

On Common Ground: Messages from the Agri-Environmental Partnership of Alberta

Intensive Livestock Working Group: Backgrounder

Submitted by the Intensive Livestock Working Group

The Intensive Livestock Working Group (ILWG) is a strategic alliance of eight of Alberta's mainstream livestock and poultry organizations, consisting of the following:

- Alberta Beef Producers
- Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association
- Alberta Chicken Producers
- Alberta Hatching Egg Marketing Board
- Alberta Milk
- Alberta Pork Producers
- Alberta Turkey Producers
- Egg Farmers of Alberta

The ILWG mandate is collaborate on overarching issues to maximize the livestock/poultry industry's influence on policy development and get the most value out of scarce resources. The organization normally meets four times a year with each member organization acting as host on a rotational basis.

OBJECTIVES

- The ILWG be an effective body who can contribute to public policy in a meaningful way.

The ILWG mandate is not to represent the livestock/poultry industry. Where it has proven to be effective is identifying emerging issues and developing a strong, common information base to assist member organizations develop policy. This process improves knowledge, understanding and results in policy continuity amongst the eight member organizations, thereby increasing the industry's influence on GOA policy development

- The ILWG members proactively address (be less reactionary) emerging issues.

The ILWG has established effective communication networks with key GOA executives (DM's, ADM's & Directors) and uses the network to constantly scan for emerging issues. Once an issue has been identified a process of information collection and knowledge improvement begins to assist member organizations develop positions and influence policy.

- Policy issues will be identified, projects developed and resources employed to deal with the issues in meaningful and time sensitive manner. Analysis and risk management studies will bring focus to those issues that are priorities and thus use fewer resources on issues that may have no or minimal effect on the livestock industry.

The ILWG recognizes it has limited resources and to be effective must restrict its activities to dealing with high priority issues. A thorough assessment of current and emerging issues resulted in a three year plan of action that was purposely limited to five priority areas:

- *Water rights and allocation policies*
- *Livestock/poultry operations impacts on water quality*
- *Ambient water/air quality frameworks (mandated through regional plans)*
- *Cumulative effects strategies*
- *Occupational Health and Safety*

- Through coordination of meetings and related correspondence the meetings promote efficiency and use fewer resources by providing clarity and by being results orientated.

Meetings are convened on a quarterly basis and agenda topics limited to preset priority issues and any emerging concerns (identified through the implementation of its issue scanning process). A concise information package is circulated two weeks prior to the meeting. The development of action items (both ongoing and new) is part of the meeting summary process, which in turn drives the work plan between meetings.

Monthly reports are circulated to member organizations to incrementally build a common information base and improve issue knowledge, which in turn facilitates collaboration and a shared approach to policy development.

- ILWG thoroughly evaluates its effectiveness tri-annually, which coincides with funding agreements.

The value of the ILWG to the industry has been demonstrated by member organizations extending the ILWG mandate in 2012 for another 3 years and stepping up to the plate with a significant year cash contribution to augment new funding from the Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency.

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