



# REPORT TO INDUSTRY

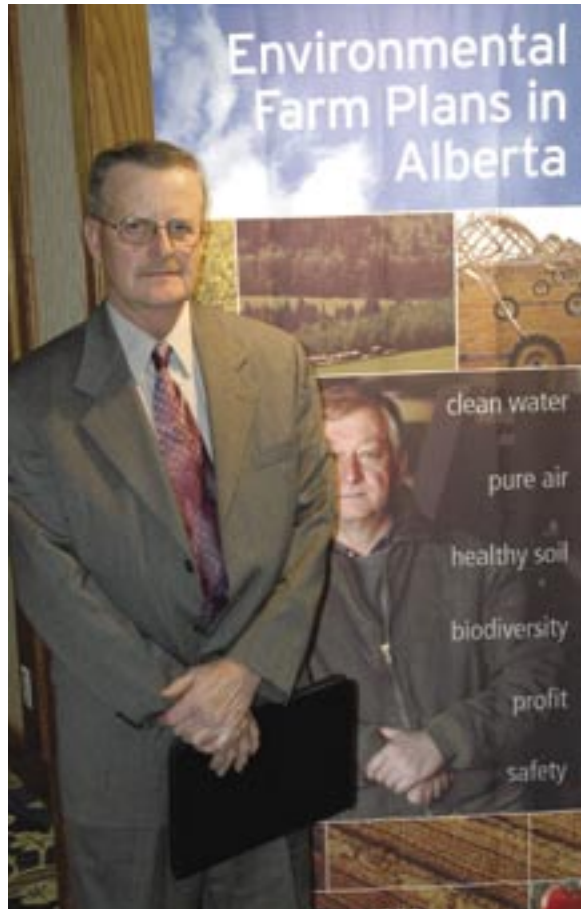
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## New AEFP chair looks to next generation of environmental sustainability

### *Alberta's agricultural industry support sets the stage for continued environmental progress*

The end of the calendar year is a time for reflection on many fronts. As a long-time producer and veteran participant of agricultural organizations, Glenn Logan knows that this year's end brings as many questions as answers for his organization.

As a board member of the Alberta Environmental Farm Plan Company (AEFP) since its inception and its newly elected chair, Logan is acutely aware his organization faces challenges. With the Agricultural Policy Framework winding up and negotiations on Growing Forward taking place between the federal and provincial governments, changes are on the horizon and Logan likes the opportunities side of the equation.



Glenn Logan, new chair of the Alberta Environmental Farm Plan Company

"The agriculture industry in Canada, just like all of society, continues to wrestle with the best way to build environmental sustainability into its future," says Logan. "But as we wrap up a highly successful year, one of the biggest highlights of AEFP is the way that the agricultural industry in Alberta has stepped up to the plate to build on environmental sustainability."

While the final numbers aren't in, the trend is obvious, says Logan. In Alberta, more producers than any year previous have completed EFPs. That participation is reflective of progress across Canada, a tribute to the vision of those partners who set up the EFP program and guided it through its infancy.

"Just as satisfying is the interest the environment has attracted from the agricultural industry and the commitment many sectors are making to this program," says Logan. "There has been significant positive media coverage of the EFP program across the country as a reflection of this."

### **Potato Growers set example**

Driven by growing standards among processors, the Potato Growers of Alberta (PGA), a new corporate member of AEFP, have built the completion of an EFP into its voluntary system of accountability. This system, which also includes the following of food safety best practices, the keeping of field records, and completion of a certified chemical applicators course, helps lay the groundwork for a broad-based marketing strategy, says Vern Warkentin, PGA executive director.

The development of this process began around seven years ago when food safety issues were coming to the forefront in the agricultural community. "That, along with the Agricultural Policy Framework's emphasis on food safety, made it clear that producers were going to have to find ways to build accountability into their management practices," says Warkentin.

However, industry pressure has possibly been the strongest driver of the PGA's efforts. As these measures were being implemented, McDonald's approached prominent food processor McCain about introducing Alberta potato growers to the McDonald's Agricultural Production Program (MAPP). "This program had been in practice for several years in Europe and is focused on food safety, food quality and environmental sustainability," he says.

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Ernie Van Boom, chair of the Potato Growers of Alberta (PGA), explained the role the EFP program plays in the PGA's voluntary system of accountability at the AEFP AGM.

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Warkentin says the PGA program is worthwhile because it permits potato growers in Alberta to produce a product that is recognized in North America as first class and safe. "They now have a comprehensive package that allows them to be competitive in a tough marketplace and be secure in the knowledge that they are taking care of their environment now and into the future.

"Essentially, it's a matter of the market driving the production process. It's a recognition by our growers that there are certain steps that must be taken to assure our clients, the processors, that we are providing a safe, quality product. Participation in the EFP program is the environmental piece in that puzzle."

### New AEFP members

Another positive sign of industry support is growth in the range, number and diversity of AEFP's corporate membership, says Logan. Twenty-six organizations, including producer commodity groups and industry organizations, now act as corporate members of AEFP. These members support and promote the EFP program, with each member entitled to one delegate and each delegate eligible to serve on the board of directors.

"The EFP program in Alberta has been built with a focus on partnership," says Logan. "This past year's addition of Potato Growers of Alberta, Natural Resources Conservation Board, and Alberta Farm Fresh Producers Association to our roster of corporate members adds to our goal of representing a broad cross-section of the province's agricultural industry."

### Focus on year ahead

Key to moving towards the next generation of on-farm environmental sustainability, says Logan, is continuing to look out for opportunities to meet the growing needs of Alberta's producers.

"The agricultural industry is facing a fundamental shift in consumer values driven by expectations in areas of the environment, food safety and animal care," he says. "Our focus for the year ahead is to continue to be prepared to change and adapt to meet these challenges for today and tomorrow, bringing together the needs of producers, food consumers and the general public." 

## EFP FYI



Grant Vogelaar (left) and Fred Lozeman (right), managers of Lozeman Farm, completed an Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) in 2005. Their story, "Young farmers, big plans" can be found on the AEFP Web site at [www.AlbertaEFP.com](http://www.AlbertaEFP.com).

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

**Who does the EFP?** Owners, family members, renters, staff – who is the best to do an EFP?

**Producer needs drive streamlined EFP workshops.** The goal is value for producers of all sizes and types completing an EFP.

## 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.

### Partners in Progressive Stewardship:



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