

Agriculture Research and Extension Associations

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Alberta's Applied Research and Extension Associations provide information that keeps Alberta's food sector safe, competitive, and leading edge. Each year, an estimated **\$41 million and 588 full time rural jobs** are added to Alberta's economy because of the activity of these associations.

In 2017, in addition to engaging through social media, website and newsletters, the associations hosted over **14,000 participants** at over **300 extension events** on topics around regenerative farming practises, farm animal care and growing crops under regional conditions.

Innovative, Diversified and Competitive



Photo by: Jacob Marfo

The associations support the development of a diversified agriculture sector by sharing information on growing crops for emerging markets.

There has been renewed interest by farmers to grow hemp as several Alberta businesses, such as Bio Composite Group (Drayton Valley) and Hempco (Nisku), are expanding food and fibre markets. In 2017 hemp was added to extension efforts with six regional variety projects and several hemp information sessions held across the province.

The Mackenzie Applied Research Association has embarked on a project to investigate the fiber strength of Hemp grown in northern conditions under organic and conventional systems. This project has received national attention, and increased funding to expand to more sites in the Peace region of Alberta.

In total, the associations conducted nearly **200 regional trials** to test the adaptability of new crops or varieties developed to address emerging challenges associated with climate change. The associations play a role in determining crop varieties and types best suited to their local areas, reducing the risk to farmers.

Food Safety and Animal Welfare



Farmers rely on the associations to connect them to the latest technologies, industry best practices and changes to regulations to ensure optimum animal care, and **supply safe local food for Albertans.**

In 2017 the associations organized about **30 events** addressing animal welfare and care, and engaged with the chief provincial veterinarian to keep farmers up-to-date on the safe use of antibiotics.

Agriculture Research and Extension 2016-17 Year in Review



Updates on current conditions and wheat midge emergence are available to farmers during the growing season.

The associations provide consistent access to quality data collection, contributing to the **Alberta Insect Pest Monitoring Network**. They monitor over **700 sites** for insect pests and diseases and pass the results onto growers throughout the field season.

Managing Alberta Resources Responsibly

The associations continue to be a trusted partner in promoting environmental stewardship programs and initiatives.

In 2017 the associations, secured a Community Environmental Action Grant that supports **Alberta's Climate Leadership Plan** by broadening climate literacy and empowering farmers to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The resulting Carbon Pasture Management project has engaged farmers across the province to measure and document how their grazing management may affect soil carbon and broaden climate literacy.

Did You Know?

82% of rural municipalities in Alberta collaborate with the associations; representing over **42 million acres of farmland**.

The associations hosted the sold-out **Western Canadian Conference on Soil Health and Grazing** in 2017, educating over **500 participants** on regenerative farming practices.

Agriculture Research and Extension Council of Alberta (ARECA) delivers the **Environmental Farm Plan (EFP)** program on behalf of the Government of Alberta.

There were just over **150 EFPs** completed in 2017, encompassing over 44 municipalities.

72% of the Alberta Beef Producer Environmental Stewardship Awards have gone to association members.

Associations currently receiving funding include:

- Agriculture Research and Extension Council of Alberta (ARECA)
- Battle River Research Group
- Chinook Applied Research Association
- Farming Smarter
- Foothills Forage and Grazing Association
- Gateway Research Organization
- Grey Wooded Forage Association
- Lakeland Agriculture Research Association
- Mackenzie Applied Research Association
- North Peace Applied Research Association
- Peace Country Beef and Forage Association
- SARDA Ag Research
- West Central Forage Association

Access association websites through the [Applied Research and Extension Association](#) webpage.