

# CountryTalk

SPRING 2019



## The changing face of agriculture

Aubrie Henry is excited about the shift she is seeing in the public perception of agriculture.

"I think there's a change where people are asking, 'Where does my food come from?' What's in it?" I think we went away from that and now people are coming back to that heritage and understanding the value of land from an agricultural standpoint," said Aubrie, a third generation farmer who assists her family with their commercial cattle and custom grazing farm near Cooking Lake.

Her insight is partly because of her first-hand experience in her industry, but also because of her role as Vice-Chair on the Strathcona County Agricultural Service Board (ASB).

An advisory board to the County, the ASB is like the eyes and ears of everything related to agriculture in Strathcona County. This ranges from advising on weed and pest control activities to promoting and enhancing agriculture through policy and project development. In addition to Aubrie's experience in the cattle industry, the current board includes members with expertise in wheat farming, greenhouse growing, weeds and soil.

Aubrie's father was a board member several years ago. In 2017, she felt it was a good time and opportunity to join the board in order to support the future of agriculture.

"I think it's really important that people from this community, and people that are interested

in agriculture, sit on boards and do what we can for our industry," said Aubrie.

Aubrie says her experience on the board has opened her eyes to the influence of agriculture in ways that many people don't think about.

"When people think of agriculture, they think of big ag, such as corporations with large livestock or grain and cereal crops. But there is also the small agriculture within our municipality, including reserve lands, wetlands, conservation areas and small producers with chickens, cattle, bees, etc.," she said, considering her own learning curve on the ASB. "There are so many things you don't think of outside of your own backyard."

In addition to her role on the board, her family's cattle farm, and a full-time job as a nurse at the hospitals in both Fort Saskatchewan and Tofield, Aubrie is also on the Community Advisory Committee for the County's multi-purpose agricultural facility.

As a horse enthusiast who barrel races in Alberta and Saskatchewan circuits, she is excited about the prospect of an arena so close to home. But she's more excited about the opportunity to bring people together from both the rural and urban communities.

"You don't need to be a horse person or a cattle person to enjoy the facility. I think it can be a real community place where people can come together, enjoy the outdoors and learn about each other and agriculture," said Aubrie.



Aubrie Henry  
Vice-Chair, Strathcona County  
Agricultural Service Board

It's those kind of urban-rural connections she hopes to increase through the board. A focus area of the ASB involves education programs for residents to promote diversification and sustainability in all sectors of agriculture. This includes education and awareness programs for school children to learn more about different forms of agriculture.

"Everyone is somehow connected to agriculture—farming is a part of our lives whether you're a farmer or not."

### Role of the Agricultural Service Board

- Act as an advisory body and assist Strathcona County Council and the Minister responsible for the Agricultural Service Board Act, in matters of mutual concern
- Advise on, help organize and direct weed and pest control and soil and water conservation programs
- Assist in the control of animal disease under the Animal Health Act
- Promote, enhance and protect viable and sustainable agriculture with a view to improving the economic viability of the agricultural producer
- Promote and develop agricultural policies to meet the needs of the municipality
- Promote the local food sector in Strathcona County

#### Citizen members

- Laura Hammer, Chair
- Aubrie Henry, Vice-Chair
- Keith Hull
- Greg Knott
- Gary Millar

#### Elected official members

- Councillor Linton Delainey
- Councillor Glen Lawrence
- Councillor Paul Smith
- Councillor Robert Parks (Alternate)



# Bertha armyworm awareness



Bertha armyworms, sometimes known as climbing cutworms, are one of the most significant insect pests of canola in Canada. Alberta Agriculture and Forestry warns that 2019 may see a breakout of bertha armyworms.

## What you need to know

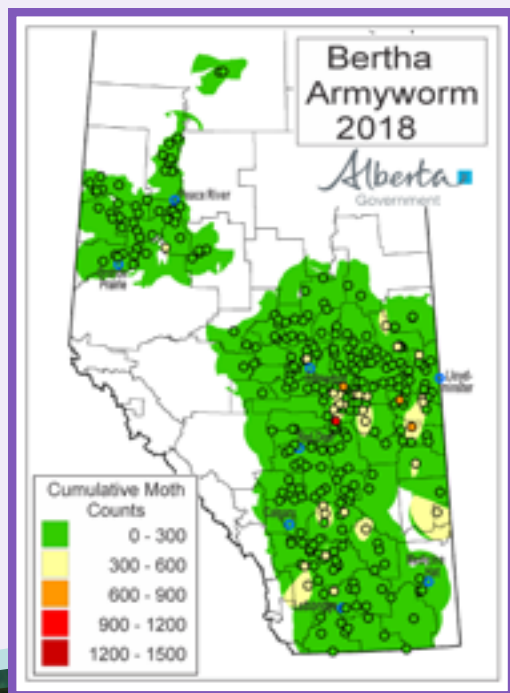
- The larvae stage is the only stage to cause crop damage, with significant crop damage happening in a three-week period between late July and late August.
- Producers should inspect for larvae in each field regularly.
  - Begin monitoring after peak flowering.
  - Sample at least three locations a minimum of 50 m apart.
  - Do not sample headlands or other non-representative portions of the field.
- The most effective form of control for this pest is insecticide application, which is recommended when the larval numbers meet the economic threshold, which can be found on the Alberta Agriculture website.

## Areas of concern

On the government of Alberta website, Insect Management Specialist Scott Meers says that the bertha armyworm is trending upwards and there could be some outbreaks in the province.

“Last year we saw quite a substantial jump up in central Alberta. I fully expect we are going to see an outbreak phase someplace in central Alberta this growing season,” said Meers. “It is hard to read exactly where—but probably centered around Camrose.”

Reference: <https://www.alberta.ca/three-additional-insect-forecast-and-survey-maps-now-available.aspx>



## Think like a pollinator

Adapting yards and gardens for native bees and butterflies

There are many kinds of pollinators that visit our gardens, flowerbeds, fields and forests in search of food, shelter and places to nest and raise their young. All pollinators need quality habitat and flowers to feed from.

Did you know being around charismatic pollinators like butterflies, hummingbirds and bumblebees can also improve our overall feelings of connectivity to nature?

Fortunately, there are ways to improve habitat for pollinators and attract them to our yards and greenspaces.

**Plant native** – Many native flowering plants are rich in pollen and nectar and have evolved alongside Alberta’s native pollinators.

**Focus on flowers** – Group pollinator-friendly flowers of the same species together in small clumps to make it easy for pollinators to travel in between them. Add plants that bloom from early spring through fall to help pollinators forage all

season. Include different flower shapes and colours to create variety.

**Offer a drink** – Add a birdbath or shallow dish with half-submerged rocks for foraging bees and butterflies to rest on.

**Create nesting and overwintering sites** – Some native bees nest in the ground and need bare patches of undisturbed soil; others nest in deadwood, raspberry canes and other dead stems. Add a bee hotel or bumblebee box to your yard to create new pollinator habitat.

**Mow mindfully** – A perfectly manicured lawn is a food desert for pollinators. Set the blade at the highest level and avoid excessive mowing.

**Be aware of pesticide use** – Pesticides are used to control unwanted pests like weeds, insects and fungi. Always follow the directions on the label or hire a licensed pesticide applicator.

## Rural roadside vegetation control

Strathcona County regularly controls weeds, brush and trees in rural ditches and municipal reserves.

Control methods include brushing, spraying, mulching and mowing in order to:

- Improve visibility and safety at intersections
- Allow proper drainage to prevent flooding
- Maintain a healthy plant community and prevent weeds from spreading on private property

Further information:

780-417-7100

[strathcona.ca/vegetationcontrol](http://strathcona.ca/vegetationcontrol)

All County maintained rights-of-way will be sprayed with herbicide where required this year. To request “no spray” next to your property, please contact us to learn about our Landowner Option Program.







# Municipal Land Licensing Program

## What is the Municipal Land Licensing Program?

- Strathcona County provides the opportunity for individuals to license certain municipal lands (reserves) for agricultural use, such as hay and pasture. What this essentially means is that for a cost of your bid (minimum \$80) plus the property tax, you can rent land from the County to use for hay or pasture.
- Bids for these reserves are accepted in the fall of each year through our Municipal Land Licensing Tender Program. As not all reserves are bid on, there are opportunities to still license the reserves in the spring.

## What do we mean by municipal land?

- The land available for license is primarily municipal reserves in subdivisions around the County.
- You may see this happening in a municipal reserve in a subdivision near you.

## What is a licence?

An agreement a person enters into with the County that allows the person to non-exclusively use the land in an agreed upon way.

## What kinds of agricultural activities are permitted?

- The reserves are designated for either hay or pasture use.
- Annual cropping is not permitted.

## How will I know which properties are available?

A list of the available reserves and maps can be found at [www.strathcona.ca/landlicensing](http://www.strathcona.ca/landlicensing).

## Why are some properties unavailable?

Not all municipal reserves are suitable for hay and pasture use. Also, some reserves may be temporarily taken out of the program for weed control and upkeep.

## When can I apply to license municipal land and who can I call for more information?

- Bids are accepted in the fall, starting the last Friday in October.
- You can call 780-410-6524 for further information regarding reserves that are still available for this spring.

## Small farm awareness

With the growing number of small farms in Strathcona County, it's important to know that your hobby animals are still considered livestock, even if you consider them pets or companion animals. Below are two important responsibilities you must be aware of, if you care for livestock or poultry.

### Premise Identification (PID) Number

A PID links species of animals to specific land locations, as part of a free program provided by the province. In 2009, it became a legal requirement that all caretakers of livestock or poultry have a PID number for the location of the animals.

The PID system is used to provide early notification to you and emergency personnel in times of natural disaster or disease outbreak, which helps you take the necessary precautions to protect your animals. Even if you only have one, your animal can still receive or transmit a serious disease or be impacted during a natural disaster.

Getting a PID is free and easy. Apply online at [agriculture.alberta.ca/traceability](http://agriculture.alberta.ca/traceability) or by phoning 780-310-FARM (3276).

By having a PID and keeping your information up to date, you are playing an important role in protecting your animals and those of other producers in Alberta and across Canada.

### Animal limits

Responsible use and protection of land and the environment is an important consideration when raising livestock and poultry.

Small farms and acreages have less available land for use by livestock and poultry. Even relatively small numbers of animals on small land parcels can lead to situations mimicking large intensive livestock operations.

The number of livestock or poultry allowed on small farms and acreages is regulated in

Strathcona County by the Animal Control Bylaw and applies to the following land use (zoning):

- Future Development (AD) where the parcel is within the boundary of a hamlet and the parcel is smaller than 10 hectares (24.7 ac.) in area
- Country Residential (RC)
- Rural Residential/Agriculture (RA) where the parcel is smaller than eight hectares (20 ac.) in area

For the above zoned land, the number of livestock or poultry allowed is:

- One (1) large animal per acre (40 lbs and over) – bison, horse, cattle, swine, donkey, mule, oxen or large controlled animal or wildlife
- Two (2) medium animals per acre (20-40 lbs) – sheep, goats or medium controlled animal and wildlife
- Twenty (20) small animals per acre (less than 20 lbs) – poultry or small controlled animal and wildlife

If you wish to have more than the allowable amounts of livestock or poultry listed above, you can apply for an Animal Over-limit Permit. Application information is available online at [strathcona.ca/animaloverlimit](http://strathcona.ca/animaloverlimit)

If you are unsure if you require a permit, please call Transportation and Agriculture Services at 780-417-7100.

## Animals covered by PID

- Alpacas
- Bees (honey)
- Bison
- Cattle
- Deer or elk (in captivity)
- Doves (in captivity)
- Ducks or geese (in captivity)
- Fish (commercial fish culture licence)
- Fur-bearing animals (in accordance with Fur Farms Act)
- Goats
- Guinea fowl (in captivity)
- Horses
- Llamas
- Mules or donkeys
- Ostriches, emus or other flightless birds
- Peafowl (in captivity)
- Pheasants (in captivity)
- Pigeons (in captivity)
- Poultry: meat birds, layers, heritage or fancy breeds, hatching egg breeders, turkeys, wild turkeys (in captivity)
- Quail (in captivity)
- Rabbits (for meat production)
- Sheep
- Swine, including all pig species and wild boar
- Yaks







## Agricultural facility and site planning moves ahead

Coming soon – a multi-purpose agricultural facility!

This new destination in Strathcona County will be a welcoming agricultural park with day-use activities, trails and more. It will be designed for year-round all-weather use to accommodate community agricultural activities, 4H, livestock, equine and canine events, vintage tractor pulls, community gardens and markets, and other recreation and social events.

Site servicing is anticipated to begin this summer, once design phases have been completed. Construction is expected to take two and a half years. Construction for the indoor arena will begin in late 2020 (pending budget approval).

An early-stage concept design of the multi-purpose agricultural facility and its site was shared in March at Strathcona County Priorities Committee. The design draft includes basic elements that will be further developed during schematic design.

The concept design was developed with input from local stakeholder groups. These groups represented the interests of agricultural societies; youth clubs and activities; cattle, canine and equine clubs, events and shows; and also the heritage, education, urban and business communities.

Input from groups included connectivity and logistical considerations to ensure the safe and effective movement of animals and people across the site, and allowing for all-weather use.

For further information, visit: [strathcona.ca/agfacility](http://strathcona.ca/agfacility)



## Weed Inspection Program

Remember, not all flowers are friendly!

Weed inspectors will be out again in 2019, talking with and educating residents about the growth and spread of noxious weeds.

Learn more: [strathcona.ca/weeds](http://strathcona.ca/weeds)

## Mark your calendars!



Here are a few of the upcoming events in Strathcona County this spring and summer.

### Deville Community Market

Tuesdays | 4 – 8 p.m.  
Deville/North Cooking Lake Hall

### Ardrossan Farmers Market

Tuesdays (June to September) | 5 – 8 p.m.  
Ardrossan Memorial Hall

### Ardrossan Recreation and Agricultural Society Rural Safety Fair

May 4 | 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
Ardrossan Rec Complex

### Josephburg Ag Society Classic Extreme Trail Challenge

May 25 | 10 a.m.  
Josephburg Gymkhana Grounds

### Josephburg Ag Society Classic Beef Show

May 26 | 9 a.m.  
Moyer Recreation Centre

### Fort Saskatchewan 4H Beef Achievement Day

May 27 | Show at 10 a.m. | Sale at 1:30 p.m.  
Moyer Recreation Centre

### Ardrossan Old Fashion Picnic and Parade

June 15 | 7 a.m. – 11 p.m.

### South Cooking Lake Trail Days

August 17 | 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

### Strathcona County Vintage Tractor Association Vintage Tractor Pull

August 24 and 25  
Bremner Heritage Site

Visit the Strathcona County events calendar for more events and info!  
[strathcona.ca/calendar](http://strathcona.ca/calendar)

# 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  
Laura Hammer, Chair

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