

2018

Volume 9, Issue 4



The Verdant Element

WHAT A YEAR!

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I will agree that as you get older, time seems to fly by even quicker. This year was both painfully long at times, but for the most part it seemed that I blinked and missed it. 2018 definitely had some challenges, with it going straight from winter to summer, with harvest to finish for some from the year previous crops. This fall was painful to say the least with the smoke effect slowing crops and preventing maturity to the early wet snow.

Many changes have come to the funding programs available. The Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) program replaced Growing Forward 2. As well, Environmental Farm Plans moved to a mandatory 10 year renewal, which is part of the eligibility requirement for the CAP funding.

As well this year, prescriptions became a requirement for producers for antibiotics. This may seem extreme to some, however I worked on a dairy farm in Denmark. We were unable to treat an animal for ANYTHING, even vaccinations. The veterinarian had to administer everything. Granted, there are more large animal vets there and the distances are much shorter, but it was still a pain to have to call the vet out for regular and special treatments. Here in Canada, in the grand scheme of things, it really is not such a bad idea to review medications with your veterinarian and treat your animals with effective and correct treatments and not waste money and the medications on a misdiagnosis.

There has been a bit of change on farm safety, as now OH&S regulations apply to farms with paid workers. In the end, we all want to come home safe to our families so having some sort of plan, or review of emergency procedures would help any operation.

This has been a year of many challenges and mental health needs to become a priority. There has been an overwhelming stress that has been felt with rising costs, a challenging harvest and market

Continued next page

A Year In Review

conditions. Coping mechanisms need to be found to effectively deal with these stressors so that we can remain positive, productive people with healthy relationships. Do More Ag Foundation was created to champion mental health in the agriculture industry <https://www.domore.ag/>

With all the changes in 2018, this next year should prove to be just as exciting.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a wonderful New Year!



Working Well Workshop

On February 14, 2019 at Lac Bellevue Hall, residents have the opportunity to learn about risks to their groundwater and ways to protect their water wells at a free water well management workshop hosted by **LARA**; presented by the Working Well Program, with technical expertise from Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Health Services and licensed water well drillers.

According to the lead presenter, **Ken Williamson**, many Albertans have old wells they don't know what to do with, or they don't know how to properly maintain their existing wells. This may be putting their groundwater at risk of contamination. "A properly constructed and maintained water well is one of a landowner's most important investments," offers Ken. "This workshop helps people understand how groundwater works, and teaches them about their well and how to properly maintain it."

Participants will learn about a variety of water well construction, siting and maintenance topics including:

1. **Setbacks:** Alberta legislation requires minimum setbacks between water wells and contamination sources such as livestock pens, septic systems, manure piles and chemical and fuel storage. Shallow wells and wells located in gravelly or sandy soils are at higher risk of contamination and may need greater setback distances or special protective measures.
2. **Landscaping:** The ground around a water well should be mounded and landscaped to ensure that surface water does not run towards and pool around the outer casing of the well.
3. **Eliminating well pits:** In the past, well pits were installed to provide a frost free location for the pressure system. Provincial regulations now prohibit the construction of wells pits as they increase the risk of contamination to groundwater and can be a deadly safety hazard. A licensed water well contractor should be hired to upgrade a well in a pit. .
4. **Water well drilling reports:** Licensed water well contractors are required to submit drilling reports to Alberta Environment and Parks. This report includes important information that will help well owners manage and protect their wells.
5. **Single Aquifer Source:** Constructing a well so it draws water from more than one aquifer might in-

crease the gallons per minute, but it also puts groundwater at higher risk. A single aquifer completion eliminates intermixing of water bearing formations with different water qualities and prevents aquifer depletion.

6. **Water sampling:** Well owners should do a standard coliform bacteria test twice a year (more often if the well is less than 50 feet deep) and a routine chemical test every two years.

According to Ken Williamson, when having a new well installed it is critical that owners select a reputable driller and know what features to ask for. For example, make sure the drilling contractor does a full pump test and calculates a recommended pumping rate for your new well. "It is also a good idea to have the drilling contractor plug any old or unused wells while he is on your property," adds Williamson. "Surface water draining down through old wells can contaminate the aquifer tapped by your new well."

Landowners can also learn more about maintaining their water wells in the booklet *Water Wells That Last*, available on-line from Alberta Agriculture and Forestry at www.agric.gov.ab.ca or by contacting the Alberta Environment and Parks Information Centre toll free in Alberta at 310-3773 or AEP.Info-Centre@gov.ab.ca.

Celebrating 10 Years of Working Well

This year marks the 10th year the Working Well program partners have been bringing water well management workshops and information resources to Albertans. Since its launch in 2008, Working Well has become a very successful and in-demand program for rural Albertans, providing them with the information and resources they need to manage their water wells and protect Alberta's groundwater resources. Over the past 10 years, the Working Well program has delivered 254 workshops to more than 6,900 people in 172 different communities across Alberta.

The success of this program is due to the hard work and dedication of a collaborative team of committed employees from Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Health, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, Alberta Health Services and individuals from the Alberta Water Well Drilling Association, as well as the support of rural municipalities and other organizations from across the province.

Working Well Workshop

February 14, 2019

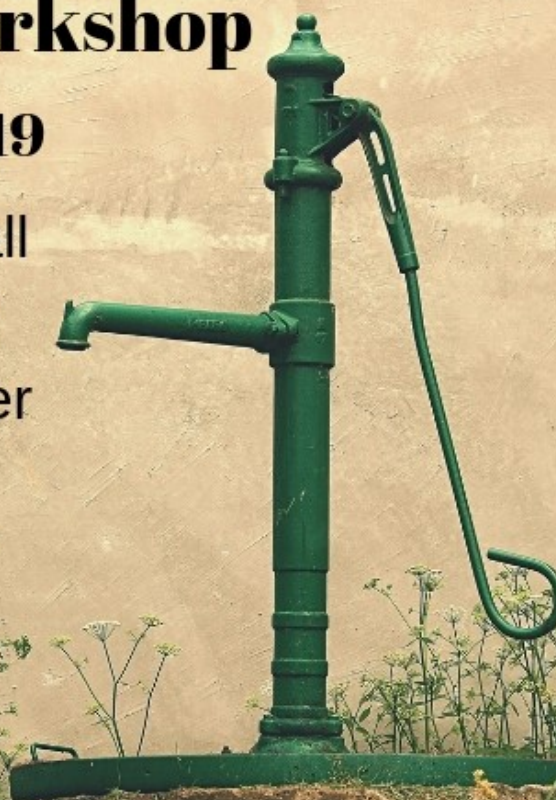
Lac Bellevue Hall

6:30 - 9:30 PM

Please preregister

by Feb. 12

FREE supper with registration



FEAP Funding

The Farm Energy and Agri-Processing (FEAP) Program is a provincial funding program, cost sharing energy efficiency investments with agricultural producers and agri-processors. **This is the only funding program that funds retroactively from April, 2016.**

This includes the cost sharing of energy efficiency upgrades to new and used grain dryers. Retrofit upgrades to existing grain dryers such as variable speed drives, automated controllers, new burners, heat exchangers or PTO to electric motor conversions are eligible for 50% cost-share funding if upgrades demonstrate an energy savings. Upgrade options for new dryers include heat exchangers, variable speed drives and automated controllers installed as factory options and are an upgrade from standard dryer configuration and demonstrate an energy savings.

Other energy savings upgrades include insulation for new and existing farm buildings, energy efficient lighting for buildings and yard sites, high volume and low speed circulation fans, agricultural ventilation fans, greenhouse heat storage, energy curtains, combined heat and power units, and much more. **This program also covers energy-free and low-energy outdoor livestock water fountains and insulated large-diameter risers for inside a pen or yard.**

To learn more about this funding program visit our website at: www.laraonline.ca/farming-resources/environmental/funding-opportunities/

For specific questions on the FEAP program contact Amber Kenyon, the Energy Outreach Officer at 780-307-7849 or email groextension@telus.net



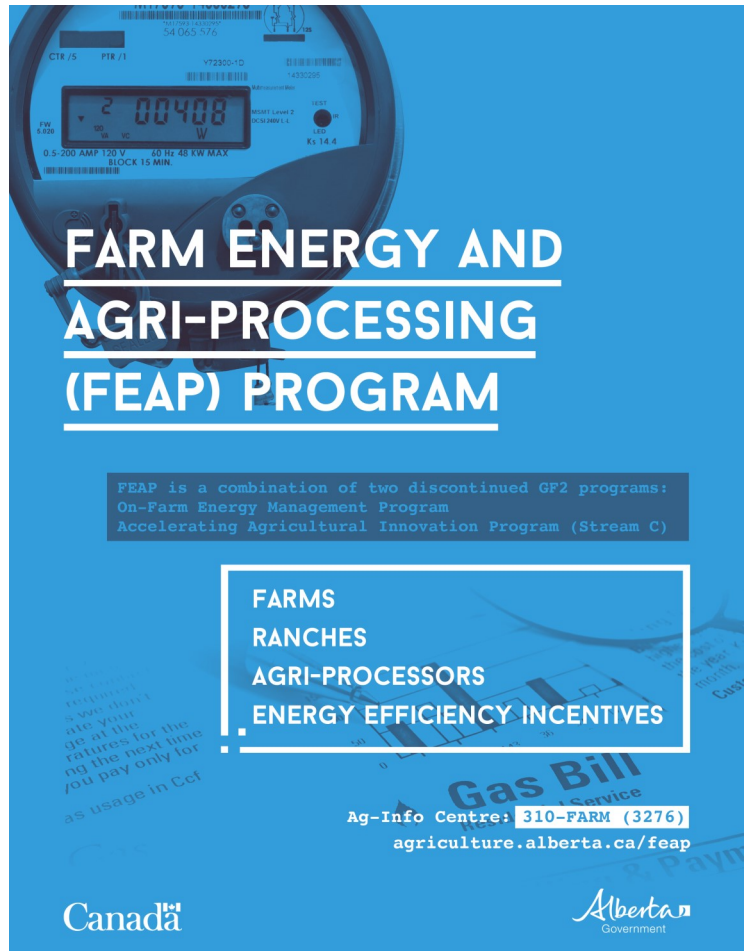
ON-FARM SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAICS (OFSPV) PROGRAM

To be eligible for funding, a Photovoltaic system must be:

- Grid-tied, not off-grid
- Approved under Alberta's Micro-Generation Legislation
- Positioned to optimize sunshine and minimize shading
- Have manufacturer-warranties on: Solar modules, Racking, Inverters and/or Micro-inverters, and
- Installed on a Site ID that has a Distribution Rate Class of Farm, Irrigation, Grain Drying, or equivalent

Retroactive projects that have been completed AFTER APRIL 15, 2017 are eligible. See website for more details!

Ag-Info Centre: **310-FARM (3276)**
agriculture.alberta.ca/solar






FARM ENERGY AND AGRI-PROCESSING (FEAP) PROGRAM

FEAP is a combination of two discontinued GF2 programs:
 On-Farm Energy Management Program
 Accelerating Agricultural Innovation Program (Stream C)

**FARMS
 RANCHES
 AGRI-PROCESSORS
 ENERGY EFFICIENCY INCENTIVES**

Ag-Info Centre: **310-FARM (3276)**
agriculture.alberta.ca/feap

Woolly Burdock is a biennial species that can reach heights of 2.5 meters and is considered noxious. It has a large tap-root that can go to depths of 1 meter. Lower leaf stalks can either be hollow or solid and the stem is grooved and rough with many branches. Leaves are heart shaped, are very large (40 cm) and alternating. Clusters of purple globular flowers with the flower head surrounded by whorls of bracts that are densely cobwebby. These bracts are curved allowing them to stick like Velcro to anything that touches them, allowing for seed distribution. This species only reproduces by seed, growing the first year as low-growing rosettes. Herbicide is most effective to control first year growth rather than digging out the large tap-roots. Woolly burdock matures in the second year of growth and flowers, producing seed. For control it is best to clip the heads and burn them, or mow the plants before it flowers to prevent seed from being produced.

Pest Watch



To report prohibited noxious weeds call the Alberta Pest Surveillance System at :

310-APSS (2777)

Woolly Burdock



Relaxation: Why It's Important For You and the Farm

By Elaine Froese
elainefroese.com

Give yourself permission to relax. If there were 25 hours in a day, how would you spend that extra hour? Would you cram in another hour of work or would you take time for yourself and relax? Before you answer, consider this: According to studies conducted on stress and its polar opposite, relaxation, those who are less stressed and more relaxed live longer with fewer health problems.

“Relaxing is a very important part of farming successfully,” says Robert Fetsch, Professor and State Extension Specialist in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies at Colorado State University. “Ag production is such a high-stress and high-tension occupation that it’s important for everyone to take care of themselves. We know from research that people who don’t take good care of themselves, don’t live as long.”

Also, consider this; A farmer’s job is never done. “Farmers and farm families work very hard,” adds Don Bower, Department Head of Child and Family Development at the University of Georgia. “But there’s always something more to do regardless of how many hours you work.”

Relaxation is Relative

The evolution of farming and American work habits, in general, have progressed to the point where the time for relaxation is a scarce commodity. Studies have shown that Americans have added the equivalent of seven weeks to their annual work schedule since 1970 through longer work hours and less vacation time.

“These are some troubling statistics, so it’s important to find some balance in your life,” says Bower. “There is clear evidence that over time, stress reduces your body’s physical resilience. You’re less likely to be able to withstand infections and injuries if your body is not renewed by relaxation as well as good nutrition and exercise.”

Wendell Joyce, farmer and current Executive Director of the Canadian Farm Business Management Council, notes that farm safety can also be at risk. “When I reflect on it, all the close calls I’ve had have been when I was under pressure or overtired,” he says. “There’s a very definite correlation between the two.”

Before you insist that you can’t possibly take five minutes out of your schedule to do nothing, consider that relaxing isn’t simply being idle.

“Relaxation is relative,” says Joyce. “It doesn’t have to be sitting on a beach or in a rocking chair. Relaxation can be sitting on a tractor. I find making hay is as relaxing for me as sitting in a rocking chair in the living room. Checking calves with my son is also relaxing. Relaxation is more of a state of mind than a physical location. It can be defined in many different ways.”

I define relaxation as enjoying a cup of tea and a good laugh with friends around the kitchen table. For my husband, it’s calling his mother who lives three hours away but wants to remain connected to the farm. My 80-year-old father who still farms, relaxes by taking a 10-minute power nap after lunch. I haven’t learned the art of napping, but it’s a great way to take a break and build more pauses into your life. It’s really wherever you go in your mind, body, and spirit where you lose all track of time and you become renewed.

Incorporating Relaxation and “Pausing” Your Day

Determine what makes you stressed

Pay attention to how your body reacts to certain situations. Notice when you feel tension in your neck, shoulder, or jaw. Stress causes other physical changes in your body as well, such as increased heart rate and chemical imbalances, notes Bower.

Learn the difference between problems and predicaments, encourages Fetsch. Predicaments are forces over which you have less than 50% control, such as the weather, commodity prices, etc. Problems are factors over which you have at least 50% control. “When I ask people to list their top 10 stressors, the weather almost always makes the list, so do commodity prices and equipment costs,” says Fetsch. “But these are all predicaments over which you don’t have control. Rather than focus on these, focus on aspects over which you have control such as when you’ll turn on the irrigation water.

“The same rule applies to relationships with people. You probably don’t have a lot of control over what Mom and Dad thinks,” he continues. “Instead of focusing on their reaction, focus on how you can be the best farmer, husband, wife, etc. you can be.”



Control your reaction to stress

Fetsch defines stress as a response to a perceived threat. Rarely are our threats truly dangerous, but threats against our plans – especially those involving time, money or relationships – are the basis for most of our stress.

For example, what is your reaction to a rainy morning if you had fieldwork planned? “Instead of letting it stress you out, focus on work that can be done in the barn or the office,” says Bower. Making it a productive day will reduce the stress. “Make a conscious decision to reframe an unplanned circumstance as an opportunity to do something else,” he says. Rather than obsess about them, train yourself to let go of those things you can’t control.”

Your perception of a stressful event is a key variable between those who handle stress well and those who don’t, explains Fetsch. For example, it may not be so much a financial condition as what that financial condition means to you.

“If you think you’re going under, you’ll have a lot higher stress and depression than if you think you have some way to manage it,” he says. “It may help to consider that at other times in your life you may have lived with less income, or maybe a spouse can get a part-time job. If you look at positive actions, it will help your stress level and depression and will help you stay healthier with better family functioning. It’s like a card game – it’s not so much winning or losing, but how well we deal with the hand we’re dealt.”

There are several physical and mental activities that can release tension and promote relaxation. Physically, Fetsch suggests that you do stretching exercises every morning, especially if you plan to do a physically strenuous activity during the day.

“Periodically throughout the day take some time for deep breathing. Roll your head to the left and right a few times and close your eyes for a second or two,” he notes. “It’s a relatively simple thing to do that doesn’t take much time. It’s best to be able to relax for 20 to 30 minutes, but even a minute or two is better than nothing.”

Emotionally, Fetsch says to focus on things that are pleasant to you, such as family. “There is real value in getting physically removed from the operation,” adds Joyce. “But on those days when you can’t do that, you can do it in your mind.”

Take some time off

Try setting aside one day a week where you don’t plan any farm work. Having a day with no real fixed agenda can be beneficial.

Stay connected with neighbors and the community

Joyce indicates that in just one generation we’ve gone from a society that enjoys a friendly visit to one that hopes no one stops when they spot us outside. The culture has shifted. Drop-in visits just don’t happen anymore. The gift of a visit, a good meal, and having fun together are becoming lost rural arts. They used to give people a lot of renewal and relaxation. But we can regain some of it. Most of us have a cell phone. Call your neighbors and ask if it’s OK to drop in. They have the opportunity to say yes or no, and you haven’t lost anything by asking.

Staying connected also helps identify neighbors and friends in crisis. Keep an eye out for who is withdrawing. Some people’s response to financial and time pressures is to pull back from the community. Pay attention to who isn’t coming to the auctions and special community events. Most people don’t even realize that they are disconnecting.

Let go of hostility

Research indicates that those who are not only stressed but are also hostile about it, are at greater risk for health issues. “There’s a difference being stressed and being stressed with hostility,” says Fetsch. “When there’s anger and blame towards the government, family members, the neighbor, etc., at some point these people will likely have health problems.”

Give yourself permission to pause

Don’t confuse relaxing with being lazy. It’s a good thing. “Everybody has the same 24 hours a day and everybody makes decisions about what to do with them,” Bower says. “Think about other people who depend on you. If you feel you’re being selfish by taking a few minutes to relax, consider that it’s an investment in your family. It’s an investment for being around to see your children and grandchildren. Farmers, in particular, are very concerned about appearing to be selfish, but consider that by relaxing, you’re doing something for someone else. Give yourself permission to take care of yourself.”



Environmental Farm Plans

The environment is becoming a more prominent issue. It is a large factor in marketing agriculture and food products in today's global markets. Consumers are demanding more transparency and are demanding high quality and safe products. Reputation of food safety is critical to retain and gain access to domestic and international markets.

Environmental Farm Plans (EFP) provide a tool for producers to self analyze their operation and identify environmental risks, current standards, areas for improvement and also highlight what they are doing well.

Having a completed EFP allows producers to access different funding opportunities, such as the Growing Forward Stewardship Program. It is also useful in product branding that demonstrates specific environmental standards.

The EFP Process

An EFP can be completed through workshops, online or one-on-one session(s). The EFP first identifies the soil and farm site characteristics. Following this, the producer completes only the relevant chapters that apply to their operation; such as wintering sites, fertilizer, pesticides, crop management etc.

Upon completion the EFP is submitted to a Technical Assistant for review. Once reviewed the EFP will be returned along with a letter of completion.

The EFP is a living document and should be reviewed and updated periodically.

If you wish to complete an EFP or have any questions regarding EFP please contact Kellie at the LARA office at 780-826-7260

Effective April 1, 2018, producers will need to have an EFP completion letter dated within the last 10 years to be considered current and eligible for cost-share funding with the Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change programs of the Canadian Agriculture Partnership (CAP). That means, for example, if you apply in September 1, 2018, your EFP will need to have been approved on or after September 1, 2008 to be considered for current funding.

Riparian Health Assessment

The riparian zone is the interface between the upland and a water course. A healthy riparian area: traps and stores sediment; builds and maintains banks and shorelines; stores water; recharges aquifers; filters and buffers water; creates primary production and much more!

A riparian health assessment is a tool designed to evaluate the site and can provide a foundation to build an action plan and identify priorities.

If you would like a FREE Riparian Health Assessment conducted on your property or more information please call Kellie at 780-826-7260 or email sustainag.lara@mcsnet.ca

CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL PARTNERSHIP

The Canadian Agricultural Partnership is a five-year, \$3 billion federal-provincial-territorial investment in the agriculture, agri-food and agri-based products sector set to begin in April 2018, and is the successor of the 2013-18 Growing Forward 2 partnership. In Alberta, the Canadian Agricultural Partnership represents a federal - provincial investment of \$406 million in strategic programs and initiatives for the agricultural sector.

Currently accepting funding applications is the Environmental Stewardship and Climate Change program and Farm Water Supply.

Funding Opportunities Stewardship covers projects such as:

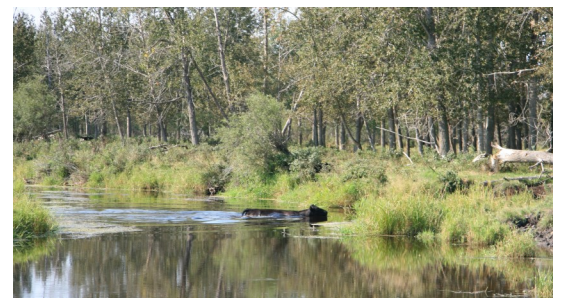
Riparian Area Fencing and Management	Permanent fencing and potentially cross fencing	Funding Maximum: \$75,000 Cost Share: 30%, 50%. Or 70%
Year-Round / Summer Watering Systems	Portable or permanent systems that are not in your yard site	Funding Maximum: \$50,000 Cost Share: 30%, 50%. Or 70%
Watercourse Crossings	Construction materials needed for watercourse crossing in accordance with the Water Act	Funding Maximum: \$10,000 Cost Share: 30%, 50%. Or 70%
Grazing Management Strategies or Innovative Solutions	Consideration will be given to projects that provide solutions to improve grazing management. The projects must meet the objectives of Environmental Stewardship and Climate Change Program and significantly improve the grazing management performance of an operation.	Funding Maximum: \$100,000 Cost Share: 30%, 50%. Or 70%
Manure and Livestock Facilities Management	Construction of surface water management system; engineering assessment; improved storage facilities; relocation of livestock facility; improved land application; manure and livestock facilities management	Funding Maximum: \$15,000 - \$100,000 Cost Share: 30%, 50%. Or 70%
Agricultural Input and Waste	Improved pesticide management; improved nutrient management (sectional controls); plastic rollers; shelterbelts; wetland assessments	Funding Maximum: \$7,000 - \$15,000 Cost Share: 30%, 50%. Or 70%

More Information On Funding Opportunities

For more information on these funding opportunities go to: <https://cap.alberta.ca/CAP/index.html>

Call the LARA office to set up a time to go over funding possibilities and for assistance with the application forms.

Please note that applications must be approved prior to work being done or purchases made to be eligible for the funding.



Stuck in the mud? Consider an offsite watering system.

LARA Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program

Watersheds are unique, come in many shapes and sizes and can cross many different land uses. The simple definition of a watershed is the area of land that catches precipitation, and drains into a wetland, stream, river or groundwater. The riparian zone is the interface between the upland and a water course. This area is heavily influenced by water, how and where it flows and is reflected in the plants, soil characteristics and wildlife that are found there. Riparian areas have a large role in water quality, quantity and biodiversity. They provide eight key functions to: trap and store sediment; build and maintain banks and shorelines; store water; recharge aquifers; filter and buffer water; reduce and dissipate energy; create primary production; and maintain biodiversity by providing habitat for plants, wildlife and fish. These Ecological Services benefit people, other living organisms, and the overall functioning of interconnected natural systems within watersheds. Conservation and restoration of wetlands and riparian areas in Alberta are needed for sustainably functioning watersheds.



Over the next year and half LARA has funding available for: offsite watering systems, riparian fencing, watercourse crossings, and wetland enhancements such as pond levelers, exclusion fencing and riparian plantings.

Forms and information for the program are available online at: <http://www.laraonline.ca/farming-resources/environmental/funding-opportunities/>

Or by emailing sustainag.lara@mcsnet.ca



Holistic Management with Kelly Sidoryk

February 15-17 and 22-24, 2019

St. Paul, AB

For over 35 years farmers and ranchers in Alberta have used Holistic Management to improve land, grow nutritious food, gain control of their finances and improve their quality of life.

Holistic Management is a values-based decision making framework that integrates all aspects of planning for sustainable social, economic and environmental considerations. Each and every operation is unique and by using Holistic Management farmers and ranchers can achieve improvements in their land and mitigate risk.

Module 1

Introduction to HM

Paradigm shifts

Enhanced decision making through testing questions

Developing holistic goals for higher quality of life, more profit and healthier land

Secrets of effective communication - working with your team

Module 2

Review principles of analytical testing questions

Learn about using tools and their effects

Grazing principles

Develop a biological plan

Module 3

Principles of holistic financial planning

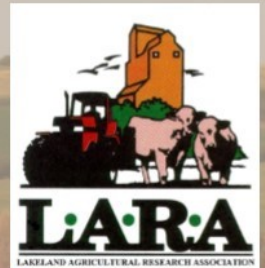
Definition of wealth

Enterprise analysis

Plan a profit

Develop your operations annual financial plan

Create a learning (support) group



There is no blanket solution or one size fits all approach to management. This course allows you to consider your own goals and what would work best for you and help you to get to where you want to go. The course is laid out into three modules over the two, three day sessions. The Cost of the Holistic Management Course is \$1,500.00 per farm unit.

If you would like additional details for this or you are **interested to register** please call Kellie at LARA at 780-826-7260 or email sustainag.lara@mcsnet.ca

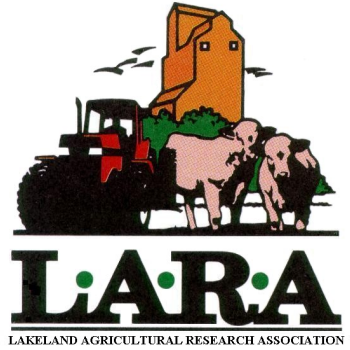
Lakeland Agricultural Research Association

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Phone: 780-826-7260
Cell: 780-812-1036
Kellie Nichiporik
E-mail: sustainag.lara@mcsnet.ca



Sustainable farming encompasses a wide range of practices and principles; combining environmental stewardship with profitability and ensuring that the family farm will be there for generations to come.



[Follow Us on Twitter! @LakelandARA](#)

Like us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Lakeland-Agricultural-Research-Association/316266591732449>

Why Take The Holistic Management Course?

- * A perfect time to gather with your family/team and work on goal development and the next year's plan— including the financial, social, land, and biological/grazing
- * Learn strategies and tools to improve decision making in these times of rapid change
- * Understand the principles behind Holistic Management and the HM framework
- * Examine the financial component and plan a profit that aligns with your farms' vision
- * Build a plan that ensures long term success of the triple bottom line: people, finances, land and livestock
- * Consider the ecosystem processes on the land and ways to build resiliency and regeneration

People don't plan to fail; they fail to plan.

WWW.LARAONLINE.CA



Merry Christmas