

# Land Use

## South Saskatchewan Regional Plan Strategy 3.15 Reporting

**3.15 Encourage and support the continued stewardship of Alberta's private lands through the *development and piloting of regionally appropriate conservation tools.* These tools may include exploring market-based options, voluntary conservation easements and the provision of other government and/or private sector incentives that assist in achieving environmental outcomes. This will be done within the provincial approach for management of ecosystem services.**

### Alternative Land Use Services

Alberta Agriculture and Forestry (AF) has facilitated workshops with Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) Producer Advisory Committees and county staff in two counties to develop a conservation prioritization tool to provide decision support for ecosystem services projects. AF has also provided training to enable the extension of this tool to other groups and areas as ALUS expands into other areas of the Province.

Opportunities exist for expansion of this type of approach in the South Saskatchewan Region. Currently AF is working with county ALUS coordinators and Producer Advisory Committees in counties in the North Saskatchewan and Red Deer regions to develop municipal, GIS-based decision support tools to assist with prioritization of conservation projects for ecosystem services.

### Life Cycle Assessments for Environmental Sustainability

Increasingly, retailers and processors are seeking greater transparency and accountability on environmental sustainability and reporting from their suppliers. AF is committed to ensuring that Alberta's agricultural producers remain competitive, adaptive and responsive in the marketplace. AF, in collaboration with the agricultural commodity groups, has developed a Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) tool to better understand and quantify the environmental impacts of Alberta agri-food industries. LCA is an internationally-recognized, scientifically validated system of analysis and is framed by

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the ISO methodology (ISO 14040). LCA is endorsed by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and by members of The Sustainability Consortium (TSC) including Walmart, McDonald's and PepsiCo. LCA measures a variety of impact category indicators (Carbon Footprint, Water Footprint, Ecosystem Quality, Resources and Human Health) that are used to measure environmental footprint sustainability. The LCA results provide a framework that can be used to support a variety of initiatives, such as:

- Benchmark and monitor environmental performance over time;
- Measure the overall sector improvement resulting from beneficial management practices adoption; and
- Engage and communicate with clients and stakeholders on sustainability.

To learn more about LCA in agriculture, its potential applications, social licence and market access, visit the LCA project [report](#) funded by Growing Forward 2.

After completing LCA for Alberta's chicken, canola, and potato industries, AF has recently completed LCA with the Alberta Pulse Growers to measure the environmental footprint of Alberta peas. A combined health and environmental benefits of pulses study has also been completed resulting in evidence that pulses provide a significant proportion of our daily nutritional needs and has a low carbon footprint. This work has placed Alberta Pea as the first agri-food commodity to have a certified Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) in North America. This supports Alberta Pulse Growers with a powerful business and marketing tool to communicate in a credible and transparent way to its stakeholders about the environmental impact of pea production. Click [here](#) to view Alberta Pulse Growers' EPD.

AF continues to build capacity in this area and is currently leading and supporting industry LCA sustainability initiatives with the Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef and Alberta Beef Producers.