History of agriculture in Strathcona County: Early farming

Research conducted by J. Ross and Associates for Strathcona County in 2011

Introduction

Built in a rural setting by an early settler and serving for decades as a farm homestead, Bremner House offers a window into the evolving role of agriculture in the surrounding region and beyond. This section of the Bremner House website covers the following topics.

Early farming	**Animal care and markets**	**Advances in agriculture**
Farming in the 1880s, when the first settlers arrived to the area around Bremner House, was quite different from today. Changing governance, equipment, techniques and global forces all combined to make agriculture in what is now Strathcona County a shifting landscape.	Many early settlers raised a variety of livestock as a hedge against downturn or disease in any one commodity. Both farmers and government experts took steps to improve herd quality in hope of opening doors to export markets.	From earliest days, farm men and women formed organizations to improve their buying power, enhance their advocacy and learn new techniques. The stakes became higher in recent decades as farms became larger and less diversified, evolving into agribusinesses.
Soils Jurisdiction Reserve lands Early farms Hay Threshing Tractors War and the Depression	Poultry Swine Sheep Horses Cattle, beef and dairy Creameries Herd improvement programs Apiculture	Changes in agribusiness Farm organizations 4-H Club Farm Women's Union of Alberta Edmonton Agricultural Society Royal Agricultural Winter Fair Agricultural colleges Farm Journals Insurance

STRATHCONA COUNTY

Soils

Soil quality ranges widely across Strathcona County, from undulating and less fertile knob and kettle terrain left behind by retreating glaciers to rich black soil. Land around Bremner House tends toward the latter.

Soils			
Location	Date	Details	Source
Strathcona County	1880s-2011	Soils in Strathcona County are mixed, from poor soils in Beaver Hills to stony at Ardrossan. North of Josephburg, the soil is good, also at Ellerslie, Clover Bar and Bremner.	*Soils Rating Map,* https://www.strathcona.ca/files/files/mdp_map_8_soils.pdf Also, *Edmonton Beneath our Feet*, pp. 43-45 Also, *Beaver Hills Initiative Ecological Primer - What Makes the Beaver Hills So Special?* http://www.beaverhills.ca/media/resources/ecoprimer.pdf
	No date	Varied soils are due to 'knob and kettle' land left by retreating glaciers.	
Ardrossan	No date	Ardrossan area has soil poorer, but it is good for alfalfa for hogs and cattle, also some wheat, oats and barley.	Interview, James Dey by Roger Parker May 12, 1983, Strathcona County Museum and Archives
	No date	Around Ardrossan the soils are poorer than those around Gibbons. But the soils vary greatly in a very short distance. Even within a quarter-section there can be as many as six different soils ranging from loam to yellow clay. Also, the fields are stony.	Interview, James Dey by Roger Parker May 12, 1983, Strathcona County Museum and Archives
	No date	Soils around Edmonton-Clover Bar range from Black to Degraded Black. The Black soils have a depth of about 12 inches. The degraded black soils have a grey leached layer near the surface but are nevertheless relatively fertile. These soils are rich in organic matter and nitrogen. "Legumes and grasses can be grown successfully on these soils and should be included in rotations with cereal crops."	*Alberta Farm Guide* 1959, p. 9
Municipal District of Strathcona No. 83	1959	"Because of their greater moisture efficiency, the black soil areas permit the use of more intensive cropping systems. A full year of summer fallow is costly and not necessary. ... the moister of the deep black soils … lend themselves more to mixed farming and the use of longer rotations involving the growth of coarse grains and forage crops rather than straight grain production. Barley and oats are the best grain crops…"	*Alberta Farm Guide* 1959, p. 31

Soils			
Location	Date	Details	Source
Municipal District of Strathcona No. 83	1959	Recommended oat varieties included Eagle, Garry and Larain; barley varieties included Gateway, Husky and Olli; spring wheat varieties were Saunders and Thatcher; flax varieties included Redwing, Redwood and Rocket.	*Alberta Farm Guide* 1959, p. 45
Municipal District of Strathcona No. 83	1959	Fescue grasses are native to black soil zones and the parkland of central Alberta. "Cultivated forage crops that do best in black soils are creeping red fescue and alfalfa for pasture and brome and alfalfa for hay. Timothy and alfalfa is a high producer for one or two years but drops off badly after that time. The importance of alfalfa cannot be over-emphasized… Alfalfa is particularly important in drier years."	*Alberta Farm Guide* 1959, p. 51

Jurisdiction

The North-West Territorial Legislative Assembly had oversight over agriculture until 1905, when this region became part of the newly formed Province of Alberta. The province created a Department of Agriculture, which became responsible for agriculture, statistics, wildlife management, public health and colonization.

Jurisdiction			
Location	Date	Details	Source
North-West Territories	Pre-1905	Agriculture in what would later be Alberta, including the area around Bremner House, was under the jurisdiction of the North-West Territorial Legislative Assembly until 1905.	
North-West Territories	1886 - 1905	Beginning in 1886, the Federal Department of Agriculture undertook research into plant and animal breeding, diseases, irrigation and drainage and summer fallow at five federal experimental farms across the country. The one at Indian Head, North-West Territories opened in 1887 to "meet the needs of new settlers for reliable information on the best farming methods and practices for local conditions."	https://esask.uregina.ca/tmc_cms/modules/customcode/includes/print_entry.cfm-entryid=73422682-1560-95DA-43EB828219E19A55.jsp
Alberta	1905-1992	The Agriculture Department Act was enacted in 1906. The department was responsible for agriculture, statistics, wildlife management, public health and colonization. Over the years, the department's mandate became more focused. The name of the department was the Department of Agriculture from 1905 to 1992.	*An Administrative History of the Province of Alberta 1905-2005,* p. 47
Alberta	1910-1971	The Publicity Bureau was established within the Department of Agriculture to induce settlers to the province. In 1916 it was amalgamated with the Statistics Branch of the department to become Publicity and Statistics Branch. In 1931 the duties of	*An Administrative History of the Province of Alberta 1905-2005* p.48

Jurisdiction			
Location	Date	Details	Source
		the branch were transferred to the Executive Council. Likewise, the Office of the Chief Game Guardian that had been established in the territorial government and responsible for fire prevention was transferred out in 1941. In 1914 the department established schools of agriculture. These were transferred to the Department of Advanced Education in 1971.	
Alberta	1957-1960	The Farm Purchase Credit Act provided farmers with money to purchase viably economic farm units with Local Farm Purchase Boards.	*An Administrative History of the Government of Alberta 1905-2005*, p. 54

Reserve lands

Cooking Lake Forest Reserve was created in 1892 in response to devastating fires around Beaverhill Lake, as trees were essential for building and fuel. Part of the reserve was used as grazing land, with as many as 6,000 cattle herded down Highway 16 to the reserve each May and back home again in October.

Interesting tidbit—

When cattle died on the grazing reserve, hired hands would cut off the brands to show owners as proof of death.

Reserve lands			
Location	Date	Details	Source
Elk Island National Park south to Miquelon Lake, west along the south end of North Cooking Lake and east to Ross Creek including the Deville and North Cooking Lake districts	1892	The Cooking Lake Forest Reserve was created to protect the forest following the 1892, 1894 and 1895 fires around Beaverhill Lake. Six townships were included in the reserve. Although the earlier fires had not destroyed the forests of Beaver Hills, the 1895 fire did and the federal government set aside 170 square miles as a reserve. When the railway went through in 1909, the Deville-North Cooking Lake district was opened for homesteads. The reserve was reduced to 71,360 acres. By 1917-1918 the number of stock grazed on the reserve was up 180 per cent and in 1921 the government put a limit of 6,000 head of cattle and horses on the reserve with monthly charges.	*Land Among the Lakes*, pp. 33-35
Cooking Lake area	1904	Settlers would travel to the Cooking Lake district to take out logs for their houses.	*Cherished Memories*, p. 678

Reserve lands			
Location	Date	Details	Source
Blackfoot Stockman's Association	No date	Part of the Cooking Lake Forest Reserve was the Blackfoot cattle reserve, also Elk [National] Park. Blackfoot at first consisted of 10,000 acres. Most farmers took their young stock, horses and cattle, to Blackfoot. The ranchers formed the Blackfoot Stockman's Association. The association built a 70-mile fence around the reserve and built pole corrals to hold groups of stock.	*Cherished Memories*, p. 559
Cooking Lake Forest Reserve	1922	The Blackfoot Stockman's Association was established on 30 January as the first community pasture in northern Alberta. The federal government gave permission to fence the area. It cost $1 to join the association. There were about 100 members. To finance the fencing of the 10,000 acres, the association went to the Merchant's Bank in Tofield. When part of the fence was up, the new bank manager called the loan and they ended up in court.	Notes, Reg Marler Collection (*Note: Strathcona County does not have access to the collection and cannot verify the source document.)
Cooking Lake Forest Reserve	No date	According to Albert Bennett, a local resident, the Blackfoot Stockman's Association operated the first community pasture in northern Alberta. W.F. Ward organized the local ranchers. The organization charged $1 membership fee. $12,000 was borrowed from the bank to purchase wire and posts. After some of the fence was built, the bank called in the loan. Eventually, the association paid off the loan. It operated under the name Blackfoot Grazing Association. It hired its own riders and many local men were employed.	Interview, Albert Bennett 12 January 1983, Strathcona County Museum and Archives
Cooking Lake Forest Reserve	No date	The riders were responsible to the tune of $10 a head and had to pay for anything that they could not produce a brand. "If they found anything dead, and everything had to be branded, then they just cut the brand off and keep it and showed it to the owners …"	Interview, Albert Bennett 12 January 1983, Strathcona County Museum and Archives
Cooking Lake Forest Reserve	No date	"There was no round-up pasture on the east side [of the reserve] and we had to bring the east side cattle over to the west side round up pasture to hold them till we had them all in off the big pasture and it was a little rough." Each rancher/farmer was assigned a corral after the round-up.	Interview, Albert Bennett 12 January 1983, Strathcona County Museum and Archives
Cooking Lake Forest Reserve	No date	The reserve is very rough land, but good as pasture land. Dan Baker located a ranch at a spring – Baker Springs. Cattle had water whenever they needed it. There was also Blackfoot Springs with a rancher, "but the government considered the land too poor to farm and those people had to move off."	Interview, Albert Bennett 12 January 1983, Strathcona County Museum and Archives

Reserve lands			
Location	Date	Details	Source
Cooking Lake Forest Reserve	1920s	Farmers and ranchers paid $.25 a ton to hay in the reserve. They would camp for at least a week when cutting hay. They often had a five-foot mower and a dump rake along with a high-wheeled wagon, a rack and tined forks. The upland hay with its peavine and vetch produced the best hay. This was fed to the calves.	Interview, Albert Bennett 12 January 1983, Strathcona County Museum and Archives
Ministik Lake	1920-1930	Other farmers who needed extra pasture drove their stock to Ministik Lake.	Interview, Robert Briggs February 26, 1980, Strathcona County Museum and Archives
Cooking Lake Forest Reserve	No date	Cattle and horse drives were organized for a Saturday in late May. The drive would start at Keith's, gathering up cattle as they proceeded east on Highway 16 with a total of approximately 70-100 head of cattle making up the drive. It was 15 miles to Elk Island's west fence and over four miles south. To help speed up the drive, an all-day affair, people were placed at the gates. At the beginning of the drive, cattle and horses would try to break and return to the home pasture. The farmers branded and dehorned the cattle before the drive. The cattle drivers were on horses. The farmers had to pay to have their livestock graze all summer on the reserve.	"Blackfoot Reserve and the pasture quarters", Reg Marler Collection (*Note: Strathcona County does not have access to the collection and cannot verify the source document.)
Cooking Lake Forest Reserve	1930s	The north side of the west pasture was reserved for TB-tested cattle and horses. There was a divide fence and the only cattle [dairy] that were allowed in had to be tested for TB. Dairy farmers from Clover Bar, Bremner and South Edmonton grazed their cows and heifers, no bulls, there.	Interview, Albert Bennett January 12, 1983, Strathcona County Museum and Archives
Blackfoot Grazing Reserve	1943	Stockmen could be members of the Blackfoot Grazing Reserve Association. Members had to submit a plan for corrals for individual ranchers so that during round-up there was as little confusion as possible. Grazing season, established by the provincial government, closed mid-October. Stockmen were charged $.40 per head of cattle and $.45 for horses. They had to re-apply each year. The reserve had a caretaker who enforced provincial regulations established by the Department of Lands and Mines.	Ottewell Family fonds, box 1, file 6, Series 2, Correspondence 1920-1946, letter from V.A. Wood, Director of Lands, to G.S. Ottewell April 5, 1943, Strathcona County Museum and Archives

Early farms

The typical early homestead was made of logs, with a dirt floor later covered by planks. Farming techniques evolved as settlers learned to cope with preying animals, prairie weather (especially drought and untimely frost) and new equipment (such as seeders and binders). Most early farmers grew a mix of grain (oats, barley, alfalfa, garden produce, etc.) and livestock (beef and dairy cattle, pigs, chickens, lambs, perhaps some horses). Besides feeding the family, diversity served as a hedge against failure in any single commodity. Settlers depended on their neighbours to survive.

Interesting tidbit—

The area's many coyotes and wolves were a major concern in early days, as they preyed on livestock. Farmers used hounds, traps and poison to kill them.

Interesting tidbit—

In 1935, the newly formed Canadian Wheat Board attempted to set the price of wheat at $1.31/bushel, lower than the norm, prompting so much protest that the board raised the price to $2.21/bushel.

Early farms			
Location	Date	Details	Source
Alberta	1880s	"Late seeding, drought, early fall frosts and simple mistakes such as sowing seed broadcast on the surface of the soil, where it shrivelled in the hot sun, were a source of disillusionment to many. Thus, the mid-1880s were a nightmare to pioneers while crop experimentation proceeded."	Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies A History,* p. 222
Alberta	1880s	Before seed drills were used widely, seed was sown broadcast from wheelbarrow seeders, knapsack-type rotation seeders (hand-powered and carried using shoulder straps, or an end-gate seeder (attached to the rear end of a wagon box).	Andersen, "A History of Seeding Practices," p. 23
Alberta	1880s-1890s	Early seed drillers were the press drill, shoe drill and the hoe (or common) drill by the late 1890s.	Andersen, "A History of Seeding Practices," p. 17
Strathcona County	No date	The first variety of wheat grown was Red Fife, then Marquis. Banner and Victory were early varieties of oats that were grown. These have been dropped in favour of new strains that are rust-resistant, early maturing and high yielding.	Interview, Robert Briggs 26 February 1980, Strathcona County Museum and Archives
Parkland	1880-1910	First homes usually small log house with either sod or sapling roof with hand sawn shingles. Dirt floors were replaced with floor boards when time and money permitted.	Myers, *Facing the Land*, pp. 20-35

Early farms			
Location	Date	Details	Source
North-West Territories	1885	In 1885 the federal government gave notice that settlers requiring to cut hay on Crown land had to pay for the privilege. There were no instructions, though, regarding the cutting of hay on land belonging to the Edmonton and Saskatchewan Land Company. The land company's agent had no authority to grant permission to settlers to cut the hay, either. One settler, who had been on his land before the existence of the land company, proceeded to cut hay, was arrested and fined heavily. Later, the issue was clarified by the declaration that homestead lands within the land company's tract belonged to the land company.	*Edmonton Bulletin,* 10 December 1887, p. 3
Clover Bar	No date	Sometimes Syd Ottewell needed to pasture his cattle and horses elsewhere for which he was charged $6.56 on seven cattle and one horse.	Ottewell Family fonds, Box 1, file 1, Series 2 Correspondence, Strathcona County Museum and Archives
Alberta	1880-1910	The land first had to be cleared of trees and shrubs. It was physically demanding work for man and beast. Many used oxen rather than horses because oxen were cheaper. Implement manufacturers offered a range of breaking ploughs to suit different types of soil.	Myers, *Facing the Land,* pp. 20-35
Alberta	1880-1910	Sulky ploughs and two- or three-bottom gang ploughs made breaking the land faster. Ploughs were pulled by bigger and bigger steam traction engines. The engines were expensive, up to $3,000, but they could also pull gang ploughs, packers, seed drills and harrows. Breaking 10 hectares a day was the norm. Steam engines and ploughs was too expensive for most farmers so they relied on entrepreneurial custom ploughmen who went from farm to farm for about $4 an acre.	Tingley, *Steel and Steam,* p. 11-28
Alberta	1880-1910	Once the land was broken, the soil had to be disked or harrowed to prepare for seeding. A settler used a fanning mill to clean his seed before planting. He may have broadcast seed at first before purchasing a seed drill. With so much to be done, there was an exchange of labour and machinery, all helping to build community.	Myers, *Facing the Land*, pp. 20-35
Alberta	1880-1910	Time was of the essence as settlers had to get a crop in so they could begin earning money.	Tingley, *Steel and Steam,* p. 3

Early farms			
Location	Date	Details	Source
South Edmonton	1893	Farming was risky due to frosts. James Lay who had a small farm in South Edmonton wrote: "The summer frost is bad here. I have not seen a good sample of wheat but have seen a great many frozen ones. …I think there is a living here at mixed farming but I do not see where the market will be when the country gets full of farmers and all have cattle to sell; it is far from the outside market; the same with wheat. A number of cattle died this winter and some of the native horses were out that will never return. …Well I must tell you if a man comes here to get rich at farming in a year or two, he has come to the wrong place."	*Edmonton Bulletin,* May 29, 1893
Edmonton district	1893	Ploughing had begun on the 24 and 25 April. "The principal hindrance is the wetness of the ground, which is not a bad fault."	*Edmonton Bulletin*, April 27, 1893
Edmonton district	1893	"Seeding is in full swing all over this district. …Although the season has opened late there is every prospect that growth will commence earlier than usual. The great danger in this western country is the drying nature of the spring weather up to the latter part of May when rain begins to fall. The earlier the spring opens the longer time there is for the ground to dry out and so stunt and delay early growth. With the ground full of moisture as it is now unless the weather should be altogether remarkable there is not time for the ground to dry out before the commencement of the rains. It will be noticed that this is one of the seasons in which the farmer with a lot of fall plowing done is away in the lead."	*Edmonton Bulletin*, May 1, 1893
South Edmonton	1893	Share farming was expensive: James Lay paid $.50 an acre to have his land sowed, $1 an acre to plough the land in the fall, $15 to have others stook, $28.15 for threshing, $2 for wood for threshing, and $10 for harrowing.	*Edmonton Bulletin,* 29 May 1893

Early farms			
Location	Date	Details	Source
Salisbury district	1895-1930s	Henry Ball and his family homesteaded in what is now the south part of Sherwood Park and several quarters in the Fultonvale district. Other members of the family came from PEI and Oklahoma. They engaged in mixed farming. They grew at least 10 acres of potatoes that they sold, in part, to Eaton's groceteria, for which they received credit notes. After Ed married in 1937, he worked out building roads and snow clearing as well as operating a mixed farm: four cows, chickens, turkeys, pigs and hogs, and shipping cream to the creamery. He hired himself out to neighbours to crush grain into chop. The George Ball farm became a local landmark when the Balls built windmill on their farm. They used the windmill to pump water into a holding tank in the attic of their three-storey house. George Ball entered his prize animals in livestock shows, first in 1904. He won a blue ribbon for the pig and red ribbon for the cow. He went on to exhibit and take many prizes over the years. Also he was President of Sheep, Swine and Cattle Breeders Associations. In 1931 George and a son, Bob, went on a Western Fair tour with 60 of their sheep and swine. They took 161 prizes. They even exhibited at the Royal Winter Fair in Toronto.	Ball Family fonds, *passim*, Strathcona County Museum and Archives
Strathcona County	1900-1915	Coyotes were a nuisance, taking out sheep and chickens. Wolves took down older cattle and weaker horses. Some people, like Bremner, used staghounds to chase down and kill coyotes. Others used the native method of trapping coyotes. If this did not work, settlers poisoned them with strychnine. Prices for fur dropped during the First World War.	*Cherished Memories,* p. 622 for detail on trapping.
Strathcona County	1902-1917	Coyotes were very numerous. The Marler family killed as many as 125 in a winter. The pelts sold for $5, $30 for large pelts.	*Cherished Memories,* p. 533
Clover Bar area	1901	The first grain binder in the district belonged to R.P. Ottewell.	*Cherished Memories*, p. 349
Clover Bar area	1909	Thomas Daly, an early pioneer, won the prize for oats at the Paris Exposition. Daly was also the first to grow apples.	Berry, "Clover Bar in the Making," p. 8

Early farms			
Location	Date	Details	Source
Clover Bar area	1909	Ernest Swift offered Syd Ottewell 700 or 800 bushels of Swedish milling seed "the same kind as you raised on 17 when we lived there. These oats tested 99 per cent Gov. test and took 1st prize in Ed Grain Fest in Nov. You can see the oats in Sec office of the Fair or Board of Trade office." Swift was willing to sell the seed oats at $.40 per bushel F.O.B. Innisfree, sacks $.10 extra.	Ottewell Family fonds, letter from Swift to Ottewell 15 January 1909, Box 1, file 2, Series 2 Correspondence, Strathcona County Museum and Archives
Clover Bar area	circa 1910	Even as late as 1910, much of the land was still bush with large poplar trees.	Interview, Cyrus Wilkinson by Robert Briggs 6 July 1979, Strathcona County Museum and Archives
Uncas district	1910s	Children milked the cows before going to Strathcona County school. The garden kept the family in vegetables and root crops for a whole year. There were lots of partridges, ducks, prairie chickens and deer to hunt and fish in the creeks and lakes. Fish were preserved in a salt brine. Homesteaders and farmers churned their own butter; some of the stores would take the butter on groceries.	Interview, Albert Bennett January 12, 1983, Strathcona County Museum and Archives
Alberta	1910s	"Loss from coyotes often prevents men from engaging in the sheep business. This is more particularly true in those parts of the Province where there is willow brush or small timber."	Swindlehurst, *Alberta's Schools of Agriculture,* p. 38
Alberta	1910	Dry land farming techniques of turning the sod, flattening the sods and then disking and then harrowing were in practise by 1910. 1910 was the year of the first serious drought and the fallacy of dry land techniques became apparent.	Tingley, *Steel and Steam,* pp. 4-9
Clover Bar	1910	Steam outfits that pulled up to nine ploughs were used to clear land.	Berry, "Clover Bar in the Making," p. 10
Clover Bar area	1910	Settlers always engaged in mixed farming – some hogs, chickens, cows both beef (Shorthorn) and dairy, and grain farming. Mixed farming was seen as a hedge. If one sector failed or had poor prices, the other sectors would even out the family income.	Interview, Don and Helen Jackson by Robert Briggs, 14 August 1985, Strathcona County Museum and Archives

Early farms			
Location	Date	Details	Source
Clover Bar - Fort Saskatchewan	1912	Farmers were still trying to grow fall wheat. It was not until the early years of the First World War that farmers started to grow spring wheat in the Edmonton district.	Interview, Bruce Bocock by Naomi Radford 19 December 1967 Provincial Archives of Alberta GR1967.0307-1 and -2
Strathcona County	1912	Hogs for butchering sold for $.525 a pound live weight.	*Cherished Memories*, p. 614
Clover Bar area	circa 1912	Harry Horton sold sugar for $1.25 for 20 pounds; flour was $2.75 to $3.50 per hundredweight. The high cost of processed food was alleviated by wild game – ducks, deer, prairie chickens and moose.	*Cherished Memories*, pp. 614-615
Alberta	1914	By the First World War the shoe seed drill was best on clean, well prepared fields and was in general use in older settled districts.	Andersen, "A History of Seeding Practices" p. 20
Alberta	1914	By the First World War small tractors were replacing horses. These tractors had names such as Titan, Happy Farmer and Mogul, and were used for light jobs around the farm. The Bococks had a Titan. Two men had to ride the plough platform to lift and set in the ploughs individually at the each end of the field. Titan had no cooling fan so it needed about three barrels of water. The Bococks got water from the river with team and wagon. Also they used tractors to break land.	Berry, "Clover Bar in the Making," p. 10. Also, Bocock, "A Tale for the Telling," pp. 50, 101; Myers, *When the Whistle Blows*, pp. 20-24
Clover Bar area	1916	Wheat sold for $2.50-$3.00 a bushel. One of the elevator agents at Bremner gave $3.05, the highest ever. (When the Canadian Wheat Board was set up in 1935, it set the price of wheat at $1.31 per bushel at Fort William. The farmers protested so much that the board raised the price to $2.21.)	*Cherished Memories*, p. 623
Clover Bar area	1918	Eggs sold for $.31 per dozen; cream was $.28 per pound. The selling price for livestock and grain: $2.30 per chicken; $31.56 per hog; $1.97 per bushel of wheat $.73 per bushel of oats, $1.16 per bushel of barley.	"Andrew Bodell" Tax Returns of 1918, Reg Marler Collection (*Note: Strathcona County does not have access to the collection and cannot verify the source document.)

Early farms			
Location	Date	Details	Source
Clover Bar	1918	A local farmer, Mr. Leon Abbot, says: "The pasture is rich and nutritious, feed is easily and cheaply raised, and climatic conditions are favourable. I am using Shorthorn grades. These milk well, and the steer calves are worth raising. I look on the $75 or $80 apiece I get for my steers as practically found money as they cost little or nothing to raise, eating principally feed which would otherwise be wasted." Cattle could be wintered at almost no cost.	Edmonton Board of Trade, p. 21
Edmonton district	1918	Barley grew well, "the yield is big and the grain is remarkably plump and heavy."	Edmonton Board of Trade, p. 23
Strathcona County	1920-1930s	The Ball family hauled grain to United Grain Growers' elevator with horses and also to the new Wheat Pool elevator built close to Nisku at the Weis siding. The family grew at least 10 acres of potatoes that they hauled to the elevator to be shipped out.	Ball Family fonds, *passim*, Strathcona County Museum and Archives
Strathcona County	1920-1940s	Farmers grew brome grass, flax, alfalfa and mixed with slough or upland hay and used them for feed. Some sowed sunflowers for silage in the 1920s but meant heavy work.	Interview, Robert Briggs 26 February 1980, Strathcona County Museum and Archives
Clover Bar	1920	Each family depended on their garden to see them through the winters, along with preserves, jams and jellies made from the wild fruit. Chokecherry jelly, mustard pickles of cauliflower, cucumber and onions were canned.	Interview, Don and Helen Jackson by Robert Briggs August 14, 1985, Strathcona County Museum and Archives
Clover Bar	No date	A.R. Gillies was the first to own a Caterpillar tractor, 65 h.p. that could plough a 12'-wide strip of land. John Schroter and W.R. Mills followed suit.	Bocock, "A Tale for the Telling," p. 47
Clover Bar area	1922	This was one of the driest years on record.	Bocock, "A Tale for the Telling," p. 74
Clover Bar	1923-1945	"In 1923 my father [Charles Briggs] bought a team of purebred Clydesdale mares. From these, many colts were raised until in the 1930s to 1945 they were using about fourteen horses in field work and almost all were Clydes that we had raised from colts."	Interview, Robert Briggs 26 February 1980, Strathcona County Museum and Archives

Early farms			
Location	Date	Details	Source
Salisbury district	1927	Edward Ball at age 15 had permission to stay home from school for a few days to plant 40 acres of potatoes for Pete Yohemas at $1 an acre. Although the family had a Twin City tractor, they also used horses. As a teen, Edward Ball always worked the summer fallow with eight horses on a tractor tandem disk and six horses on a three-bottom tractor plough, both very difficult rigs.	Ball Family fonds, *passim*, Strathcona County Museum and Archives
Edmonton district	1931	It was easy to rent land because much land around Edmonton had been bought on speculation by oil companies and individuals.	Interview, Don and Helen Jackson by Robert Briggs August 14, 1985, Strathcona County Museum and Archives
Clover Bar area	1936	Roy Marler built a small house for a married couple who he hired to care for his dairy herd. They had to milk 26 cows by hand twice a day and do all the cow chores. They were paid $75 a month.	Notes, Reg Marler Collection. (*Note: Strathcona County does not have access to the collection and cannot verify the source document.) Also, interview, Reg Marler by Jane Ross June 25, 2011
Prairie provinces	Late 1930s	The agriculture industry manufactured tillers that farmers used alongside their old steel-wheeled tractors.	Interview, Reg Marler by Jane Ross, 25 June 2011
Alberta	1938	The placement of juvenile delinquents on farms was seen as beneficial to child and farmer.	Alberta, Department of Agriculture Provincial Archives of Alberta 73.307, file 228 letter from District Agriculturalist to D.B. Millen, Minister of Agriculture 24 November 1938
Strathcona County	1939	This was a dry year for the farmers.	Interview, Reg Marler by Jane Ross, 25 June 2011

Early farms			
Location	Date	Details	Source
Edmonton area	1965	There was at least one request for information to the Department of Agriculture regarding establishing a mixed farm of beef and dairy cattle and swine. The department advised that the breed was not as important as the quality and price of the animals.	Alberta, Department of Agriculture PAA, District Agriculturalist and General Correspondence, letter from W.C. Gordon Live Stock Supervisor to W.M. Kuhn January 11, 1965

Hay

In the days when horses powered farm machinery, hay was the most important crop because it fueled that horsepower. But haying was arduous work, especially before loose haystacks gave way to automatic bailers in 1944 and beyond.

Hay			
Location	Date	Details	Source
Prairie provinces	1880-1930s	Hay was the most important crop because it fed the horses. Therefore, it had a perceived cash value. Haying was a long, arduous job. It was cut by mowers, and left to cure. Later, it was raked in piles by dump rakes and then loaded by hand onto slings on racks for transportation to the barn, where it was hoisted up to the loft by slings.	Rogers, "Hay Harvesting Equipment," p. 1
	1900s	Hay loaders were introduced in the early 1900s. Later, the sweep and haystacker combination was favoured for its low cost and simplicity. Hay was gathered with sweep rakes attached to the stacker. The stacker lifted the hay to the top of the stack where one or two men on top of the stack laid the hay. This method of stacking prevailed until the 1950s. "Loose hay during this period was much more economical than baled hay which was baled only at this time if it was to be shipped a long distance."	Rogers, "Hay Harvesting Equipment," p. 4
	1880-1940s	Farmers preferred horses in haying operation to tractors because horses were used to it, and horses did not trample the hay as did the tractor.	Rogers, "Hay Harvesting Equipment," p. 4
	1880-1920s	Equipment needed for haying: mowers, hay rakes, hay loaders, sweep rakes, hay stackers, balers or hay presses, slings. These were purchased by farmers over time.	Rogers, "Hay Harvesting Equipment," p. 1

Hay			
Location	Date	Details	Source
	1900-1950	Hay harvesting crews were common and were employed until the pick-up baler was introduced in the 1950s.	Rogers, "Hay Harvesting Equipment," p. 4
Alberta	1880-1940	Most hay was gathered using horse-powered machinery. Hand sickles or scythes and hay rakes were used only in very wet areas. Horse-drawn mowers were mostly two-horse mowers with five- to seven-foot cutter bars. One-horse mowers had a three- to four-foot cutter bar. Heavy duty mowers were introduced in 1910. Mowers needed daily sharpening. Hay could only be mowed after morning dew dried. Swath hay took two days to cure to lower moisture content enough to allow stacking. Gathering cured hay was done with a dump rake, the design of which remained unchanged to 1950s. Piles of hay were then "pitch forked" onto a hayrack and hauled to the stack or barn. This was very time consuming so farmers, when they were financially able, purchased a sweep rake. Most were homemade using plans from the Dominion Experimental Farm at Brandon, Manitoba but they could be purchased. Hay stacks were built layer by layer. Well-cured hay was flammable and many farmers ploughed seven or eight furrows around their stacks. Stacking was tough, dangerous work and required large numbers of men. Most custom outfits used a baler that compressed the hay to between 1/4 and 1/8 of its original bulk. The bales had to be hand tied. The switch from horse power to tractor power happened very quickly due to labour shortages during the Second World War. Most horse-powered machinery could be adapted to tractor power. New equipment like the combined hay sweep and stacker cut time and manpower. Automatic balers came on the market in 1944.	Larmour, *Making Hay While the Sun Shone,* pp. 4-27
Strathcona County	1916	The Edmonton Board of Trade extolled the benefits of mixed farming. Native grasses such as wild peavine and vetch were valuable for pasturage and hay.	Edmonton Board of Trade, p. 17
	1920	Hay was in short supply and prices high. During the early 1930s, the Alberta Government bought surplus hay for export.	Larmour, *Making Hay While the Sun Shone,* p. 28
	1920-1940s	In the early days, there was always a market for hay in the city. Timothy hay was in demand for horse feed and many farmers grew a field of it.	Interview, Robert Briggs 26 February 1980, Strathcona County Museum and Archives

Threshing

Some farmers purchased equipment and did threshing for hire. Harvest days were especially busy for farm women, who provided meals for large teams of hungry workers, including young boys pulled out of school to help.

Interesting tidbit—

Threshing operators developed a code of toots to communicate with wagon drivers and other crew members. It was a source of pride to be the first outfit in the neighbourhood to give a starting toot in the morning.

Threshing			
Location	Date	Details	Source
Central Alberta	1900-1930s	Threshing was done by big steam outfits with perhaps 10 stook teams, two spike pitchers helping the teamsters unload the sheaves into the separator and two field pitchers helping to top off the loads in the field. Three or four teams hauled the threshed grain; another team hauled water for the steam engine and some outfits used straw for fuel, which would take another team. Altogether, with the engineer and separator man, there were often twenty and sixteen teams. It was no small feat to feed this many people for three or four days. The separator man and the engineer were paid extra. The Fosher brothers, who rented a farm by the river, had a steam outfit. They used mules instead of horses.	Berry, "Clover Bar in the Making," p. 10. Also, Bocock, "A Tale for the Telling," p. 50, 101; Myers, *When the Whistle Blows*, pp. 20-24
Central Alberta	1900-1930s	Threshing evokes memories of teamwork, excitement, and sense of the phases in agricultural cycle. Most farmers could not afford own steam thresher so they relied on custom thresher men who charged a set amount per bushel. Custom thresher men remained part of the landscape until the 1930s. Small crops could be stack threshed. Larger crops had to be stook threshed where sheaves were hauled to the separator from their stooks in the field.	Myers, *When the Whistle Blows,* p. 1-7
Central Alberta	1900-1940s	Threshing was an extremely busy time for women who had to prepare three sit down meals plus two lunches taken to the field for 10 to 12 very hungry men.	Myers, *When the Whistle Blows*, p. 28
Central Alberta	1900-1930s	Threshing demanded large work crews. The railways ran "harvest excursion" trains that brought thousands of men from eastern Canada to bring in the harvest. The provincial government worked with the railways to get workers where they were needed.	Myers, *When the Whistle Blows,* p. 28

Threshing			
Location	Date	Details	Source
Clover Bar area	1902	The Clover Bar Threshing Company had 10 or 12 farmers who bought a J.I. Case tractor-steamer and a separator that had no blower. The company did custom threshing for four or five years.	Interview, Cyrus Wilkinson by Robert Briggs 6 July 1979, Strathcona County Museum and Archives
Clover Bar	1900-1910	Syd Ottewell and George Uren had a threshing outfit, "a J.I. Case, 28 inch separator, hand fed with a straw carrier. It was run by a stationary steam engine that had to be pulled by horses. The separator had to be manned with two band cutters and one feeder, and one or two men were on the straw stack." "…One man had a water tank and team to haul water to the engine. The engine was fired with straw…When they were threshing from stooks there were also several bundle racks which meant 20 to 27 men working on the outfit."	*Cherished Memories,* p. 605
Clover Bar	1910	"The grain was threshed by the three bushel bags and as I recall the price was 10¢ per bag. The bagman had a tally board above the bagger and kept track by moving pegs on the board to represent 5¢, 10¢, 100¢ and 1000¢."	*Cherished Memories* p. 679
Strathcona County	1913	Young boys around age 12 were often pulled from school to help with the harvest, using a four-horse team to pick up the stooks. They were also responsible for feeding and cleaning the horses, harnessing them, cleaning the barn, all before breakfast. Often most children got barely a Grade eight education as their labour was needed on the farm. A 12-year old boy was also expected to harrow and disk. Harrows were about nine feet long with two horses pulling them. On a half-mile field, they had to do 10 rounds in the morning and 11 rounds in the afternoon, for a total of 21 miles a day until seeding was finished.	*Cherished Memories,* p. 620
Strathcona County	1932	Wallace Ball bought his first threshing machine in 1932 and did custom threshing in the neighbourhood as far west to what is now 50th Street, Edmonton. When threshing at home, they baled wheat straw and hauled it with the horses to Gainers plant, the University farms and the City barns on 95 Street and 1045 Avenue. They sold a bale of straw for $.50. Loose straw went to Swifts and Gainers plants every two or three weeks at $.75 a load. They also sold split firewood to private homes at $5 a load.	Ball Family fonds, *passim*, Strathcona County Museum and Archives

Threshing			
Location	Date	Details	Source
Strathcona County	No date	"There were several steam operated threshing machines in the area, east and south of Edmonton from 1895 on and each one seemed to have an area staked out with a gentleman's agreement basis and they pretty well took care of all the farms in that area. …We always had to provide fuel for the steam engine consisting of a cord or two of dry wood and possibly a wagon box load of coal, which was hauled from the Clover Bar mines. Any of the left-over was used in the house. Wood for the steamer engine was cut in four foot lengths and was either cut smaller for house use or left piled for the next year. Steam threshing time was always fascinating for me as a boy. Sometimes we could hear as many as four outfits threshing as sound carried far in the still fall air. There was always some rivalry between the outfits and the engineers usually tooted the steam engine whistle as soon as they'd steam up in the morning to let everyone know that they were ready to thresh! And during the day you could always hear the whistles giving the various signals – so many toots to warn the waterman that they were running low on water as he had to go to any water source he could get to, either soughs or creeks, to fill up his water tank. Other signals were for fuel or the need of a grain wagon with empty sacks as all the grain was sacked at the machine, either in the wagon boxes or on the ground. And the farmer had to take care of the grain and this made it necessary to exchange help with neighbours. The threshing crews all knew throughout the years where they could get the best meals and the places to spread out their bedrolls. It must have been quite a chore for my mother at threshing time getting all the food prepared for the family and all the crew which could vary anywhere from ten to fourteen men. It must have taken a lot of preparation ahead of time as they never knew for what meal a threshing crew would arrive. The result was that the threshers would often be fed very freshly killed beef. …Dried peaches and apples were always available and kept on hand in those early years. Some of the first threshing machines in the area were hand-fed machines with a straw carrier in the rear. These were run by horsepower using six to eight horses or a portable steam engine. Then came the larger separators with automatic feeders and straw blowers and operated by a steam tractor."	Interview, Robert Briggs 26 February 1980, Strathcona County Museum and Archives

Threshing			
Location	Date	Details	Source
Strathcona County	No date	Harvest was a busy time for everyone. Those into mixed farming had to do the barn chores in the morning before going to the fields to thresh and more chores after threshing was done for the day. They tried to thresh from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.	Interview, James Dey by Roger Parker 12 May 1983, Strathcona County Museum and Archives

Tractors

Tractors began appearing in the 1890s and evolved from lumbering and unreliable gasoline or kerosene fueled giants to smaller steam-powered tractors too light for heavy work. Tractors continued to improve, but war and the Depression both complicated the shift away from four-legged horsepower. Horses continued to be used for some jobs into the 1950s.

Tractors			
Location	Date	Details	Source
Alberta	1880-1910	New settlers found that the farming techniques in Ontario, Britain etc. were not suited to drier Alberta climate. By 1900 new tillage procedures were aimed at conserving water, weed control. Now there were new wheat varieties such as Red Fife.	Tingley, *Steel and Steam* pp. 4-11
Prairie provinces	1890-1914	Steam traction engines reached the height of their technological development by the First World War.	Myers, *When the Whistle Blows* p. 15
Prairie provinces	1890-1914	"These early kerosene or gasoline fuelled tractors were lumbering giants that delivered great power but which packed the earth over which they moved, or became mired when the soil was soft or wet. They were expensive to acquire and to operate, and they were notoriously unreliable. Farmers were intrigued by the new technology but with the exception of a few adventurous souls, they were reluctant to buy it."	Gordon, "Agricultural Tractors in Alberta since 1925" p. 1
Prairie provinces	1890-1914	Steam traction engines were available in the 1890s onward and by the First World War, internal combustion tractors were available.	Gordon, "Agricultural Tractors in Alberta since 1925" p. 1
Prairie provinces	1890-1914	"The most popular of the early general purpose tractors was the Titan 10-20."	Gordon, "Agricultural Tractors in Alberta since 1925" p. 12
Alberta	1920	Small, light gasoline tractors were introduced by the First World War but even as late as 1920 only 12 per cent of Alberta farms had tractors. Nevertheless, they heralded the mechanization of farming. The Fordson tractor was too small and light to do any of the heavy farm work so horses were still needed.	Tingley, *Steel and Steam* p. 29. Also, interview, Reg Marler by Jane Ross April 5, 2011

Tractors			
Location	Date	Details	Source
Alberta	mid-1920s	As the economy recovered from the post-war recession, farmers bought Rumley Oil Pull—a heavy tractor designed to burn all kerosene grades—that they used with their threshing machines.	Interview, Reg Marler by Jane Ross June 25, 2011
Prairie provinces	1914-1930	"Almost without exception, the farmer who went shopping for a tractor in Alberta in any year before 1930 was looking for a machine that would supplement his horses as a source of draft power, not replace them."	Gordon, "Agricultural Tractors in Alberta since 1925" p. 12
Alberta	1930-1950	Horses, though, continued to be used on farms until the 1950s while others bought their first tractor in the late 1930s or during the Second World War. Some of the first tractors were the Rumleys, but they were slow. Reg Marler's father bought a 2236 International with a three bottom plough.	Interview, George Jenkins by Jane Ross 1 and 8 March 2011. Also, interview, Robert Briggs 26 February 1980, Strathcona County Museum and Archives; interview, Reg Marler by Jane Ross April 5, 2011
Alberta	1930s	"The onset of the great depression caused a sharp decline in the rate of tractor sales in the province, but … by the middle of the decade the number of machines sold was increasing spectacularly. The trend continued into the war years of the 1940s." Reasons: technological improvements and disappearance of farm labour.	Gordon, "Agricultural Tractors in Alberta since 1925" p. ii
Alberta	1930s	Due to the low prices for farm produce, many farmers stopped using their tractors and reverted to farming with horses. Clydesdale stallions were shipped in from Salmon Arm, B.C., for the breeding season. Then in 1935 or 1936, a group of farmers formed a stallion club to ensure that a stallion was in the area. The club bought a "very good blue roan Clyde stallion from the government farm at Agassiz, B.C."	Interview, Robert Briggs 26 February 1980, Strathcona County Museum and Archives
Alberta	1930s	Because of low prices for farm produce, Alberta farmers were having a hard time to remain competitive on the world market. The Alberta Clydesdale Horse Breeders' Association made a pitch to the federal government to revert to horse-powered machinery that was cheaper than buying expensive machinery, and it would give people work.	Alberta, Department of Agriculture Provincial Archives of Alberta 73.307, file 164 letter from W. Moodie of the Alberta Clydesdale Horse Breeders' Association to Robert Weir, Minister of Agriculture, Ottawa, 27 December 1930

Tractors			
Location	Date	Details	Source
Alberta	1930s	There were about 18,000 tractors in use in Alberta. Each tractor displaced one six-horse team. Therefore, 18,000 tractors displaced 108,000 horses.	Alberta, Department of Agriculture Provincial Archives of Alberta 73.307, file 164 Passing of the Horse
Alberta	1930s	Six horses were required per half section if the whole were under cultivation. A farm of a section and a half could be worked with 12 horses (two six-horse units or three four-horse units.)	Interview, Reg Marler by Jane Ross April 5, 2011
Prairie provinces	1920-1940s	"In broadly comparative terms, the one plough tractor produced the same draft power as a four horse team; the two plough the equivalent of eight horses; the three plough tractor that of fourteen horses; the four plough the equivalent of eighteen horses and the five plough tractor the power of a twenty-one horse team." One or two quarter-sections required a one-plough tractor; a two-plough tractor was needed for a farm of 320 to 480 acres.	Gordon, "Agricultural Tractors in Alberta since 1925", p. 19

War and the Depression

Global forces impacted farmers in and around Bremner in the early decades of the 20th century. With two world wars bookending the 1930s Depression, settlers had new challenges to face.

Topics covered:

First World War. Even as they mourned sons lost to war, area farmers benefited in some ways from wartime policies. Many sold grain, flour, dairy products and more to European countries buffeted by wartime scarcity. When income tax was instituted to aid the war effort, farmers could write off expenses. Also, returning soldiers who wanted to become farmers received federal assistance to get started.

The 1930s Depression. Prices plummeted during the Depression, as did the quality of breeding stock, raising fears that a decade of gain would be lost, limiting access to export markets.

Second World War. A Prices and Trade Board rationed and set prices for sugar, dairy products and honey. Scarcity of tires and gasoline caused some farmers to shift to horses, but then back to tractors due to labour shortages.

First World War			
Location	Date	Details	Source
Clover Bar	1914-1918	Crops were good in 1916 and 1917, and relatively new farms were able to boast of several binders and several four-horse outfits to work. Threshing was still done by contract, some in Fort Saskatchewan doing the trade with a Case steamer with a 36-inch separator.	*Cherished Memories*, p. 622.
Canada	1914	"The War Office … requested the Canadian Government to purchase, prepare for shipment and forward to France, large quantities of hay, oats and flour. …The hay had to be recompressed into bales of great density, the oats and flour packed in 80 pound bags. We handled nearly one million tons of hay, 76 million bushels of oats and 12 million bags of flour."	Alberta, Department of Agriculture, Dairy Branch Provincial Archives of Alberta 67.21, file 5 Forty One Years in the Dominion Dairy Branch by Dr. J. A. Ruddick, Dairy Commissioner
Canada	1917	Income tax was introduced as a temporary tax to aid in the war effort.	
Canada	1918	On the new income tax forms, farmers could write off binder twine, fence and building repairs, fuel and oil for machinery, hired help wages, threshing fees, board for hired help. As well they could write off depreciation on farm building, machinery and work horses.	"Andrew Boddell income tax return 1918", Reg Marler Collection (*Note: Strathcona County does not have access to the collection and cannot verify the source document.)

First World War			
Location	Date	Details	Source
Canada	1920	The Soldier Settlement Board was established following the First World War to help those wishing to start up a farm. The board also was to "advise and assist settlers in the management of their farms so that maximum returns to the settler may be received for the capital invested and the labour expended and the Board's risk." Syd Ottewell was a Field Supervisor responsible for the placement of settlers. He also worked to ensure their success. After settlement the Field Supervisor assessed settled soldiers by placing them into "good" or "uncertain risk" categories. Those who failed to meet their due payment were weeded out of the program.	Ottewell Family fonds, box 1, file 3, Series 2, Correspondence, letter to S. Ottewell from the Soldier Settlement Board 9 December 1920, Strathcona County Museum and Archives
Canada	1920	The Department of Agriculture helped resettled soldiers by ordering hay from hay wholesalers in Ontario or grain companies like Gillespie Elevator Company Ltd. The department also sold livestock and equipment to returning soldiers.	Alberta, Department of Agriculture Provincial Archives of Alberta 73.307, file 163 letter from F.D. Helps to H.A. Craig, Deputy Minister of Agriculture 20 April, 1920; also invoice from Gillespie Elevator Co. Ltd. To H.A. Craig 30 April 1919

The 1930s Depression			
Location	Date	Details	Source
Prairie provinces	1931	Price of wheat plummeted to $.32 per bushel.	Berry, "Clover Bar in the Making," p. 10
Alberta	1932	"The tendency, as a result of the depression, is to get along without the use of good sires, and the quality of the herds and flocks of the country is likely to greatly deteriorate. So serious has this become that there is a likelihood that much of the progress made in the past ten years in building up the quality of livestock will be lost. … Further, when conditions do improve, it will take much of the next period of good prices to get livestock back to its former standard. As a consequence, the farmers of Alberta will not be able to supply the quality necessary to secure the top grades and prices and they will not be in a position to supply a quality acceptable to the export trade." This might have been in response to cuts coming in the government because this is followed by a plea not to cut field staff as "the results are bound to be far-reaching."	Alberta, Department of Agriculture Provincial Archives of Alberta 73.307, file 176 memorandum from G.M. Cormie, Poultry Commissioner to H.A. Craig, Deputy Minister 10 November 1932

Second World War			
Location	Date	Details	Source
Britain	Pre-1939	Before the war, Britain imported about 70 per cent of shell eggs used. After the outbreak of war, Britain found that due to curtailment of imports of feeds, the number of home flocks had to be drastically reduced.	Alberta, Department of Agriculture Provincial Archives of Alberta 73.307, file 180 memorandum from C.W. Traves, Poultry Commissioner to O.S. Longman, Deputy Minister of Agriculture 15 March 1944

Second World War			
Location	Date	Details	Source
Canada	1939-1945	The Wartime Prices and Trade Board sent coupons for the maximum amount of sugar that each household could have for home canning.	Ottewell Family fonds, box 1, file 3, Series 2, Correspondence 1920-1946, letter from the Wartime Prices and Trade Board to Ottewell, no date, Strathcona County Museum and Archives
Canada	1939	Wartime Prices and Trade Board fixed the price of butter so as not to harm exports to Britain. The fixed price could not be too low or else butter production will drop. "The arbitrary fixing of prices at levels that discourage production may have a serious effect on Canada's war effort and arouse discontent among producers who already see farm labor flocking to industry where wages are more attractive."	Alberta, Department of Agriculture Provincial Archives of Alberta 73.307, file 199 Press Notice re: Price of Butter
Alberta	No date	At the upcoming Alberta Dairy Convention "Alberta Dairymen will obtain a better understanding of the responsibilities of the Dairy Industry under the strain of war conditions. … fats may become one of the [food] essentials, as was the case in the last war." But it takes time to build and increase dairy production. Therefore, dairymen needed to be given some guesstimates on the probable demand for dairy products, and the returns he might expect. "Cheese will probably be the form in which the largest volume of Canadian milk will be demanded by the Mother Country [and] the price of cheese will be the barometer of expansion in other branches of dairy production."	Alberta, Department of Agriculture Provincial Archives of Alberta 73.307, file 200 "The Dairy Industry in Peace and War"
Canada	1939-1945	War time restrictions on gasoline and rubber tires forced a continued return to horse-powered farm machinery.	Alberta, Department of Agriculture Provincial Archives of Alberta 73.307, file 166 letter from E.D. Adams, the Alberta Thoroughbred Horse Association to Hon D.B. MacMillan, Minister of Agriculture, 25 March 1944
Canada	1939-1945	Despite gasoline rationing, labour shortages forced the agriculture industry and producers to switch from horse to tractors. The industry manufactured heavier tractors that now did all the work around a farm.	Interview, Reg Marler by Jane Ross June 25, 2011

Second World War			
Location	Date	Details	Source
Canada	1939-1945	The Wartime Price and Trade Board had exclusive jurisdiction over milk prices and supply.	An Administrative History of the Province of Alberta 1905-2005 p. 47
Prairie provinces	1939-1945	Most of bachelor young men signed up making it difficult to secure help during seeding and harvest.	Interview, Robert Briggs 26 February 1980, Strathcona County Museum and Archives
Canada	1939-1945	Honey production was brought under wartime regulations so that quotas could be filled for Britain. Cane sugar was rationed and honey was seen as a substitute. By 1942 there was a surplus of honey in Alberta but shipping costs were very high and prices low so producers could not ship honey further than B.C. profitably.	Alberta, Department of Agriculture Provincial Archives of Alberta 73.307, file 181 letter from George Wilson, Wartime Prices and Trade Board to W.G. Le Maistre 17 June 1942
Canada	1939-1943	Farmers had to get government permission to purchase farm equipment.	Ottewell Family fonds, box 1, file 3, Series 2, Correspondence 1920-1946, letter from the Cockshutt Plow Company Limited to George Ottewell, 16 May 1945. Strathcona County Museum and Archives
Britain, Canada	1929	In 1929 Britain imported nearly 250 million dozens of eggs from 42 countries; Canada supplied barely one-third of one per cent.	Alberta, Department of Agriculture Provincial Archives of Alberta 73.307, file 176 Imports of Eggs (in Shell)
Canada	1939-1945	A “Bacon for Britain” campaign saw farmers turning to raise swine during the war. Purebred swine breeders, like Roy Marler, traveled the province on behalf of the government to advise farmers.	Interview, Reg Marler by Jane Ross June 25, 2011

Second World War			
Location	Date	Details	Source
Britain	1940	Britain had introduced a daily caloric intake for its population at the beginning of the war. Soon, it was discovered, there was not enough protein in the prescribed diet. Shortages of butter, meats, bacon, cheese and milk meant less protein in diet. Eggs, then, were substituted and the allotment of shell eggs in Britain was 30 eggs per person per year but egg powder from Canada was being shipped in such quantities that there were no restrictions on the sale.	Alberta, Department of Agriculture Provincial Archives of Alberta 73.307, file 180 memorandum from C.W.S. Longman March 15, 1944
Alberta	1941	The Alberta government felt that despite mechanization of army cavalry, there might be need for cavalry horses in Greece. Gasoline shortages and heavy rains were also cited as reasons that horses may be required for cavalry.	Alberta, Department of Agriculture Provincial Archives of Alberta 73.307, file 165 memorandum from P.W. Johnson, Secretary to Hon. D.B. MacMillan, Minister of Agriculture 3 April 1941
Canada	1941-1942	Hired hands who worked for farmers for more than 14 days had to hand over their ration books which the hiring farmer can use.	Ottewell Family fonds, box 1, file 3, Series 2, Correspondence 1920-1946, letter from the Local Ration Board to Ottewell, no date, Strathcona County Museum and Archives
Britain, Canada	1942-1944	With the outbreak of war, British Ministry of Food requested that Canada supply all possible eggs. In 1942 the shipment of shell eggs was stopped and egg powder shipped instead. “An intensive campaign was put on by all the Provincial Departments of Agriculture, Universities, and the Dominion Department of Agriculture. The result being that a tremendous increase in the egg production of Canada has taken place, especially in the past two years. Regulation were amended whereby all eggs were received and graded at as many country points as possible at stations registered by the Dominion Department of Agriculture and licensed by the Provincial Government and the Regulations require that the people grading eggs must be competent and under the supervision of the Inspection Service.” By 1944 Alberta had 175 such stations. However, wholesale houses and country grading stations had trouble getting people due to wartime service call-ups.	Alberta, Department of Agriculture Provincial Archives of Alberta 73.307, file 180 letter from C.W. Traves, Chairman Poultry Advisory Committee to Chief Justice Horace Harvey, Chairman, War Mobilization Board, 28 April 1944

Second World War			
Location	Date	Details	Source
Canada	1943	A new contract between Canada and Britain provides $.50 a hundredweight more for dressed pork than last year's contract. "This brings the amount paid for hogs which are going to fill the contract up to the ceiling price on hogs which may be consumed in Canada." In 1943-44 there was a decrease in the number of hogs because of crop failure in Alberta and Saskatchewan.	Alberta, Department of Agriculture Provincial Archives of Alberta 73.307, file 171 letter from James G. Gardiner, Minister of Agriculture, Canada to D. Bruce MacMillan Minister of Agriculture [Alberta] 29 October 1943
Alberta, Clover Bar area	1946	The federal government froze all daily milk averages on 31 March but this was at least somewhat ignored by shippers. The Northern Alberta Dairy Pool established new averages based on the average for the years 1943-45 using the three months in each year in which the plant received the lowest daily milk shipments. The highest daily average was set as 1,200 pounds of milk. Ella Ottewell's average was set at 495 pounds. A month later her average daily amount was increased to 682 pounds.	Ottewell Family fonds, box 1, file 3, Series 2, Correspondence 1920-1946, letter from the Northern Alberta Dairy Pool Limited to Ella Ottewell 21 March 1946 and 20 April 1946, Strathcona County Museum and Archives
Alberta	1948	"Since the start of the war, the flavour quality of Alberta creamery butter has retrogressed. This retrogression has been related to the lowered quality of the incoming raw cream which in turn is thought to be largely a reflection of the farm labour situation."	Alberta, Department of Agriculture Dairy Branch Provincial Archives of Alberta 67.21, file 5 "Production Methods and the Keeping Quality of Churning Cream"