



New canola pathotype found in neighbouring county

Farmers in Strathcona County are likely familiar with the canola disease, clubroot. This pathogen affects canola and other mustard family plants by reducing yield and oil seed quality. All counties surrounding the City of Edmonton have clubroot and are actively working with farmers to prevent crop losses.

Over the past 10 years, developments such as clubroot-resistant varieties of canola have made it possible to maintain rotation lengths and prevent losses in yield. However, in 2013 a new pathotype of clubroot now called 5X was discovered. The 5X pathotype was able to bypass the resistant genes in certain varieties of canola, similar to how antibiotic resistance occurs in bacteria. Researchers believe that clubroot resistance broke down due to overuse of one type of resistant gene.

Since no current clubroot-resistant canola cultivars are registered as resistant against 5X, Strathcona County is taking the threat of this pathotype seriously. Testing for clubroot in all canola fields across Strathcona County will continue, and if any symptoms are found, the inspector will contact the landowner to find out if the cultivar was a clubroot-resistant variety or if it was a susceptible variety.

Further information

Transportation and Agriculture Services
780-417-7100

Reduce your risk of clubroot

- Plant clubroot-resistant canola on a minimum of one in three year rotation.
- Plant clubroot-susceptible canola on a minimum of a one in four year rotation.
- Avoid planting canola on fields known to have a high clubroot inoculum level for more than four years.
- Scout your fields for clubroot regularly.
- Plant different varieties of clubroot-resistant canola.
- Limit soil movement between fields.
- Use equipment sanitation between fields.



Clubroot is caused by a microscopic soil-borne pathogen that infects the roots of cruciferous plants.



Please join us for Rural Living Days on Saturday, June 6 from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Strathcona Olympiette Centre (Fultonvale).

There will be information booths and displays showcasing rural Strathcona County businesses and organizations. Drop by and get to know your rural community!

Rural Living Days Seminar Series

This year, workshops will be offered throughout May and June. Full workshop descriptions and details can be found on our website.

- May 12 – Everything Horse
- May 16 – Alternative Energy Seminar
- May 20 – Shelterbelt Design and Renovation
- May 23 – Pruning and Tree Health
- May 30 – Backyard Critters and Pests
- June 2 – Raising Fish in your Dugout
- June 4 – Building a Dugout
- June 11 – Attracting Native Pollinators
- June 16 – Septic Sense

Register today!

Visit www.strathcona.ca/agevents
\$15.00 registration fee
Pre-register for all workshops

Further Information

Transportation and Agriculture Services
www.strathcona.ca/agevents

Northern Pocket Gopher

Appearance

Northern Pocket Gophers are common burrowing rodents that get their name from the fur lined cheek pouches that they use for carrying food and nesting materials. They are built for digging and tunneling with powerful shoulders, large clawed front paws and short fine grey fur. Pocket gophers are often confused with moles; however, moles are not present in Alberta.

Behavior

Pocket gophers live in a burrow system that can cover an area of 18 to 185 metres. Mounds of fresh soil are formed as the pocket gopher digs its tunnel and pushes the loose dirt to the surface.

Management

Pocket gophers are controlled by several natural predators. However, in certain situations such as gardens, septic mounds and hay fields, further means of control may be necessary. The sooner you detect their presence and implement control measures, the better!

Trapping

Trapping is a safe and effective method to control pocket gophers. There are several types of pocket gopher traps available. Mole traps do not work for pocket gophers.

Setting traps:

- Step 1: Locate the main tunnel near the mound with a probe (i.e. a long screwdriver).
- Step 2: Use a shovel or garden trowel to open the tunnel wide enough to set the trap.
- Step 3: Set the box trap as per directions.
- Step 4: Leave the air hole open at the back of the trap.

Once the trap is set, prevent light from entering the tunnel by covering the opening with soil, sod or cardboard. Fine soil may be sifted around the edges to ensure a light seal. If too much light enters, the gopher may plug the burrow with soil, filling the traps and making them ineffective.

Check traps often and reset them when necessary. If a pocket gopher is not caught within three days, move the traps to a different location where fresh mounds are found.

Further information

Transportation and Agriculture Services
www.strathcona.ca/wildlife



New weapon ready to fight thistle

Here comes spring, here comes summer, here comes thistle, what a bummer.

These prickly weeds have become part of our lives here in Strathcona County. If you have had the chance to battle an infestation of thistle, you know that they put up quite a fight.

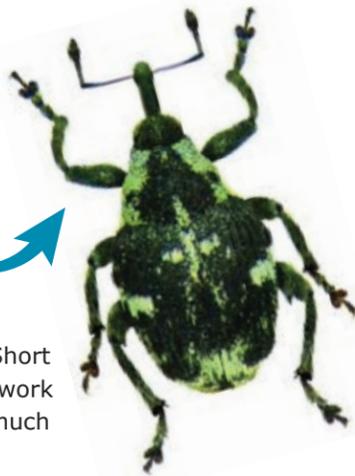
There are several methods the County uses to remove prohibited and noxious weeds such as Canada thistle, as part of the Rural Roadside Vegetation Control Program (RRVCP). These methods include manual, mechanical, and targeted herbicide application, known to us as Integrated Vegetation Management or IVM. The principle behind this is to disrupt the establishment and spread of specific species by using several tools. Each method affects the plant in a different way, thus minimizing the chance of resistance.

Here comes the exciting part...

Introducing the newest member to Strathcona County's Rural Roadside Vegetation Control Program...

The Canada Thistle Stem-Mining Weevil!

That's right, biological control. Short and sweet, these crafty critters work year after year, chewing up as much thistle as they can.



Our team will be introducing our new friends where other forms of control are severely restricted. Continued monitoring will provide us with the feedback we need to further integrate them into our operations. In addition to this, they will begin to spread on their own. It does take time for a colony to cover an area but the spread can be supervised quite easily.

We are all excited to begin a new season with a fresh approach. See you on the roadside!

Further information

Transportation and Agriculture Services
780-417-7100

Weed Inspection Program

Weed inspectors will be out again in 2015, talking with and educating residents about the growth and spread of noxious weeds.

Visit www.strathcona.ca/weeds to learn more.

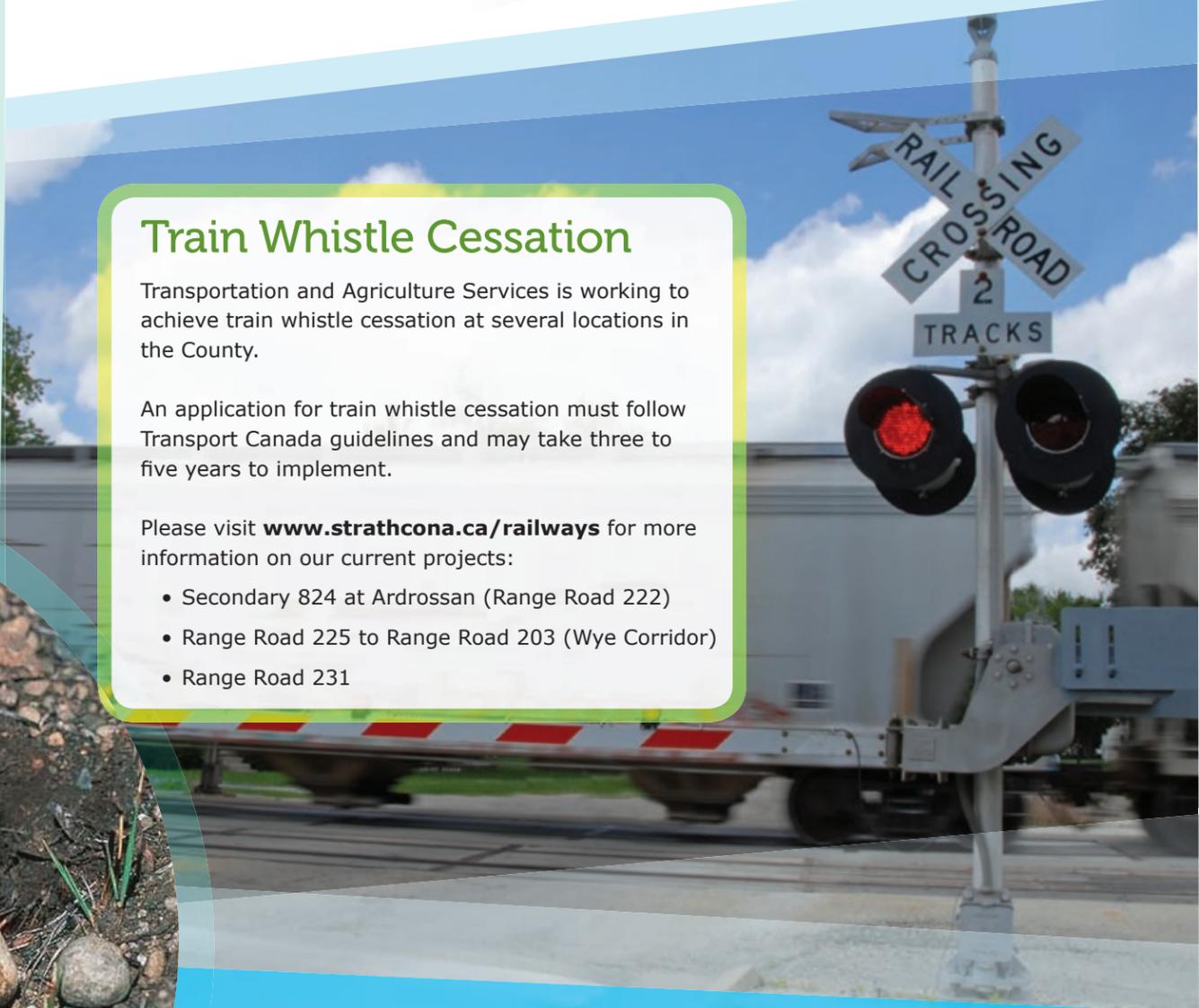
Train Whistle Cessation

Transportation and Agriculture Services is working to achieve train whistle cessation at several locations in the County.

An application for train whistle cessation must follow Transport Canada guidelines and may take three to five years to implement.

Please visit www.strathcona.ca/railways for more information on our current projects:

- Secondary 824 at Ardrossan (Range Road 222)
- Range Road 225 to Range Road 203 (Wye Corridor)
- Range Road 231



Ornamental weeds

After a long cold winter, most gardeners are starting their vegetable seeds inside and looking to buy fresh young plants for their garden. Sometimes, however, gardeners unknowingly purchase noxious or prohibited noxious weeds. These weeds can cause years of headaches from repeated weeding.

Save yourself time and money by purchasing plants that are not on the Weed Act list. For more information, contact the Invasive Species Council at www.abinvasives.ca or the County weed inspectors at 780-417-7100. They can help identify any plant that may be a noxious weed and can suggest alternative plants.

Plants to avoid

Himalayan Balsam

A large beautiful plant with orchid-like flowers that spreads by forcefully ejecting seeds from the seedpod at a distance of up to 5 metres. This type of dispersal creates a problem in flower gardens as the gardener will be constantly removing the seedlings throughout the season for many years. This plant is considered prohibited noxious because of the ecological damage it causes in riparian habitats.

Yellow Clematis

A large noxious weed that can extend up to 16 metres in height. The seed heads are attractive and unusual in form. Seeds can travel in the wind far distances, invading natural habitat or creating havoc in another garden. At one time, this species was found in most greenhouses, and was a popular choice to cover up unsightly fences as it grew large and fast.

Oxeye Daisy

The flower gardener's favorite standby is also a prolific seed former and designated as a noxious weed. This plant looks exactly like Shasta Daisy which is sterile and cannot grow from seed.

Common Tansy

Common tansy spreads prolifically by seed, eventually turning your nice border garden into a monoculture of yellow, choking out all the other plants. This plant is also toxic to grazing animals.

Creeping Bellflower

Creeping bellflower can grow roots anywhere and take over without being affected by repeated mowing. An entire lawn can be choked by this plant within a couple of years as it is very difficult to eradicate or contain unless the entire root system is dug out. A small piece of broken-off root can develop into another plant and continue spreading.

Further information

Transportation and Agriculture Services
www.strathcona.ca/weeds



Salisbury Greenhouse School Gardens Program

School gardening engages students by providing a dynamic environment to observe, discover, experiment, nurture and learn.

The Salisbury Greenhouse School Gardens Program in Strathcona County was established two years ago by Rob Sproule from Salisbury Greenhouse in partnership with Strathcona County. The program started with Elk Island Public Schools (EIPS) and has been expanding ever since. Schools who participate in the project receive an Edible Garden package which includes raised-bed planters, soil, seedlings, seeds and gardening tools.

In most schools, the grade four and five students are responsible for planting, watering and maintaining the planter beds. However, in many cases, the entire school gets to take part in some fashion. Over the summer months, when school is out, the planters are maintained by volunteers from the school program. Schools are encouraged to plant vegetables that produce earlier in the summer so they can harvest before the school year ends.

In many schools, the produce is shared and the classes learn how to cook with what they have grown. In 2014, schools received an additional 1,500 tomato plants for students to take home for Mother's Day.

Each year five schools will be accepted into the program.

Further information

If your school would like to participate, please contact:

Rob Sproule at Salisbury Greenhouse
rob@salisburygreenhouse.com



Himalayan Balsam



Yellow Clematis



Oxeye Daisy



Common Tansy



Creeping Bellflower

Alberta Weed Spotter

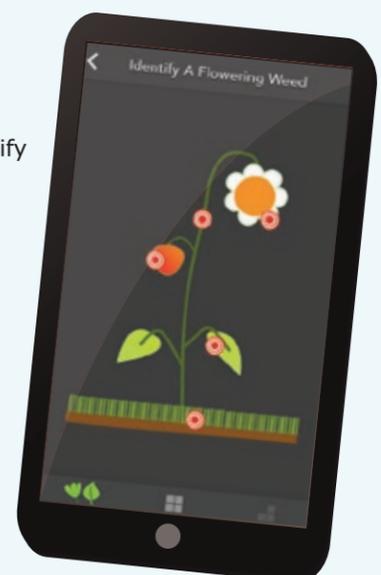
New smartphone App takes aim at noxious weeds

The City of Edmonton has developed a new iPhone applications to help with weed identification. It is designed to help Albertans identify and report weeds to provincial authorities, including Strathcona County. The application includes all 75 species currently regulated under Alberta's Weed Control Act.

Weed complaints or inquiries can still be reported to Strathcona County through their website at www.strathcona.ca/weeds or by calling 780-417-7100.

Alberta Weed Spotter is available for download from the App Store. For more information and other weed resources, visit:

www.abinvasives.ca/resources
www.edmonton.ca/weeds



Container gardening

Container gardening is an inexpensive and simple way to grow fresh, healthy, produce.

Why Containers?

Container gardening allows you to grow food virtually anywhere with much greater control and flexibility. It also results in less pest and disease issues on the plants.

There are many methods of container gardening such as square foot gardening, raised bed gardening and hanging or wall mounted containers. It is a great option when space is limited.

Anything you can grow in a traditional vegetable garden can be grown in containers. Many vegetables perform better in a container such as peppers, tomatoes, lettuce, beans, spinach, carrots and radishes. There really are no restrictions on what vegetable can be grown in a container. Let your imagination run wild!

Containers and prepping pots

There is no need for specialized equipment and you don't need to go out and purchase expensive pots, containers or tools. Look around the yard and see what can be 're-used' and take it from there. If you do need to buy new containers they do not have to be expensive. Vegetables are happy growing in just about anything.

All containers, whether clay, wood, plastic or ceramic, require an adequate number of holes in the bottom for drainage. Holes should be drilled or punched in containers that do not drain quickly after each watering. If the container is set on a solid surface such as a cement or patio floor, raise the container one or two inches by setting it on blocks of wood to improve drainage.

Most vegetables can be grown in containers as long as there is enough space for root development. The spacing requirements on the seed packets or plant tags will help determine the size of the container required.

The ideal planting medium for containers should provide rapid drainage with sufficient water retention to keep the root zone uniformly moist. There are many 'soiless' potting mixtures on the market and these tend to work best. They are lightweight and free from soil-borne diseases and weed seeds.

Fertilization

Soiless mixes contain little, if any nutrients so regular fertilization is important to successful container gardening. A 5-10-10 or 10-10-10 fertilizer will keep your garden growing well all season.

Watering

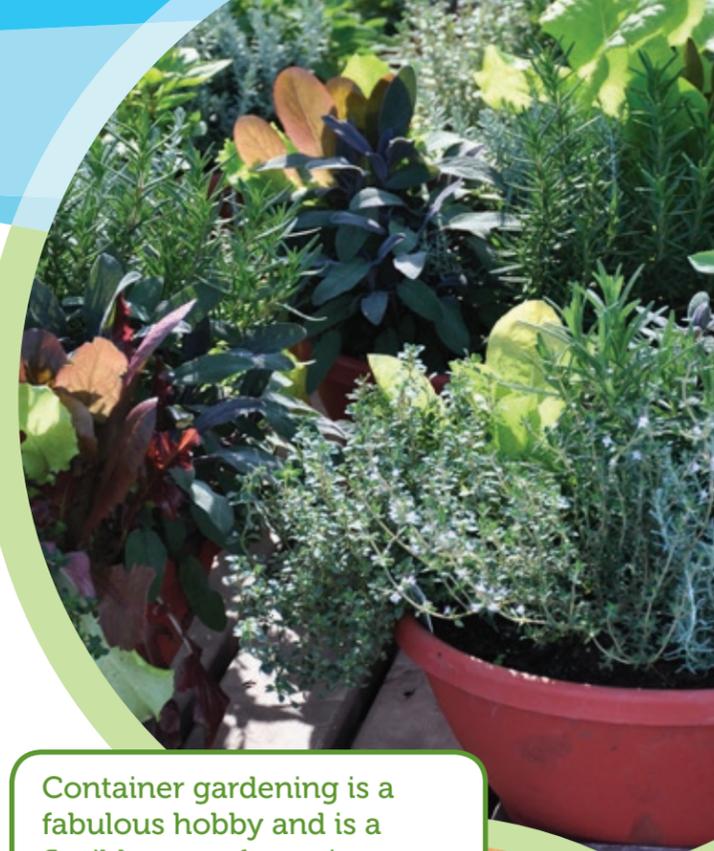
Some vegetables need watering every day, depending on container size and weather conditions. The best way to water is with a watering can or sprayer attachment on a garden hose. Be careful to not get water on the leaves of the plants as this may cause some damage.

Sun exposure

The containers should be receiving at least five hours of sunlight per day for maximum performance. The beauty of container planters is that you can move them around to catch the sun as it moves.

Further Information

Transportation and Agriculture Services
780-417-7100



Container gardening is a fabulous hobby and is a flexible way of growing food for you and your family.

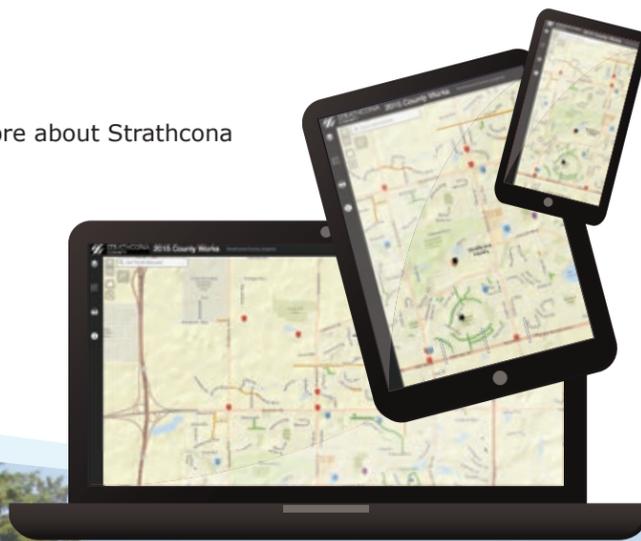


CountyWorks

Visit the interactive web map to find out more about Strathcona County construction projects.

Further information

Transportation and Agriculture Services
www.strathcona.ca/countyworks



Did you forget to renew?

Love your dog...
License your dog.

All dogs in Strathcona County (including rural areas) are required to be licensed. Residents are permitted to license up to two dogs per household. An over-limit permit is required to keep more than two dogs. Dogs must be licensed annually by March 31.

Dog owners must ensure that their pets' barking does not disturb neighbours. Dogs must stay on the owner's property and not be allowed to run free. Strathcona County Enforcement Services peace officers pick up stray dogs and act on the complaints of neighbours about the loose dogs.

Further information

Enforcement Services
780-449-0170
www.strathcona.ca/dogs



FireSmart activities in your subdivision or hamlet



FireSmart is a program that works with residents to identify, reduce or eliminate as many fire hazards and fuel sources on their property as possible. As a result of a grant provided by the Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta (FRIAA), Strathcona County was able to conduct a number of new initiatives in select rural subdivisions and hamlets in 2014, with plans to continue this work into 2015.

Highlights of 2014 work include:

- Establishing a fire guard in Collingwood Cove and Meadow Court.
- Converting flammable vegetation in the fire guard area to less flammable species native to Alberta (a mixture of Slender Blue Penstemon, Blanketflower, Harebells, Low Goldenrod, Northern Bedstraw, Tufted Hair Grass and June Grass).
- Completing 100 wildfire risk assessments and operational plans for various subdivisions and hamlets. Information reported includes a general description of the community, forest fuel type(s), landscape description, community access road (width and length), utilities present, and historic fire occurrences. These FireSmart summaries also evaluate the risk and likelihood of a wildland fire in each community and what the consequence of the event would be. Forest fuel management/modification recommendations are included for each community.
- Leading Community Champion Workshop, free yard debris clean-up events and conducting FireSmart property assessments. The purpose of these assessments is to identify risk and outline ways individuals can help protect their property from wildfires.

Work will continue in 2015. An additional 115 hamlets and subdivisions will have wildfire risk assessments and operational plans developed. Community Champion Workshops will be planned and delivered, and free road-side chipping events will be coordinated for interested rural communities.

Further information

To book a FireSmart Community Champion Workshop or a free FireSmart property assessment, please contact:

Community Safety Education
780-464-8468
safety.educators@strathcona.ca

What types of rural fires require a valid fire permit?

A fire permit is required for certain types of fires in Strathcona County and are valid for one year from the date of approval. A permit can only be issued to the owner, authorized agent or occupant of the property and is not transferable. Before you burn, you must call the 24-hour burning information line at 780-464-8464 to confirm if it's safe to burn. Below notes three types of fires that require a fire permit in rural areas.

Brush pile

The size of brush piles is limited to three metres by three metres by two metres. Larger brush piles require permission from the Office of the Fire Marshal. Phone 780-449-9651 before igniting.

Incinerator (burn barrel)

Incinerator or burn barrel fires are allowed on properties five acres or larger. This type of fire must be confined in a non-combustible structure or container with draft and smoke vents, and be covered with a heavy gauge metal screen. The mesh on the screen must be 13 millimetres or less. Household refuse can be burned in this manner, with the exception of:

- Food waste
- Manure and animal carcasses
- Treated construction materials
- Wire
- Insulation
- Rubber and plastics
- Herbicides and pesticides
- Any other toxic material which may produce dense black smoke
- Painted, stained or pressure treated wood
- Railroad ties

Open fire

An open fire is any fire which is not an incinerator fire, a public park site fire or smudge fire. This

includes grass fires, brush fires, bonfires and recreational fires without screens.

Where can I apply for a fire permit?

Apply for a fire permit online or in person.

- Online at www.strathcona.ca/sces
- Station 6, 915 Bison Way in Sherwood Park between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday. Closed on Statutory holidays.
- Station 4 (Heartland Hall), 55305 Range Road 214 between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m., Monday to Thursday. Closed on Statutory holidays.
- Station 3 (Ardrossan) between 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. on Thursdays.
- Station 2 (South Cooking Lake) between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m., Wednesday to Friday and evenings from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Wednesdays. Closed on Statutory holidays.

Further information

Fire Prevention and Investigation
780-449-9651
fireprev@strathcona.ca

Stubble burning

Stubble burning is a process for farmers who need to remove excess crop build-up on their field. It is a process most commonly used after growing flax, however a permit is required. For further information, please contact Transportation and Agriculture Services at 780-417-7100.

Saturday, June 13

Old Fashion Parade and Picnic

A celebration of family and community

Presented by Ardrossan Recreation and Agricultural Society

Event features delicious food, craft market and plant sale at 55 Plus Club, and fun, affordable activities for families and kids of all ages.

For more information please visit www.ardrossanrecagsociety.ca

Pancake breakfast	7 a.m. to 11 a.m. (Fire Hall Station 3)
Parade starts	11 a.m.
Picnic activities	12 noon



Country Talk Online Survey

What do you think of Country Talk?
What topics do you think are missing?

Participate in an online survey before May 15 to share your feedback.

www.strathcona.ca/countrytalk

Complete the online survey for a chance to win a free composter!

Are you planning a new approach on your property?

Currently, each lot in Strathcona County is permitted one access that must conform to the Strathcona County Design and Construction Standards. All landowners are required to complete and submit an application with the required fees to Transportation and Agriculture Services for review and approval of any additional accesses to County roads.

Unapproved accesses or accesses that do not conform to County Standards may be removed in order to maintain the safety and integrity of the transportation network.

Further information

Transportation and Agriculture Services
www.strathcona.ca/tas

Strathcona's largest stock show showcasing youth in agriculture



Farm smarts safety camp • pitchfork perfect youth talent contest
open & junior beef shows - \$3000 added prize money
country classic horse show in conjunction with north country circuit
jmha pancake breakfast • country classic gymkhana



Buckles, banners, ribbons and a chance to perform on stage at Josephburg Presents are all part of the prize list

May 21 - 25, 2015
in Josephburg



For dates and times or to register visit josephburg-ag.ca



Country Talk

News for rural residents provided by Strathcona County's Agricultural Service Board



The Agricultural Service Board (ASB) acts as an advisory body to Council on agriculture matters, while promoting and developing agriculture policies and programs to meet the needs of residents and the municipality.

Further information

Agricultural Service Board
Councillor Bonnie Riddell, Chair
780-464-8003

Transportation and Agriculture Services
Joel Gould, Manager, Agriculture Services
780-417-7100

