



REPORT TO INDUSTRY

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Updated edition of EFP workbook ready for fall workshops

Revised workbook tackles needs identified by EFP participants

The Alberta Environmental Farm Plan Company (AEFP) will have an updated edition of the EFP workbook, the key document of the EFP program, available in time for this fall's workshops. The revised edition is an opportunity for AEFP to continue to respond to the needs of producers and other program participants, says Mike Slomp, AEFP executive director.

"This version of the EFP workbook does not represent an extensive overhaul — it's not intended to replace the existing version for participants currently using that edition," says Slomp.

"Rather, it's an update that has allowed us to quickly respond to the feedback collected from participants and the program delivery team which represents them. We have done this by addressing issues of clarity and ease of use while at the same time strengthening technical details to reflect the current environment. You can almost think of it as 'Version 2.1.'"

The updated edition of the workbook acts as an example of the EFP program's commitment to gathering feedback from participants and readjusting the program to better meet their needs. "This has been an ongoing process since EFP's

inception in the province in 2002, and will continue to be as we prepare for future editions of this core document."

Opportunity for update

The decision to publish an updated edition of the workbook was largely based on timing, says Slomp. "The 2006/07 year was a pivotal one for the EFP program, with over 4,200 producers attending the introductory workshop and over 3,500 attending the follow-up workshop. This marked an unprecedented level of participation in the history of Alberta's EFP program."

At the same time, it became clear that the number of workbooks AEFP had available would not be adequate for this fall. This drove a need for new copies. "We saw this as an opportunity," says Slomp. "Because we had to print new copies anyway, we thought this offered us a perfect chance to review comments participants have made about the workbook and the program and make adjustments based on those comments."

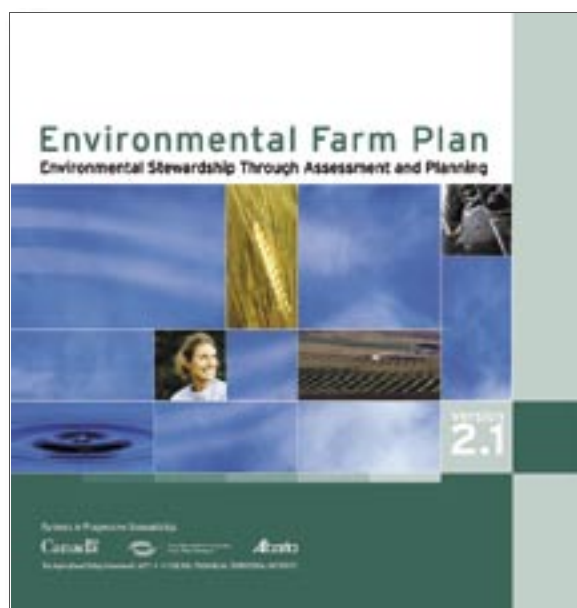
This discussion, which featured input from a broad cross-section of stakeholders in the agricultural industry, not only drove the adjustments in the revised version but also set the stage for the next edition of the workbook. "That edition will offer more significant changes than the current revised edition," he says.

Clarity key

Clarity was a key driver of the changes made to the revised edition. "Participants who provided input told us there were parts of the workbook which could be more concise, particularly in the chapter introductions which summarize the issues and goals tackled in the chapter."

For this reason, chapter introductions have been adjusted to be easier to scan and reference. "Like many people today, producers are busy people who are often strapped for time," says Slomp. "As a result, they generally prefer information that is presented in such a way that they can read and digest it quickly and easily. This approach was a priority as we embarked on the updated version of the workbook."

Version 2.1 of the AEFP Workbook is intended to quickly respond to the feedback collected from participants and the program delivery team which represents them



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Technical adjustments

Technical detail was another priority. The revised edition features additions and adjustments to workbook questions based on input from participants and from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Alberta Agriculture and Food experts who ensured the answers retained their scientific accuracy. Facilitator and technical assistant (TA) editions have also been adjusted to include answers to frequently asked questions.


“The EFP program is constantly growing and evolving to meet the needs of producers,” says Slomp. “As participants continue to make the on-farm environmental improvements identified in the EFP process, it’s not unusual for them to discover new issues that have not been previously addressed.

“This is where the program’s extensive network of TAs comes in. TAs provide the technical foundation of the EFP program by providing input into the development of its technical documents as well as offering on-farm support to participants.

“Because of their on-the-ground involvement with producers implementing Beneficial Management Practices on their farms and ranches, they are in a unique position to hear and address producers’ challenges. As a result, the program’s technical community was an invaluable resource in the development of this revised edition.”

An ongoing process

AEFP will continue to gather participant feedback as the EFP program moves forward, says Slomp. “This program was created by producers with the needs of producers foremost in mind. The ongoing success of the program tells us that this direction is the one we need to continue to follow.”

One important point about the revised workbook is that there is no need for producers with earlier versions of the workbook to change anything. “Those versions are still valid; the new version is not intended to be a replacement for previous editions,” says Slomp. 

EFP FYI



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:

Tech Talk: Backflow prevention device placement on a water line. Optimal placement depends on the situation.

Tech Talk: Managing wells that are closer than the minimum distance to a livestock yard. Water testing and knowledge of ‘grandfathering’ key.

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.

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