

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. The sector facilitates the adoption of internationally-accepted food safety systems and standards; conducts surveillance for food safety and animal health; minimizes the impact of animal diseases on public health; provides essential non-routine animal disease investigation services; and plans for and responds to food safety and animal health emergencies. The sector supports the safe processing of meat and dairy products through technical support and regulation, and also ensures compliance with 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 Agricultural Boards and Commissions. 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 establishes the overall strategic framework and implements strategies necessary to generate and attract international and domestic investment to the agriculture sector in the province and advocates for the growth of Alberta agriculture and agri-food export opportunities.

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. 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. 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. 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.

The sector supports the development and implementation of environmental stewardship best practices. 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 unique financial services, including risk management products and lending capital to fit the business needs of producers, the agriculture industry, and small businesses in Alberta. Working closely with clients and rural Albertans, many made-in-Alberta products have been developed to address existing gaps in the marketplace where similar products are not available on a consistent and reliable basis from other sources. AFSC partners with agricultural producers, agri-business and commercial entities to support and advance agricultural development, to create new opportunities for businesses, and to improve the quality of life for rural Albertans

The corporation has helped position Alberta as a leader in business risk management programs for both crops and livestock, and plays a pivotal role in the development and delivery of insurance, income stabilization, and disaster recovery programs on behalf of the Alberta and Canadian governments under statute and intergovernmental agreements. AFSC is responsible for all portions of the multilateral Growing Forward 2 Framework agreement that governs the management of agriculture risk in Alberta, including: AgriInsurance, AgriStability, AgriInvest, AgriRecovery and the Wildlife Damage Compensation Program. 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 increased customer access and market development, enabled product differentiation, enhanced productivity, and sustainable development.

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 is an agency within the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, comprised of up to eight Alberta Grains Council (AGC) farmer members appointed by the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. The AGC advises and makes recommendations to the Department and the Minister on current and emerging issues and trends in the grain industry, including grain transportation, competitiveness in cereals, and sustainable farming. The AGC maintains liaison with other governments, groups, and 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.

Further information about ministry programs and services can be found at: www.agric.gov.ab.ca. The Ag-Info Centre is also available for additional information by calling toll-free in Alberta 310-FARM (3276).