

Appendix A: Organizational Descriptions

The Ministry is comprised of the:

- Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
- Agriculture Financial Services Corporation
- Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency Ltd.
- Office of the Farmers' Advocate of Alberta
- Alberta Grains Council
- Agricultural Products Marketing Council
- Irrigation Council

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development:

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development operates in three key sectors: Food Safety and Technology, Industry and Rural Development, and Policy and Environment.

Food Safety and Technology:

The Food Safety and Technology Sector focuses on safe food production systems and animal health programs that protect public health and support market access for Alberta's agriculture and food industry through: facilitating the adoption of internationally-accepted food safety systems and standards; maintaining a surveillance system for food safety and animal health; minimizing the impact of animal diseases on public health; providing essential non-routine animal disease investigation services; and planning for and responding to food safety and animal health emergencies. The sector also validates the safe processing of meat and meat products through provincially-licensed meat facilities and dairy through provincially-licensed dairy processors, as well as ensures compliance with assigned legislation through investigation and enforcement activities. The Office of the Chief Provincial Veterinarian (OCPV) is part of the sector and advocates the use of current scientific principles and information in the development of animal health legislation and disease control programs. The OCPV liaises with international, federal and other provincial governments, as well as industry, on food and animal health issues.

In addition, the sector administers and coordinates the development of legislation that provides the framework for the establishment and management of Agriculture Boards and Commissions, rural gas, electric and water associations and other regulatory tools that support rural communities. To aid the growth and sustainability of rural communities, the sector provides financial support for the development of rural gas and electric infrastructure and facilitates the delivery of governance and leadership development programs. The sector is also responsible for working in partnership with program areas to optimize program delivery, contribute to business innovation and increase efficiencies by enabling modern technologies and through information management, as well as information sharing best practices. The sector provides the secure, robust and reliable technology infrastructure necessary to support the Ministry's requirements for electronic service delivery and is responsible for the planning, development, organization, evaluation, and delivery of information services, including print and electronic publishing.

Industry and Rural Development:

The Industry and Rural Development Sector supports the agriculture industry with a focus on business and technology development, and product and process testing in order to develop and support a competitive and self-reliant industry through technology transfer and extension activities. The sector provides relevant market information, opportunity identification, and networking opportunities with the goal of positioning Alberta as a preferred supplier to support targeted export growth for Alberta agriculture products and services. Through a focus on the value-added processing of agriculture commodities through laboratory development, applied research, and pilot plant scale-up, the sector facilitates development of new products, and supports the development of new companies and the attraction of new food processors to Alberta. In order to successfully grow the agriculture industry in Alberta, it is necessary to create and promote Alberta as a stable, credible and profitable location for agricultural and agri-food investors, as well as support the increase of agricultural exports and business services within Alberta's agriculture and agri-food industry. The sector is dedicated to establishing an overall strategic framework and implementing strategies necessary to generate and attract international and domestic investment to the agriculture sector in the province and advocating the growth of Alberta agriculture and agri-food export opportunities.

In addition, the sector enables industry and supports the development of Alberta's rural economy by encouraging innovation in the agriculture industry, supporting the development of youth and future leaders in rural Alberta, providing information and knowledge to agriculture entrepreneurs, and providing oversight and financial support for rural utilities. By focusing on communication with a variety of clients, and meeting local and domestic market demands, the sector is able to influence the creation and maintenance of a strong rural economy.

The sector also builds and implements food chain traceability initiatives, links these traceability systems to the national and provincial emergency response systems and provides policy advice on Alberta and national traceability initiatives and issues. In addition, the sector assures the effective delivery of agriculture educational training, leadership and grant programs, as well as front-line client contact services for industry clients through the Ag-Info Centre, field offices, and a variety of extension activities.

Policy and Environment:

The Policy and Environment Sector continues to address the growth of agricultural trade through monitoring and advancing international agricultural policy and agreements, and exploring international market access opportunities. It also ensures that Alberta's policy and strategic frameworks enable business opportunities and innovation, and strengthen rural communities through government-wide leadership of rural development policy. Through a focus on industry, social and economic trend analysis, strategic planning, policy development, market and competitiveness intelligence, and rural business and infrastructure development, the Policy and Environment Sector advances the competitive position of Alberta's agriculture industry. The Sector also focuses on the provision of statistical information, data on costs and returns, as well as market analysis to support sound decision-making by government and industry.

As public awareness drives the need for the agriculture industry to earn and demonstrate a social license to operate, development and implementation of environmental stewardship best practices is becoming increasingly important. By working collaboratively with industry and rural Alberta, the Policy and Environment Sector is building industry capacity and environmental opportunities that are outcome-focused, reportable, and verifiable. This also involves working with Alberta's irrigation industry in addition to agricultural producers to ensure that good quality surface and ground water supplies meet current and future agricultural, municipal, wildlife, and recreational needs. This

work also ensures that management practices meet acceptable water quality guidelines and that management systems assist livestock and crop producers to deal with changing climate conditions.

Agriculture Financial Services Corporation:

The Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC) provides a wide variety of risk management products and financial services to fit the business needs of farmers, the agriculture industry, and small businesses in Alberta.

The corporation provides insurance products to mitigate risks related to both livestock and crop production, including hay and pasture, and offers waterfowl and wildlife damage compensation to help Alberta farmers protect against production losses on their farms. AFSC delivers the federal/provincial AgriStability Program, a whole-farm program that provides compensation for decline in farm margin relative to historical margin for eligible producers, regardless of the commodities they produce. The corporation offers agriculture financial services such as farm loans and guarantees for new and expanding farm businesses and financing for those facing disastrous reductions in farm production or income. AFSC also provides and facilitates sourcing of financing for companies in the agri-food and value-added industry, as well as the small business sector, with an emphasis on rural Alberta.

Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency Ltd.:

The Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency Ltd. (ALMA) acts as a catalyst to help transition Alberta's livestock industry into competitiveness and sustainability, and ensures effective implementation of programs and initiatives directed at Alberta's livestock industry.

ALMA provides ideas, information and investment opportunities to the livestock industry and advises on public policy related to regulations, legislation, programs and issues of importance to the livestock and meat sectors. As well, ALMA identifies solutions and engages the industry to foster collaboration and alignment between industry and government priorities. ALMA's programs stimulate innovation and encourage the adoption of best practices, develop new technologies and state-of-the-art processes. The agency's priority areas are market access, streamlining the regulatory burden, synergistic growth, domestic positioning and information flow.

Office of the Farmers' Advocate of Alberta:

The Office of the Farmers' Advocate of Alberta works closely with rural Alberta and provides the Minister with information on issues concerning rural Albertans. The agency exists so that rural Albertans can make informed risk management decisions, operate in a balanced legal environment, and have an outlet to settle disagreements. The Office of the Farmers' Advocate of Alberta also provides advice to rural Albertans, works with the Ministry to ensure fair process for rural Albertans, and informs and explains issues regarding industry policies and procedures.

Alberta Grains Council:

The Alberta Grains Council provides strategic and tactical advice to the Minister and appropriate groups who are able to impact the long-term profitability and sustainability of the grains and oilseeds industry. The Council also provides advice to the Minister on other matters pertaining to the grain industry (such as transportation issues and investment needs in grains research and innovation), conducts ongoing examination of all facets of the industry, and maintains liaison with other governments, groups, or boards within and outside Alberta.

Agricultural Products Marketing Council:

The Agricultural Products Marketing Council advises the Minister on matters related to the establishment, operation, and management of the marketing boards and commissions established under the *Marketing of Agricultural Products Act*. The Council also provides strategic support to marketing boards and commissions on board governance, leadership development, strategic and business planning, and regulatory and policy matters.

Irrigation Council:

The Irrigation Council supports the Government of Alberta and Irrigation Districts by providing recommendations and advice, regulatory administration, and strategic funding decisions that facilitate the responsible allocation, management and use of water delivered through irrigation infrastructure. The Council is made up of five public members and two government representatives appointed by the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development.