

The Alberta Environmental Farm Plan Company

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 3

REPORT TO INDUSTRY

OCTOBER 2005

New financial assistance available for environmental improvements

First step is a completed
Environmental Farm Plan

Alberta producers, successfully completing an Alberta Environmental Farm Plan (EFP), may qualify for up to \$30,000 in cost-shared funding from a federal program that helps cover the cost of environment-related improvements.

Funds available through the Canada-Alberta Farm Stewardship Program (CAFSP) will cover a wide range of projects. All activities must be cost-shared at 30 percent or 50 percent with the producer, depending on the project. On many projects, labor and in-kind services can count toward the producer's share.

"A key point to remember in order to qualify for assistance is that all projects must be approved by CAFSP administration before any work is undertaken or purchases made," points out Bob Cameron,

a program manager with the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) based in Calgary, Alta. "Funds do not apply retroactively."

"Once they have a completed EFP, producers should apply for Stewardship funds as soon as possible to allow for the necessary approvals," he says. "The approval process can range from six to eight weeks depending on the type of project, so producers need to allow for lead time in their planning."

Stewardship funds can be used toward improvement of some 26 categories of agricultural production practices. The categories include improved manure storage and handling, relocation of livestock confinement and wintering facilities, improved riparian area management, improved cropping systems, and improved on-farm fuel, chemical and fertilizer storage systems, to name a few.

Some of the most common eligible projects cost-shared by CAFSP include:

- Construction materials
- Fencing materials
- Fertilizer storage — such as epoxy fertilizer bins
- Chemical storage
- Fuel storage — such as double walled tanks
- GPS systems
- Sprayer accessories — such as low drift nozzles and shrouds >>



How producers are using the Farm Stewardship Program


Farmers discovering program value

Continued...



Key CAFSP points

Some key points about the process to keep in mind:

- CAFSP is an initiative under the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF) to assist farmers and ranchers in implementing viable and environmentally sustainable agriculture practices on their farms.
- A deemed-appropriate Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) is required to be eligible for the program.
- A copy of the EFP certificate must be submitted with the application.
- The name on the certificate must match the name on the CAFSP application.
- Only *bona fide* farms can apply for assistance, e.g. Alberta farmers must have a farm fuel number. However, in a family situation, for example, if two or three members of a family farm together but have individual farm fuel numbers, each member can apply for assistance.
- Up to \$30,000 is available per farm, on a cost-shared basis.
- Approvals from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada must be in place before implementing the project. The program is not retroactive.
- All activities must be cost-shared at 30 percent or 50 percent depending on the project. Receipts are required to document the cost of implementing the project. 

Although figures weren't available at printing for the third deadline period which ends in August, Alberta farmers from the first half of the year are most interested in using Farm Stewardship dollars for improving cropping systems — and specifically adopting GPS and autosteer technology.

According to CAFSP statistics to the end of May 2005, of the 277 applications received in total, 50 percent of producers applied for assistance with the cost of improved cropping systems.

“And most of those were for GPS technology,” says Bob Cameron, a program manager with PFRA in Calgary. Producers are eligible to recover up to 30 percent or a maximum of \$15,000 for equipment that qualifies for assistance. The category also covers chaff collection and spreading systems.

“The cost of GPS and guidance systems can range from a very basic \$1,000 up to several thousand dollars,” says Cameron. “A basic requirement is that whichever system is being considered, that it helps deliver more accurate rates of inputs such as herbicides and fertilizer and eliminates overlap.”

The second most popular category is product and waste management, with 14 percent or 32 producers applying for assistance to cover the cost of improved fuel and fertilizer storage systems.

Another eight percent or 21 applications were received for projects involving riparian area management. These projects mainly involve fencing materials to exclude cattle from sensitive riparian areas.

From January to July 2005, producers applied for more than \$1.35 million in assistance.

“Farmers applied for more than \$1.35 million in assistance which shows the program’s popularity. And funding is still available.”






Funding categories

The Farm Stewardship Program provides assistance for 26 crop and livestock production and management categories. See *Chart*.

“Improved cropping systems, chemical storage and riparian area management have been the most popular so far, but we are seeing increasing interest in several other categories,” says Cameron. “It is an awareness issue.”

Several of the categories deal with improved manure storage, handling and application practices. The Stewardship Program isn’t intended to buy or build new facilities such as storage tanks or lagoons, but can apply to upgrades or improvements to existing facilities. That includes storage facility liners, covers and monitoring systems, assistance with the cost of liquid/solid separators, and help with the cost of converting a broadcast application system to a direct injection system.

Wintering site management and relocation of livestock confinement facilities are two more categories drawing producer interest. As with projects involving riparian area management, the Stewardship Program doesn’t cover the cost of building new perimeter fences, but will assist with the cost of interior fencing. The Stewardship Program can help with the cost of fencing or corral materials, but can’t be used to create off-site watering systems.

Producers can receive assistance with professional consulting fees and a range of longer term planning services. Categories include nutrient management planning, grazing management planning, biodiversity enhancement planning, irrigation management planning and riparian health management. 

Farm Stewardship assistance available

BMP Identifier	BMP Category	Cost Share	Max. \$
A	Improved Manure Storage and Handling	30%	\$30,000
B	Manure Treatment	30%	30,000
C	Manure Land Application	30%	10,000
D	Farmyard Runoff Control	50%	20,000
E	Relocation of Livestock Confinement Facilities	50%	30,000
F	Wintering Site Management	50%	15,000
G	Product and Waste Management (Farm Products)	30%	15,000
H	Water Well Management	50%	6,000
I	Riparian Area Management	50%	20,000
J	Erosion Control Structures (Riparian)	50%	20,000
K	Erosion Control Structures (Non-Riparian)	50%	20,000
L	Land Management for Soils at Risk	50%	5,000
M	Improved Cropping Systems	30%	15,000
N	Improved Pest Management	30%	5,000
O	Nutrient Recovery From Waste Water – Greenhouses	30%	10,000
P	Irrigation Management	30%	10,000
Q	Shelterbelt Establishment	50%	5,000
R	Enhancing Wildlife Habitat and Biodiversity	50%	10,000
S	Species at Risk	50%	10,000
T	Nutrient Management Planning	50%	4,000
U	Integrated Pest Management Planning	50%	2,000
V	Grazing Management Planning	50%	2,000
W	Soil Erosion Control Planning	50%	2,000
X	Biodiversity Enhancement Planning	50%	2,000
Y	Irrigation Management Planning	50%	2,000
Z	Riparian Health Assessment	50%	2,000




Farm Stewardship Program Do's and Don'ts

Aside from having a “deemed-appropriate” Environmental Farm Plan in place, the second most important step in accessing federal funds is to apply for CAFSP funding before undertaking any improvements, advises Bob Cameron.

He offers a few other points to remember:

- Once the EFP is completed, keep in mind the four CAFSP application deadlines during the year — February 28, May 31, August 31 and November 30.
- Before undertaking any improvement, buying equipment or hiring a consultant, first make application to, and receive approval through, the Canada-Alberta Farm Stewardship Program.
- Most of the simple or basic projects can be approved within about six weeks, while those that may require more support documents, on-farm inspection or a Canadian Environmental Act Assessment could take eight weeks for approval. Allow enough time in your planning for the approval process.
- Projects described in the EFP binder or recommended in the EFP are not necessarily eligible for CAFSP funding.
- CAFSP funding isn't intended for capital costs or to build original facilities, such as perimeter fencing, or a new sewage lagoon. It is intended for upgrades, improvements and modifications.
- If the planned improvement involves buying equipment such as a GPS system, a lagoon liner, chaff spreader, fencing or building materials, for example, include at least one price quote for a specific make, model or amount with your application to facilitate the process. After approval has been given, the CAFSP will also need to see a *bona fide* receipt for the purchase before any money is paid.
- A proper plan is needed to support applications for most projects. Aerial photos or at least a good hand-drawn diagram is needed, for example, to show the proposed fencing layout to exclude cattle from a riparian area.
- Producers are responsible for obtaining any other government approvals that may be required before any project is undertaken.
- Reports on any professional services used to help design a project should be included with applications. For example, if a producer works with a Ducks Unlimited or a Cows and Fish program biologist to develop a riparian management plan, that report should be included with the application for fencing materials.
- Application needs to be made in advance of hiring professional services such as engineering, range management, or nutrient management services.
- In most cases, CASFP funds will not apply to any existing or partially completed projects that were underway before the EFP was developed, or before application for CAFSP funding was made.

All questions regarding the CAFSP should be directed to the central customer service centre by calling toll-free 1-800-667-8567. 



Annual Report available

The complete business overview on the Alberta Environmental Farm Plan Company is available in the 2004 AEFP *Annual Report*. A limited number of print copies are available for industry partners, but the full report is available to anyone online at the AEFP Web site www.albertaEFP.com.

For more information

If you would like more information on any aspect of the Alberta Environmental Farm Plan Company, check the AEFP Web site at www.albertaEFP.com or contact the AEFP office. We welcome your comments, questions and suggestions.

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The Alberta Environmental Farm Plan Company

801-4445 Calgary Trail
Edmonton, Alberta
T6H 5R7

Telephone: 780.436.2339

Fax: 780.436.2382

Toll free: 1.866.844.AEFP (2337)

Web site: www.albertaEFP.com

Partners in Progressive Stewardship:







The Alberta Environmental Farm Plan Company

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