



REPORT TO INDUSTRY

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How corporate partners add value to AEFP

Partners such as Ducks Unlimited Canada and UFA Co-operative Limited support EFP through promotion, sponsorship and projects which enhance the program

Like most companies today, the Alberta Environmental Farm Plan Company (AEFP) operates in a world of partnerships. In the case of AEFP, strong partnerships with like-minded organizations play a fundamental role in helping the company achieve its core business goals.

“It was decided early on that the EFP program would be based on a partnership mentality,” says AEFP executive director Mike Slomp.

“Through this, our goal was — and is — to create new opportunities for EFP and its participants and stakeholders and, hopefully, add value to our partners’ programs in return.

“Together, AEFP’s partners create a network that supports the program financially through the sponsorship of EFP workshops, promotes the program through a host of initiatives at both local and provincial levels, and adds value through programs which complement the EFP program’s core values and goals.”



Ducks Unlimited Canada

AEFP’s partnerships with Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) and UFA are strong examples of this, says Slomp. “Many companies today are increasing their focus on the environment and AEFP is fortunate to be partners with two of the best.”

Ducks Unlimited Canada

Ducks Unlimited Canada is a natural partner for AEFP, says Slomp. Over its 65-year existence the organization has been a key player in the fields of habitat management and education. As partners in the EFP program, DUC has provided broad support, with its technical assistants offering on-farm support for participants.



Partner support helps bring environmental improvements such as the preservation of wildlife habitat

This year, a new pilot program will help further define and accentuate this relationship. The “On-Farm Wildlife and Biodiversity Planning Service” will help producers develop plans to protect and manage wildlife habitat on their farms and ranches.

Similar to the EFP process, the program helps producers systematically analyze their farm’s situation. Habitat is classified, assessed and mapped, with opportunities for improvement and integration into the farm’s operations identified. Participants are encouraged to make changes using funding and technical support available through the Canada-Alberta Farm Stewardship Program (CAFSP).

“We are finding a number of producers who want to better understand their habitat assets,” says Kim Schmitt, director of the DUC project and a board member for AEFP. “Integrating this type of conservation management into farm operations can have significant environmental, social and economic advantages. In many cases, the value of land today is driven by aesthetics and diversity, including the quality of its wildlife habitat.

“Our hope is that this initiative will add value by shining a light on producers’ habitat assets. Integrating habitat management into a farm’s operations now could well result in significant reward in short, mid and longer terms.”

The On-Farm Wildlife and Biodiversity Planning Service is intended to be a simple and efficient process for producers, says Schmitt. DUC biologists work with participating farms and ranches to help producers identify, map and classify wildlife habitat on the property. The producer then receives a written evaluation based on the data gathered.

“Hopefully, through this process producers will gain a better understanding of their habitat and how cropping and farming practices affect it,” says Schmitt. “It all comes down to developing a better understanding of the biodiversity on their farms and ranches.”

The organization’s goal is for 60-80 producers to participate in the program over the coming year. “We’re hoping it will grow into a larger initiative,” says Schmitt.



Using a dry air system, Lloydminster-area hog producer Dwight Peregrym, pictured here with wife Judy, has drastically reduced odour in one of the five barns on his hog operation. The full story can be found at www.AlbertaEFP.com.

New on the AEFP Web. The AEFP Web site at 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 publications. Some recently posted examples of feature articles under the *AEFP Journal* Web magazine are:

Simple strategies protect water and air. Composting gathers interest among farmers

Tech Talk: Spray Drift. The most important things to remember when controlling spray drift of chemical sprays on crops. Attention to fundamentals is key.

Technology helps hog producer fight odour on the farm. Dry air system minimizes odour, strengthens animal health on Lloydminster area hog farm.

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“In many ways, this habitat planning initiative is a natural extension of the EFP program,” says Slomp. “The program will reinforce the value of developing an EFP and put extra emphasis on wildlife habitat, which is often undervalued. In turn, we believe the EFP program enhances an effort that fits DUC’s core educational objectives.”

UFA Co-operative Limited

With 120,000 active members, UFA Co-operative Limited is one of Canada’s largest and most dynamic agricultural organizations. The co-operative has been a corporate partner with AEFP since 2005.

“Many people trust UFA and that’s a very valuable thing when that supplier supports us as a program,” says Slomp. “We were very pleased when UFA approached us about the possibility of becoming a corporate partner. In many ways, our relationship has lived up to those expectations.”

UFA provides support to the EFP program in a number of ways. “One major way is through direct financial support,” says Slomp. “The most obvious example of this is UFA’s sponsorship of EFP workshops in communities throughout the province.”

The co-operative also provides support through promotion. Not only does it promote EFP workshops to producers on a local level, but it also uses its expansive member network to reinforce the intrinsic value of the EFP program. For example, this past year UFA distributed 80,000 EFP brochures directly to producers across Alberta.

Finally, UFA promotes the broad value of EFPs by building program support into its marketing materials. One example of this is the *UFA Environmental Products Guide*, which outlines commercial products available to help producers make the on-farm environmental improvements identified in their EFPs. The guide, distributed by mail and handout, reinforces the EFP message through visuals and verbal references to the program.

That kind of value goes beyond what can be measured on a monetary basis, says Slomp. “Ultimately, the organization’s sheer size alone virtually guarantees a high level of program exposure to the farming community.”

“UFA is committed to serving the people who live, work and play in rural Alberta,” says Dallas Thorsteinson, president and CEO. “Alberta’s environmental farm plan aligns perfectly with this commitment by giving our customers and owners the products, services and solutions they need to make environmentally sound choices.”

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 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.

Partners in Progressive Stewardship:



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The Agricultural Policy Framework (APF)
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