

South Saskatchewan Regional Plan Strategy 1.4 Reporting

1.4 Support a business climate and complementary production and marketing approaches that recognize the contribution of local production in addition to existing domestic and international market opportunities for Alberta’s agriculture, agri-food and agri-product sectors.

The following information provides an overview of Alberta Agriculture and Forestry’s (AF) work in support of Strategy 1.4 in the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan. Support for local production and facilitation of domestic markets occurs through the Alberta Approved Farmers’ Market Program, while support for international market opportunities is made through market development and investment attraction programs. Performance in both domestic and international markets can be indirectly measured by Farm Cash Receipts (FCRs) and agricultural trade balance (exports less imports) for Alberta.

Supporting Alberta’s Local Food Sector Act

To promote Alberta’s local food producers and to support the Province’s local food industry, AF introduced *Supporting Alberta’s Local Food Sector Act, 2018*. Passed on May 30, 2018, the Act -

- Recognizes the value and importance of local food providers in the provincial economy and Albertans’ quality of life;
- Acknowledges that Alberta producers, processors and other members of the Province’s supply chain are instrumental to meeting consumer demand for fresh and healthy local food and beverages that are grown, harvested or made in Alberta;
- Ensures that a thriving local food sector continues to build on the strengths of the Province’s agriculture and food industry which includes a highly productive land base, diversity of crops, livestock and agricultural products, innovative and dedicated producers and processors of all sizes and an effective network of distributors, retailers, restaurateurs and other sales venues; and
- Encourages that the local food sector is supported by increased consumer awareness and effective assurance systems.

Click [here](#) to learn more about the Act.

Alberta Approved Farmers’ Markets

AF has managed and administered the Alberta Approved Farmers’ Market Program since 1974. The program provides an operational framework which gives direction and guidance to those markets choosing to be a part of it. Through an application process and ongoing monitoring, AF ensures that approved farmers’ markets are meeting minimum operational standards. Individual markets are encouraged to set standards over and above the minimums by striving to incorporate best practices and in keeping up with their established values.

AF staff provide resources and training for new and existing farmers’ market managers, boards and vendors throughout the Province, sharing regulatory, business and best practice information to assist the markets in becoming more successful.

Table 1: Number and Market Days of Alberta Approved Farmers’ Markets by Land-use Framework Region

Year	Alberta		South Saskatchewan		North Saskatchewan		Red Deer		Upper Peace		Upper Athabasca		Lower Peace		Lower Athabasca	
	Number of Markets	Number of Market Days	Number of Markets	Number of Market Days	Number of Markets	Number of Market Days	Number of Markets	Number of Market Days	Number of Markets	Number of Market Days	Number of Markets	Number of Market Days	Number of Markets	Number of Market Days	Number of Markets	Number of Market Days
2015	130	3,481	25	608	50	1,499	23	425	7	288	17	425	3	72	5	164
2016	135	3,497	30	663	51	1,513	22	409	7	281	16	401	3	51	6	179
2017	135	3,566	28	691	54	1,550	21	397	8	296	16	410	3	54	5	168

Source: Estimates prepared by Rural Development Branch, AF.

Since 2010, there has been a significant growth in the number of Alberta approved farmers’ markets. More communities (both urban and rural) are interested in having a market that provides more outlets for producers to sell their products. In the South Saskatchewan region, there are ten urban markets with six of them operating in Calgary, while the remainder of the markets operate in smaller rural communities stretching from Crossfield to Magrath.

The total number of market days are the number of days each market was open in a given year. Each market must be open for a minimum of 10 days per year and operate at least two hours per market day. The majority of markets continue to be seasonal with

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typical operations occurring between May and October. In the South Saskatchewan region, the Calgary Farmers' Market operates four days per week year-round with the other markets in the region being seasonal.

Alberta approved farmers' markets are required to maintain a minimum of ten vendors per week. The Millarville Farmers' Market, operated by the Millarville Racing and Agricultural Society, is the largest farmers' market in the South Saskatchewan region, averaging 159 vendors per week in 2017, an increase of 10 vendors per week over 2016. This outdoor market attracts crowds of over 2,600 each week totaling more than 49,000 customers for the season plus an additional 22,000 over the course of their three day Christmas market.

Farm Cash Receipts and Trade Balance

Farm Cash Receipts (FCRs) represent revenues from the sale of agricultural commodities, program payments from government agencies, and payments from private crop and livestock insurance programs. Receipts are recorded in the calendar year in which the money is paid to farmers. All inter-farm sales within the Province are excluded; however, farm-to-farm sales between provinces are included. FCRs are estimated using both administrative and survey sources of data.

In 2017, Alberta's FCRs from agricultural products totaled approximately \$14.11 billion which was slightly higher than the 2016 value. The value of FCRs for the South Saskatchewan region totaled \$5.2 billion in 2017, accounting for almost 37 per cent of the provincial total. See Table 2 for annual total value and per cent of FCRs for Alberta as well as each Land Use Framework region.

Table 2: Alberta's Annual Total Farm Cash Receipts (\$ billion) by Land Use Framework Region.

Year	Alberta		South Saskatchewan		North Saskatchewan		Red Deer		Upper Peace		Upper Athabasca		Lower Peace		Lower Athabasca	
	\$\$	%	\$\$	%	\$\$	%	\$\$	%	\$\$	%	\$\$	%	\$\$	%	\$\$	%
2015	13.55	100	5.25	38.7	3.18	23.5	2.48	18.3	0.95	7.0	0.70	5.2	0.22	1.6	0.12	0.9
2016	13.50	100	5.17	38.3	3.10	23.0	2.45	18.2	0.99	7.3	0.69	5.1	0.28	2.1	0.12	0.9
2017	14.11	100	5.20	36.9	3.33	23.60	2.66	18.9	1.00	7.1	0.75	5.3	0.29	2.1	0.12	0.8

Source: Estimates prepared by Economics and Competitiveness Branch, AF based on Statistics Canada data

In 2017, Alberta's international exports of primary and processed agricultural and agri-food products set a record at approximately \$11.24 billion, a 12 per cent increase from \$10 billion in 2016. In 2017, Alberta also saw an improvement in the sector's trade balance (the value of exports minus the value of imports), reporting an \$8.02 billion surplus compared to that of \$6.95 billion in 2016. See Table 3 for Alberta's annual trade balance.

Table 3: Alberta's Annual Agriculture and Agrifood Trade Value (\$ billion).

Reporting Year	Total Exports	Total Imports	Trade Balance
2015	10.18	3.08	7.10
2016	10.01	3.05	6.95
2017	11.24	3.22	8.02

Source: Prepared by Statistics and Data Development Section, AF based on Statistics Canada data