 conference, contact Teresa van Bryce, manager, Horse Industry Association of Alberta, at 403-948-8521 or Les Burwash at 403-948-8541.

Information is also available on the association’s website at www.albertahorseindustry.ca or by calling the association at 403-948-8521.

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Harmonizing Alberta’s Organic Sector

In the summer of 2008, Going Organic (GO) launched the Alberta Organic Harmonization project. With more than 330 organic producers in Alberta, the time had come for organics in the province to step-it-up and organize the industry.

“We have received funding from the Organic Federation of Canada to bring Alberta organic producers and processors together to create a stronger unified voice for the organic sector – a voice to better represent, advocate for and promote the industry” says GO president, Steven Snider. “It is a timely step forward as we anticipate the implementation of the new Organic Standard by the federal government.”

One of the first steps to achieving this goal was to bring stakeholders in the organic sector together through a series of symposiums held across the province in November. Each symposium had a speaker series and a discussion about the direction and strategic goals of the organic sector. Topics included: Canada’s New Organic Standard – How it will affect you!; Selling in Today’s Grain Market; and, Marketing Organic Livestock.

Another important part of the project is a comprehensive organic producer and processor directory. Building on the directory currently in place on Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development’s website, the new directory will link information

about Alberta and Saskatchewan organic producers and processors and will provide multi-search functions to help customers and buyers find exactly what they are looking for. Once this directory is built it will be a one-stop shop on the internet for everyone and anyone looking to find out more about the organic sector in Alberta. People looking for organic beef will be able to find farmers in their region, while buyers looking for organic grains will have a list of numbers that they can call. Evidence shows that farmers who are listed in directories get approximately seven to ten more calls a year – calls that can make a huge difference in terms of moving product at the right price.

To find out more about the Alberta Organic Harmonization project, Going Organic or the Organic Online Directory, visit the Going Organic website at www.goingorganic.ca or contact Becky Lipton, coordinator of Alberta Organic Harmonization project, at 780-271-1116 or email at becky.lipton@mail.mcgill.ca.

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Cityfarm for Christmas!

After another successful summer season at Cityfarm, the water has been turned off, and only a few stalks remain standing as quiet evidence of the time 1000 children spent planting, digging, hoeing, weeding, watering, feeding chickens and building forts – but that doesn’t mean that the programs end! The Cityfarm winter growing season starts in January. The Cityfarm Little Green Thumbs, initiated in January 2008, in Evansdale, Sifton, Norwood and Belvedere Schools of Edmonton, provides a way to continue involvement with growing plants.

Little Green Thumbs is being expanded to 11 locations. The program involves placing grow boxes in classrooms. With the use of grow lights, tomatoes, carrots, cucumbers, basil and marigolds are grown right beside students’ desks. The program not only offers an opportunity to watch the entire growth cycle from seed to salad, it also provides a wealth of opportunities for curricular tie-in’s (e.g. photosynthesis, art, diet and nutrition, etc.). Staff members at Cityfarm, a four-acre site on Riverbend Market Gardens in northeast Edmonton, acknowledge the contributions of the Robert Tegler Trust, the NE Rotary Club and The Co-operators who are funding the ’09 expanded program.

“As the Christmas season approaches, and the season brings with it the inevitable perplexing question of what to buy for that favorite uncle or teacher, allow us to make a suggestion - sponsor a child for a day at Cityfarm,” says Louisa F. Bruinsma, community development officer, Cityfarm. “You can get all of

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your Christmas shopping done early, with little fuss, no driving, no mall trips, and no need for ribbons or wrapping. And, the real bonus is that it is a gift with long-lasting value, one that will benefit children and youth, both now and in the future.”

For only \$50 a day, kids can discover that carrots grow in dirt, are not all even cylindrically shaped and are actually very yummy. Cityfarm is a place where city kids can hang-out, build forts, plant pumpkins and beans, dig potatoes, chase butterflies, savour the sweet taste of a tomato ripe from the vine, and get their hands (and clothes) dirty while finding and feeding potato bugs to chickens, collecting eggs, and baking muffins in a clay oven.

Getting involved in the ***Sponsor a Child for a Day at Cityfarm*** can take several forms:

- sponsor one child for \$50 (or several for a larger donation)
- sponsor a child on behalf of someone else as a gift to and from them
- request family and friends to direct the amount of money they generally spend on a gift to you, to sponsor a child for a day at Cityfarm
- invite colleagues and fellow employees to pool money generally used in the Christmas gift exchange towards sponsorship of a child or children
- contribute an individual or company/organization (group) prize (or draw prizes)
- ask Cityfarm to e-mail the pdf file of the flier (attached/ enclosed) so that you can invite friends and family to consider this alternative Christmas gift

Cityfarm helps children better understand the complexity of growing food, the benefits of eating healthy food and the joy of engaging in a healthy outdoors experience in a positive and supportive community.

The first 200 people sponsoring a child for a day at Cityfarm will receive a complementary hard cover copy of Lois Hole's popular book *I'll Never Marry a Farmer*, donated by Holes Greenhouses & Garden Ltd. Other prizes are also being offered. Check the Cityfarm website at www.city-farm.org for a list of prizes and for ideas on how to get involved with Cityfarm.

“We believe that the impact Cityfarm makes on over 1000 annual visitors, many of them from disadvantaged areas of the city, makes a huge difference to them and may help them in the long term as they make healthier lifestyle choices,” says Bruinsma.

Contact: *Louisa Bruinsma*
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4-H Beef Leaders' Update

Every two years, 4-H beef project leaders from Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan congregate for the keenly-focused ***Beef Leaders' Update Program*** (BUD) where the goals are to increase industry knowledge, expand networks and hone leadership skills. From November 14 to 16, 2008, the Alberta 4-H Centre played host to 48 beef leaders, 46 from Alberta and one from British Columbia and one from Saskatchewan.

“The turnout at this year's 4th biannual BUD program was conducive to effective educating, socializing and interacting,” says Mark Sayers, south region beef advisory committee (BAC) representative. “It was a very functional number as it allowed for plenty of one-on-one time and each delegate was able to be actively involved and engaged during each session.”

As well as featuring keynote speakers Eileen Leslie, Tim O'Bryne and Richard Stadlwieser, sessions included an interactive clipping and grooming demonstration, a round of Select-A-Sessions (with a choice of managing conflict or age verification), calf nutrition, a year in the life of a 4-H steer, become more engaged with the judging program, how to breed the right heifer, simple ways to reduce the likelihood of an infection at venues such as the 4-H show and sales, and a session on projects, record books and achievement day planning.

BUD was generously supported by Apache Canada Ltd, United Farmers of Alberta, along with cosponsors Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Farm Credit Canada, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, Ketchum Manufacturing Inc., Alberta Beef Producers, Lakeland College, AMA Insurance.

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Agri-News Briefs

Ropin' the Web Links Producers to Information

When looking for commodity, market and export information and updates, be sure to check Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development's website, **Ropin' the Web** at www.agriculture.alberta.ca. The website includes information gathered by department experts and specialists as well as links to a number of commodity, market and export sites.

- For cattle and hog market updates, bookmark the *Cattle Market Update* and *Hog Market Update*. Both pages contain regularly-updated reports that review cash and future prices, exports, slaughter information, and other market aspects.
- For agriculture and food export information, visit the *Agriculture and Food Exports* site. The site has information on several markets, basic export information, and a listing of events recommended for exporters.
- For advice on crop varieties and market news for cereal and oilseed crops, check out the many resources including the current *Alberta Crop Report*, yield reports and several online decision making tools.

Ropin' the Web also maintains several directories as well as a *General Store* site where producers can buy and sell online.

Christmas – A Wonderful Time to Buy Local

Christmas is all about family – all about community. Alberta's farmers' markets are gearing up for Christmas and, as always, feature many products that are grown, produced and made in Alberta. Christmas is less than a month away, so make it easy on yourself and look for a Christmas market close to home. A listing of farmers' markets and the Alberta Farmers Market Map are posted online and available under the *Maps* tab on Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development's website, **Ropin' the Web** at www.agriculture.alberta.ca.

Ag Tour of the Dominican Republic with Olds College

The Agriculture, Land & Environment program at Olds College has organized a tour that will give participants a chance to visit the mountains, forests and grasslands of the Dominican Republic and the variety of agricultural operations that flourish there. These operations range from small traditional farms to large value added ventures. The trip will be an opportunity to network with Dominican agriculturalists and learn about the pending Canada – Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement and how it will benefit producers in both countries. The trip will also include recreational opportunities in the lush Dominican Republic. The registration deadline has been extended to December 12, 2008. For further information or to register, contact Mary Jane Block, program manager, continuing education, Olds College, toll-free at 1-800-661-6537 ext 7761.

Horses Eligible for AFRP II Funding

Although little publicized, horses do qualify for payments from the Alberta Farm Recover Plan II Funding (AFRP II). To be eligible for an AFRP II payment, producers must have been actively raising horses in Alberta in 2006 and 2007, and had production in 2006. The first payment will be dispersed immediately and is based on the producer's 2006 livestock information. Deadline for applications for this first payment is December 31, 2008. The second payment will be issued commencing January 2009, only after producer compliance with the premises identification objectives of The Alberta Livestock and Meat Strategy. The pay-out amount for horses is \$23,928/head. Call 1-800-396-0215, or visit the AFSC web site at www.afsc.ca for further information and application forms. The AFRP II link can be found under the *Risk Management* menu.