



# REPORT TO INDUSTRY

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## New *Tech Talk* articles launched for EFP

### *This new tool helps producers access technical assistance*

One of the things producers attending Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) workshops ask for most frequently is technical assistance. It's why the Alberta Environmental Farm Plan Company (AEFP) has produced a new communications tool called 'Tech Talk.'

AEFP is fortunate to have the support of a province-wide network of Technical Assistants available to provide producers with personal assistance on any topic that comes up in the process of completing an EFP, or the process of maintaining environmental efforts after an EFP is completed.

The Technical Assistants, or TAs as they are known within the EFP community, are supporters rather than employees of AEFP. That's an important distinction because TAs can go on-farm to meet with producers and assist with questions that arise about completing an EFP. The AEFP workshop facilitators do not meet with participants on farms and ranches because of confidentiality issues.

TAs are available at workshops to help producers answer any questions that come up in the first and second workshops. However, many questions that producers have will come up between workshops, or even after the EFP is completed.

#### Personal assistance

*Tech Talk* articles are designed to help producers outside workshops. The articles contain answers to the most commonly asked questions from producers over the past few years since the EFP program was started.

Each *Tech Talk* article provides short answers to these questions. The answers are designed to provide producers with core information on that particular topic and to encourage producers to ask further questions.

"Many of the technical issues that come up require solutions specific to a particular farm or ranch," says Mike Slomp, executive director of AEFP. "We want producers to understand they can get personal assistance specific to their needs.

"In addition, no one TA is an expert on all subjects. That's why there is a network of them, so they can draw on a broad range of expertise to provide the best answer for each situation."

It is also important that AEFP's role in this process is clear and separate from the technical assistance process.

"We are in the business of helping producers to complete their EFP," says Slomp. "We are not in the consulting business. There are many resources available for technical assistance, including our TA network. Our role is to help producers find the technical assistance they feel they require, rather than giving them specific technical advice. That's an important point of our relationship with farmers."

#### Workshop handouts

Besides being available in text format on the Web site, *Tech Talk* articles have been developed into handouts for AEFP workshops. Each layout is under the *AEFP Journal* masthead. This Web magazine is becoming recognized as a key communications tool by which AEFP speaks to its producer community.

## TECHtalk

*Tech Talk* articles are designed to help producers outside workshops.



“The article layout is designed to give producers an easily-understood article,” says Slomp. “The question style headline leads to a basic overview of the topic. The handout version has contact information for Regional Team Leaders in each region of the province, who can put the producer in touch with the most appropriate source of technical help.”

As with all tools, the AEFP toll-free phone line and Web site are provided for simple assistance.

### Quick articles

To see an example of a *Tech Talk* article, check the AEFP Web site [www.AlbertaEFP.com](http://www.AlbertaEFP.com). “These are the first of these articles,” says Slomp, “and more will be added regularly in the coming months.”

One of the real benefits of these short *Tech Talk* articles is that they can be used by AEFP stakeholders in their own publications or for handouts at meetings in each sector of the farming and ranching community.

All articles are posted on the *AEFP Journal* Web page. There are specific reprint guidelines, so any of these articles are available to stakeholders.

The articles will be available in both standard HTML format, as well as a PDF of the handout version so that stakeholders can have quick handout materials for themselves at their fingertips.

### Fresh information


To ensure *Tech Talk* covers the latest questions from producers, TAs across the province are being asked on a regular basis to provide questions they hear in workshops and suggested answers.

“That way we can ensure our articles are fresh, answering the most current questions from producers,” says Slomp.

### Supporting articles

Additional more in-depth feature articles on selected topics are available on the Web site, says Slomp.

For example, some *Tech Talk* articles will revolve around water use. There are several feature articles available on the Web site.

“As with all of our efforts, we welcome comments, questions or suggestions,” he says. 

## EFP FYI



**New on the AEFP Web.** The AEFP Web site is home to the latest information on many environmental subjects, virtually all of which are available to stakeholders for use in their publications. Some recently posted examples of feature articles under the *AEFP Journal* Web magazine are:

- **Grass — nature’s filtration system saves water quality.** Rethinking runoff issues on his hilly pasture land led producer Greg Pugh (left) to let his grass do the work
- **The do’s and don’ts of winter grazing.** Keys to effective seasonal feeding and bedding

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you would like information on any aspect of the Alberta Environmental Farm Plan Company, check the AEFP Web site at [www.AlbertaEFP.com](http://www.AlbertaEFP.com) or contact the AEFP office. We welcome your comments, questions and suggestions. Articles in this Report To Industry newsletter may be reproduced. Acknowledgement of the source is appreciated.

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