



# REPORT TO INDUSTRY

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## Full steam ahead for Alberta's EFP program

*A snapshot of the early stages of EFP's business year and a look at the future*

With Alberta, Canada and the world moving into a new era of focus on the environment, the Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) program in Alberta is being recognized for its potential as a key player in the province's next generation of on-farm environmental progress.

"Ongoing positive feedback tells us that the EFP program is well positioned to play a continuing role in achieving environmental goals at a time when government and society are focusing on issues of environmental sustainability," says John Kolk, chairman of the Alberta Environmental Farm Plan Company (AEFP).

At the same time, AEFP's plans for the future are being made against a backdrop of dramatic changes in the agriculture environment, says Mike Slomp, AEFP executive director. "However, that's just the reality of the business world today. We're targeting the coming business year with a positive and realistic attitude. Here's a recap of the positive things we see as we move into our new business year."

### Meeting new Alberta minister

AEFP accepted an invitation to meet new Alberta Agriculture and Food (AF) Minister George Groeneveld shortly after the Minister's appointment in January.

"Like anyone new to the position, Minister Groeneveld has a lot of things on his plate," says Kolk. "The Minister is a producer himself, so the opportunity to briefly explain, farmer-to-farmer, the history of the EFP program, why it was established under the structure it has, key elements of the partnership required to develop and deliver the program, as well as our progress to date, was very much appreciated. We felt it was a productive, cordial meeting and we appreciated that the Minister was open and receptive to what we had to say."

### AF and AAFC: powerful partners

Alberta Agriculture and Food (AF), an original partner in the EFP program, has been, and continues to be, a powerful partner, says Kolk. "AF provides the technical backdrop to the program and contributes to a network of technical assistants (TAs). AF's 2007-08 business plan refers to continually growing participation in the EFP program and we take that as a positive sign."

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), through the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA), is the other key partner in program delivery, contributing TAs to assist with program delivery. Together, AAFC, AF, and AEFP have developed an impressive team that works collaboratively to achieve the significant progress that has been made to date.

### APF consultation

The Agriculture Policy Framework (APF) industry consultation process is well underway. The input collected nationally during the first and second rounds of consultations has greatly assisted in providing direction into the next generation of agricultural policy and programming.

"From our experience in participating in that process with sister organizations across the country, there do not appear to be any fundamental concerns about the EFP program," says Slomp. "The EFP program has played a key role in the APF's environmental objectives and we hope it will continue to do so as it moves into its next generation."

### Federal program review

At the same time as Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) was undertaking its APF consultation process, it also conducted a review of all of its programs. The EFP program was a part of that process.

"The EFP program is well-positioned to play a continuing role in achieving environmental goals."  
John Kolk,  
AEFP Chairman.



“While the final report of the review is not yet available, anecdotal evidence from that process suggests there were no significant concerns across the country over the EFP program, and we would take that as a positive sign,” says Slomp.

### 2007/08 plan: full steam ahead

Perhaps the biggest factor this year is that the Federal/Provincial/Industry partnership has given the AEFPP Company “full steam ahead” approval of its 2007/08 business plan, says Slomp. “We have some strong business goals established for the coming year and we intend to meet them,” he says.

“Key to these goals is our expectations pertaining to participation. Over the coming year our goal is to deliver EFP workshops to 4,000 Alberta producers and, through our regional review committee process, sign-off on 3,000 new Environmental Farm Plans. All three partners (AEFP, AF, AAFC) are committed to working together to meet these ambitious goals.

“If achieved, this would bring our total numbers to nearly 15,000 producers who have attended an Environmental Farm Plan workshop and over 9,300 completed EFPs. We believe these goals are attainable and in line with what the program has achieved in recent years.”

“A major milestone this coming year will be the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers’ Conference in British Columbia in late June,” says Kolk. “We are hopeful that this meeting will result in a continued commitment to move environmental stewardship forward in agriculture.”

“The EFP program in Alberta has reason to look to the future with optimism,” says Slomp. “We have strong support from all corners of the industry. We have committed partners, an excellent structure and a strong foundation of qualified and committed people to deliver the program at the grassroots level. We are confident that, when we look back at 2007, we will look back at it as a solid year for the EFP program and the agricultural industry in general.”

## EFP FYI



Olds producer Gordon Ellis

**New on the AEFPP Web.** The AEFPP Web site [www.AlbertaEFP.com](http://www.AlbertaEFP.com) is home to the latest information on many environmental subjects, virtually all of which are available to stakeholders for use in their communications. Some recently posted examples of feature articles under the *AEFP Journal* Web magazine are:

**What are the risks of using a burning barrel and how can I burn farm wastes safely and legally?** The best bet is to reduce, reuse, recycle and not burn at all.

**What I learned from my EFP.** Five things Olds producer Gordon Ellis learned from developing an Environmental Farm Plan.

**What’s the best way to safely dispose of spray rinsate from my tanks?** The onus is on producers.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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

### Partners in Progressive Stewardship:



The Alberta Environmental Farm Plan Company  
Progressive Stewardship

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The Agriculture Policy Framework (APF)  
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