New Guidelines to Reduce Impacts on Agriculture

Agricultural Services staff are embarking on a project to identify agriculture boundary design guidelines to reduce land use conflicts, and achieve better transitions between agricultural and non-agricultural uses when new residential and commercial land uses are proposed.

Possible examples might include barrier fencing, vegetated buffers, increased setbacks from residences to agricultural land, siting to provide natural topographic or environmental barriers (to achieve more spatial separation), etc.

The guidelines can be applied to large residential and commercial developments bordering agricultural lands, and also to smaller ones, including first parcels out. Developers will use the guidelines when designing their proposals, and Administration will use them to evaluate applications proposed in agricultural areas.

Direction for this project comes from the Actions sections of the new County Plan: “Develop and apply ‘agriculture boundary design guidelines’ to minimize negative impacts on agricultural land from new non-agricultural land uses, including a consideration of increased building setbacks (policy 8.31).” In addition, this project will fulfill recommendations stemming from the Agriculture Master Plan approved in 2011.

It is anticipated the draft guidelines will be available for public comment and input during the spring of 2015, with implementation beginning in the summer of 2015.
Get Set to Grow

Watch for Agricultural Services’ Get Set to Grow workshop series beginning 2015. Here are just a few of the topics we have in mind.

• Farm and Ranch Succession Planning workshop
• Working Well workshop
• Beaver workshop
• Riparian Setback Implementation
• Wetland Restoration Pilot Project
• Crop Pests and Diseases
• Tree Pruning
• Horse Health and Management
• Weed and Pests
• Vegetable Gardening

Watch for details about these and other upcoming workshops at www.rockyview.ca/getset

Joint Workshops with Neighbouring Municipalities

LIVING IN THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Friday, February 6, 2015
Cochrane RanchesHouse
5:00 to 9:00 p.m. (doors open at 4:00 p.m.)
$35 per person, includes dinner

This annual forum hosted by the MD of Bighorn brings together rural and urban populations to discuss relevant environmental topics. This year Dr. Edward W. Bork will discuss feral horses in Alberta, including potential conflicts with agricultural operations; and Peter Sherrington will give a presentation titled “Being Aware of What is Around You”. Both presentations will explore how we can all become more aware of what is happening around us and how that awareness can be used to help affect positive change.

Tickets for this event are available in person at Rocky View County, 911 32 Avenue NE, Calgary, and by phone from Mountain View County 403-335-3311 ext.143 and the Municipal District of Bighorn 403-233-7678 or 403-673-3611.

For more details visit www.mdbighorn.ca

RANCHING OPPORTUNITIES

Thursday February 26, 2015
Olds College Alumni Centre
8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
$40/person includes lunch, snacks and beverages

The morning sessions will have speakers discussing the ranching industry, including: watering systems, winter grazing demonstration, feed efficiency, and genomics. The afternoon will include discussions on calving times and strategies as well as a keynote address from Theresa Dietrich on what your consumers want.

To register for this event, please contact Mountain View County Agricultural Services at 403-335-3311 Ext. 143 or email fmccarthy@mvcountry.com
Technical and Financial Incentives for Farmers and Ranchers

Several programs are available to assist you both technically and financially to implement projects and management practices that have a direct and positive impact on surface water quality, and that promote sustainable management of your operation.

ON-FARM ENERGY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

This program shares the cost of investments that improve energy efficiency on Alberta farms. This enables producers to conserve energy and reduce carbon emissions, ultimately reducing the environmental footprint of Alberta’s agriculture industry.

This program addresses three important industry priorities:

• Increased industry competitiveness. When producers make investments that improve energy usage on their farms, the result is a more competitive, adaptable, and sustainable provincial agriculture industry.

• Improved environmental stewardship. When producers use energy more efficiently, they are recognized as reliable stewards of Alberta’s resources.

• Improved energy management. Producers who install on-farm submeters are better aware of their energy usage and how to manage it to improve their bottom line.

Eligible projects include (but are not limited to):

• Construction projects that install high-efficiency equipment from the program’s funding list

• Retrofit projects that improve the operation’s energy usage per unit of production

• Installation of submeters to monitor on-farm electricity and/or natural gas usage

ON-FARM WATER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

This program shares costs relating to enhancements of a producer’s on-farm water supply management, arising from a long-term water management plan (LTWMP). These eligible costs are offered through standard and special incentive projects described in detail in the On-Farm Water Management Program factsheet.

• Standard incentive projects include construction of water sources such as wells, dugouts, spring developments, dams, and pipelines. These projects are eligible for reimbursement of up to one-third of expenses, to a maximum of $5,000 per applicant.

• Special incentive projects include well decommissioning, well pit conversions, water meters, water well depth measurement equipment, and connections to multi-user water supply pipelines. These projects are eligible for reimbursement of up to 50% of expenses, to a specified maximum per applicant or project.

There is no cost to producers for technical assistance provided by Agriculture and Rural Development (ARD) water specialists, relating to the completion and required prior approval of a long-term water management plan. You must be an agricultural producer to be eligible for this program, but no environmental farm plan (EFP) is needed.

ON-FARM STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

This program funds projects that help livestock and crop producers implement on-farm management practices in five areas that positively impact water quality and promote sustainable management of inorganic agricultural wastes, including:
• Grazing management: This includes riparian area fencing and management, summer and year-round watering systems, portable shelters or windbreaks and wetland restoration (some specific requirements apply; contact program lead for information), and shelterbelts. Examples:
  - Riparian area fencing and management
  - Year round summer watering systems
  - Portable shelters and windbreaks
  - Wetland restoration
  - Shelterbelt establishment

• Manure management: This includes improvements to manure storage facilities, livestock facilities runoff control and livestock facilities relocation. Examples:
  - Improved manure storage facilities
  - Livestock facility runoff control
  - Livestock facility and permanent wintering site relocation

• Crop input management: This includes new purchases of low-drift nozzles and air induction tips, sprayer cones and shrouds, chemical handling systems with jug rinse, sectional control operation system for sprayers and seeding equipment, sprayer boom height control, and weather monitoring equipment (upgrades, maintenance and replacement of existing equipment are not eligible). Examples:
  - Improved pesticide management
  - Improved nutrient management

• Fuel and ag waste management: This includes the purchase of new double-walled fuel tanks that are CSA or ULC approved and/or double-walled storage tanks for used oil that are identified with a ULC-652 name plate or equivalent, and plastic rollers for used grain bags. For an application for fuel storage to be accepted, at least one old fuel tank must be decommissioned. Examples:
  - Fuel storage
  - Used oil storage
  - Agricultural plastic waste management

• Other innovative stewardship solutions: This is project-based and requires one-on-one discussion with a technical representative of the program.

You must be an agricultural producer with an approved environmental farm plan to be eligible for these programs.

If you would like to complete an environmental farm plan or have questions about the Growing Forward Stewardship plans, please contact Laura Poile, agricultural services officer at 403-520-7273, lpoile@rockyview.ca
The Grain Bag Saga

Do you ever wonder what happens to the grain bags that either you or your neighbours bring to one of our transfer points?

This year the bags were sold to a broker that ships the plastic to Taiwan. We loaded two sea containers with a total of 38 tonnes. In Taiwan, the plastic will be shredded, washed, dried, and processed into small pellets. Those pellets will then be used to manufacture a range of polyethylene products. The bags are made of a very high quality plastic and are of great interest to recyclers world-wide. Rocky View Solid Waste and Recycling is always seeking new markets for our recyclables. This time, we got the best price from Taiwan, but next year it could be a North American recycler or another company abroad.

It may seem like the County is making a lot of money on residents’ plastic. Not true. Getting the bags from the collection site and getting it ready for shipment is not easy or inexpensive. When we receive the plastic it is either folded or in rolls. In order to be able to ship it economically, it must be baled in our portable baler. At this point, the program costs more than we receive but, without the recycling option, grain bags become a very problematic waste. They are difficult to handle, both on the farm and at the landfill. Burning is not an option; it is illegal because it is dangerous to both human health and the environment.

Rocky View County has been a leader in managing agricultural wastes. We work with a number of agencies in Western Canada to develop systems and programs to deal with difficult materials like grain bags and twine. We believe that some form of stewardship program, like the one in place for pesticide containers, will be required at some point to ensure the recycling program is sustainable. But until that time, we intend to keep refining our program to keep the material out of landfills and off fence lines.
LADIES LIVESTOCK LESSONS

January 16th-17th, 2015
STRATHMORE!

An opportunity to learn, socialize & connect with farming women.

REGISTRATION
$50 includes meals, coffee & snacks.
For more information or to register & pay contact Fiona at Mountain View County Agricultural Services. Phone: 403-335-3331 Ext 143. E-mail: hmeCarthy@mvcounty.com.
Registration closes January 10th.

HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS
Strathmore Travelodge 403-901.0000
Days Inn 403-934-1134
Best Western 403-934-5777

HOSTS
Kneehill County, Mountain View County, M.D. of Big Horn, Cows & Fish, Foothills Forage & Grazing Association, Wheatland County, Rocky View County.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 16TH
Strathmore Travelodge
4:00 pm to 9:00 pm
Canadian Market Update & Taking Your Beef to Market.
Brenda Schoepf - Alberta Rancher & Consultant.
Support (we will even do the dishes!)
Wine Tasting & Entertainment.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 17TH
Strathmore Travelodge
9:30 am to 3:30 pm
Morning Yoga class (optional)
7:30 to 8:30
Breakfast 8:30 to 9:30
Emergency Preparedness & Response.
Caring for Injured Livestock.
IHA - Strathmore Animal Health Clinic.
Freshen up your Feed ID!
Nicole Kimmel, Alberta Agriculture.
Tag Reading the New Way!
Allegro Technologies Sales/technology specialist.

#ladieslivestocklessons

HANG UP YOUR BOOTS AND COME TO THE 2015 LADIES LIVESTOCK LESSONS WINTER RETREAT!

AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARD

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Ashley Stewart, AGRICULTURAL SERVICES OFFICER

Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development Key Contact:
Michelle McKinnon

NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTION

The Agri-View newsletter is a free publication for Rocky View County residents. If you wish to be on the mailing list, please contact Agricultural Services.

If addressing is incorrect, or if you wish to unsubscribe, please contact Agricultural Services at 403-520-7273 or e-mail AgServices@rockyview.ca

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