

AEPA representatives also participated in the provincial Water Conversation with discussions focusing on four key topic areas: healthy lakes, hydraulic fracturing, water management, and drinking and wastewater systems.

#### LOOKING FORWARD

AEPA aims to keep current and engaged in developing LUF and water policy processes in 2014. This will include responding to the outcome of the provincial Water Conversation, staying engaged in the implementation of the AWP, and participating in the Regional Advisory Council nominee process for the remaining regional plans, once announced.

**PRIORITY 2: TO PROVIDE POLICY INPUT ON INNOVATIONS AND BUSINESS MODELS THAT WILL HELP THE AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY ACHIEVE AEPA-DESIRED OUTCOMES.**

#### GROWING FORWARD 2

Growing Forward 2 is the successor to Growing Forward, a federal-provincial-territorial agricultural policy framework that expired March 2013. AEPA has been providing input to ARD regarding Growing Forward 2's development. In 2013, along with the Board receiving updates on this framework, AEPA representatives also attended information sessions on the framework. AEPA's discussions with ARD will continue in 2014 as Growing Forward 2 is implemented.



#### ECOSYSTEM SERVICES FORUM

AEPA held a forum February 27, 2013 on Ecosystem Services in Agricultural Lands: Public Benefits, Producer Opportunities? Producers depend on the ecosystems of their farms and ranches to produce crops and livestock and are directly paid for that ecosystem service. The Forum explored other ways for producers to engage in the ecosystem services markets. The Forum included presentations on what are ecosystem services, ecosystem markets in the United States, and tools that help keep land for agriculture purposes.

**PRIORITY 3: TO ENGAGE AND BUILD UNDERSTANDING WITH MEMBERS AND INDUSTRY PARTNERS TO ENABLE THE AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY TO BE A CREDIBLE PARTNER IN AGRI-ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT.**



#### COMMUNICATIONS

Communications is a central element in all aspects of AEPA's activities. The AEPA Communications Plan ensures those activities can be conveyed clearly and effectively to increase awareness and understanding of agri-environmental issues. The plan is linked to AEPA's 2012-15 Strategic Plan, enabling a consistent, coordinated approach to communications. In 2013, AEPA continued implementing its Communications Plan including maintenance of the AEPA website, new issues of On Common Ground (AEPA e-newsletter), and email communications with partners.

#### INTERNAL PROCESSES

Good governance is also important to AEPA. In 2013, AEPA updated internal processes to ensure they are current and consistent. This included reviewing and renewing the Board Procedural Guidelines, developing Criteria to Determine Priority Issues, and updating and revising the Water Advisory Team and LUF Advisory Team Engagement Strategies and Terms of Reference.

#### AEPA Board Members in 2013

The members of the AEPA's Board and their alternates are committed to two-way communication between the organizations they represent and the Board, to enable the AEPA to develop a unified voice on priority agri-environmental issues. AEPA thanks the representatives who departed the Board in 2013 and welcomes the new members who joined the Board during this past year.

Board Member/Alternate	Organizations Represented
Jack Swainson	Industry Co-Chair
Sean Royer	Government Co-Chair
<b>CROP INDUSTRY</b>	
Erin Gowriluk/Garson Law	Alberta Barley Commission
Greg Sears/Ward Toma	Alberta Canola Producers Commission
Neil Boyd/Leanne Fischbuch	Alberta Pulse Growers Commission
Wayne Tuck/Erin Gowriluk	Alberta Wheat Commission
Terence Hochstein	Potato Growers of Alberta
<b>LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY</b>	
Herman Bulten/Diana O'Hara	Alberta Elk Commission, Alberta Goat Breeders Association, Alberta Lamb Producers, Alberta Reindeer Association, Alberta Whitetail and Mule Deer Association, Bison Producers of Alberta, Horse Industry Association of Alberta, Ostrich Association of Alberta
Rich Smith/Bryan Walton	Alberta Beef Producers, Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association
Martin Van Diemen/David Hyink	Alberta Chicken Producers, Alberta Hatching Egg Producers, Alberta Turkey Producers, Egg Farmers of Alberta
Lorrie Jespersen/Allan Child	Alberta Milk
Will Kingma/Darcy Fitzgerald	Alberta Pork
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION</b>	
Morgan Stromsmoe/Tracy Scott	Ducks Unlimited Canada
<b>GOVERNMENTS</b>	
Dave Burdek/Sean Royer	Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development
Soren Odegard/Pat Gordeyko	Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties
Shannon Flint/Andy Ridge	Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development
<b>LIAISON</b>	
Don Reiter/Terry Dash	Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

AEPA acknowledges the support of its partner organizations and of the Crop Sector Working Group and Intensive Livestock Working Group.

#### Contact the AEPA

For more information about the Agri-Environmental Partnership of Alberta, please contact the AEPA Secretariat:

Agri-Environmental Partnership of Alberta  
 Phone: 780-427-3629 (toll-free through 310-0000)  
 Email: info@agpartner.ca

Or visit the AEPA's website, [www.agpartners.ca](http://www.agpartners.ca)



2013  
Annual Review







## ABOUT THE AGRI-ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNERSHIP OF ALBERTA

The Agri-Environmental Partnership of Alberta (AEPA) is an inclusive partnership of the agriculture industry, government and environmental stakeholders working together to proactively address agri-environmental issues from a policy perspective. This diverse group provides a forum for developing balanced policy input that encourages both a vibrant agriculture industry and a healthy, sustainable environment.

AEPA, established in January 2008, grew out of a need identified by many agricultural organizations for a transparent partnership between government and the agriculture industry and for a collaborative approach to resolving agri-environmental issues.

As a consensus-based partnership, AEPA provides a unified voice on agri-environmental issues in Alberta. The members of its Board and their alternates provide direct communication links to numerous organizations including: crop and livestock groups, federal, provincial and municipal governments, and an environmental non-government organization. The Board has two co-chairs, one from Alberta's agriculture industry and the other from the Government of Alberta (GoA). The Secretariat carries out administrative functions for AEPA.

AEPA takes a strategic, proactive approach to achieving its desired outcomes which are:

- Healthy agricultural landscapes sustain both agricultural productivity and ecological integrity.
  - A safe and secure water supply is assured for agricultural production.
  - Agricultural practices optimize productivity while minimizing risks to air, land and water.
- Alberta's agricultural producers are recognized as responsible environmental stewards.

By working together, AEPA aims to ensure that both agriculture and the environment thrive in Alberta.

This report reviews the AEPA's accomplishments in 2013 and looks ahead to 2014.

## VISION

Alberta's agriculture industry is profitable, accountable and recognized for its proactive, responsible environmental stewardship.

## MISSION

The AEPA is an inclusive multi-stakeholder partnership of government, industry and environmental stakeholders working together to proactively address agri-environmental issues from a policy perspective.

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## FROM AEPA'S INDUSTRY CO-CHAIR

### JACK SWAINSON

*Crop producer and Chair, Crop Sector Working Group*

2013 has been another banner year for AEPA. We have had great attendance and participation at our Board meetings and I would like to applaud all those individuals who contribute to our success. Your dedication, commitment and sharing of knowledge is invaluable to the Partnership.

One of our greatest strengths has been the involvement and contributions of our advisory teams (Water and Land-use Framework). Their work has covered many issues including the draft South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (SSRP), the draft Alberta Irrigation Strategy, and many other issues such as ecosystem services and wetlands policy. Thank you to those members who have given unselfishly of their time and expertise to these initiatives.

The Partnership enjoys a productive and visible relationship with our GoA ministers and staff as shown by their attendance at Board meetings and participation in advisory teams over the year. Their engagement is greatly appreciated and is also a tribute to the value we afford to them.

This year we saw a change in the AEPA Government Co-Chair. After 3 years as Co-Chair, Brenda Brindle retired and was replaced by Sean Royer, the new Executive Director, Environmental Stewardship Division, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development (ARD). I would like to thank Brenda for her valuable leadership and dedication during her time as Government Co-Chair. I would also like to welcome Sean to the role and thank him for the knowledge and current information he brings to the table.

In any organization there are always key individuals that need to be recognized for their skills, knowledge and dedication. Sincere appreciation to our General Manager, Janet Dietrich and our Projects Manager, Laura Polasek. Their tireless work ethic is a major factor in the success of this Partnership.

In closing, I encourage you to peruse all of the information in this Annual Review and be informed on our accomplishments and activities. I am looking forward to another involved and productive year in 2014 focusing on the agri-environmental issues that are important to the agriculture industry in Alberta.



## FROM AEPA'S GOVERNMENT CO-CHAIR

### SEAN ROYER

*Executive Director, Environmental Stewardship Division Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development*

Since starting as the new Government Co-Chair in October 2013, I have had the opportunity to make a number of observations about AEPA. Seeing the results of the Partnership from this past year and looking forward to 2014, the importance of AEPA is apparent.

What strikes me the most is the value of having a forum for the agriculture sector to discuss and address common agri-environmental policy issues. Using a consensus-based process, the Partnership offers increased knowledge and common understanding between its partners, not only of relevant issues but also of partners' perspectives specific to their industries. This collaborative approach results in a broad based perspective of the agricultural sector. This is important as agriculture is a significant land manager and the number one renewable and sustainable resource in Alberta generating substantial social, economic and environmental benefits now and into the future.

Another observation is the continued commitment of AEPA partners. AEPA was formed over five years ago and it is more important than ever for the agriculture sector to work collaboratively on increasingly complex issues. This commitment is shown through participation on the Board, advisory teams and committees, as well as partners providing financial contributions. And the commitment extends to ARD. AEPA is of significant value as it is a critical forum through which ARD engages with industry on a number of important agri-environmental issues in the province.

The successful nature of the Partnership is shown in the accomplishments of the past year. This includes providing consensus feedback to the draft SSRP, as well as to the Alberta Irrigation Strategy. Looking forward to the coming year, AEPA recognizes the importance of continued engagement in new and continuing agri-environmental policy processes such as Land-use Framework (LUF) and water related policy.

Also on the horizon for the agriculture sector is the increasing need to demonstrate the industry's environmental stewardship. It is becoming increasingly important as consumers and society are demanding more environmentally responsible food production systems. This means 'social license to produce' is becoming more significant to the agriculture sector and will be an important lens for AEPA to consider as it moves forward in 2014.

I would like to thank the partners for their continued involvement and significant contributions to AEPA. I am looking forward to another successful year for AEPA in 2014 with continued opportunities to work collaboratively on complex agri-environmental issues.

## Progress on the AEPA's Strategic Priorities

*In 2013, AEPA continued working on the three strategic priorities under its 2012-15 Strategic Plan.*

**PRIORITY 1: TO ENGAGE IN LAND-USE, WATER, AND AGRI-ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES.**

### LAND-USE PLANNING ISSUES

The LUF, released by the GoA in 2008, provides a comprehensive approach to land-use planning in Alberta. Development of land-use plans for Alberta's seven regions is a key strategy of the LUF. In October 2013, the GoA released the draft SSRP, the second of the seven plans to be drafted.

AEPA responded in several ways to the draft plan. In October, AEPA hosted an industry roundtable on behalf of ARD. The purpose was to create a clearer understanding of the draft SSRP to assist agricultural stakeholders in providing input during the formal public consultations. The roundtable offered participants the opportunity to increase their understanding of the plan from a broader agricultural perspective, and helped identify issues on which AEPA partners and stakeholders should further focus their time.

To further help agricultural stakeholders prepare for the formal consultations, AEPA also developed the AEPA Briefing for Agricultural Stakeholders on the Draft SSRP. This document was made available by AEPA partners to their membership.

AEPA stakeholders participated in the draft SSRP formal consultations that ran from November 5 – 28. The sessions were hosted in 18 locations in southern Alberta and in Edmonton, Red Deer and Drumheller.

Along with participation in the formal consultations, AEPA also developed consensus feedback on the draft plan. This feedback was forwarded to the ministers and deputy ministers of ARD and Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (ESRD).

In addition, AEPA representatives participated in a stakeholder discussion session in 2013 relating to the surface water and air quality management frameworks for the draft SSRP.



### WATER

Along with the water issues addressed in the feedback to the draft SSRP, AEPA developed feedback on Alberta's Irrigation – A Strategy for the Future. This strategy was released at the same time as the draft SSRP. Its purpose is to support the irrigation industry's ability to take advantage of enhanced economic opportunities and contribute to vibrant rural communities in the region. The consensus feedback was forwarded to the ministers of ARD and ESRD.

In 2013, AEPA worked with Ducks Unlimited Canada to partner in planning a pilot Wetland Management Course, designed to allow participants to learn about conservation, restoration and protection of wetlands. The pilot will be held in March 2014.

The new Alberta Wetland Policy (AWP) was released September 2013. During development of the policy, an AEPA representative participated in both a Wetland Value Working Group and a Wetland Mitigation Working Group which fed into the development of the AWP. In 2013, AEPA representatives attended North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) forums on wetland restoration and wetland policy implementation.

