

ACROSS THE FENCE

SPRING 2025
NEWSLETTER

ALBERTAAGSOCIETIES.CA

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MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



Tim Carson

CEO of Alberta Association of
Agricultural Societies

2023 – 2024 was a very interesting and challenging year for AAAS and our members. Drought, fires, floods all contributed to the diversity of hurdles, but as usual the Agricultural Societies were up to the challenge as was AAAS.

This past year saw the highest demand for AAAS member services ever. Strategic planning topped the list followed closely by governance training and conflict support. I personally visited 26 Agricultural Societies travelling more than 24,000 km and spending nearly 100 days on the road. I find this work to be incredibly rewarding but all encompassing. Many of the conversations and some of the meetings included the department staff. Carmen Andrew and company have been very supportive of the members and have collaborated with AAAS to successfully navigate through some of the most difficult challenges.

Unfortunately, the cost of providing these services and other critical components of AAAS programming has escalated beyond the income we receive. This is reflected in our financial statement. The AAAS board recognizes the value of these programs to our ag societies and agreed to proceed with the escalated support until our year end.

The organization is now looking at options for the continuation of the in-person programs which will include innovations to revenue generation. There were several applications to the federal and provincial governments requesting new program support, unfortunately, these were not successful. AAAS will continue to explore all options to effectively and efficiently support Agricultural Societies.

This year also marked a significant effort by our regional ag societies to advocate for additional support. As always AAAS's position for additional support referenced all our members. Whether we are speaking of our largest member, the Calgary Stampede, our 7 regional members, or the 284 primary ag societies, the impacts of these amazing organizations are critical to the communities they serve. As a result of this advocacy, Minister RJ Sigurdson commissioned a study of the regional ag societies.

At the time of this report the results of the report and the actions that might be taken have not been revealed. Unexpected consequences of the focus of the Alberta government and the study are that until a direction has been decided by the Minister, funding for AAAS to support our members will not go forward.

We continued to work on the strategies set out by our Board and the current strategic plan. AAAS creates and implements a 3-year strategic plan every 2 years. This process ensures all directors can be part of the strategic planning process, allowing AAAS to pursue an appropriate direction. 2024 was such a year. The board embarked on a 2 ½ day facilitated strategic planning process. The new strategic plan was approved at the June Board meeting.

From the Board and Staff, we wish every one of you an amazing summer 2025!

Tim Carson

CEO of Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies





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Critical Update

AGLC Charitable Gaming Policies Restructuring What Societies Need to Know

AGLC Updates Charitable Gaming Policies

Big changes are here for how your Ag Society can manage gaming proceeds! The Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Commission (AGLC) has announced significant updates to its Charitable Gaming Policies Handbook (CGPH), impacting eligible expenses, reporting expectations, and streamlined guidance on acceptable uses of charitable funds. All Societies that rely on gaming to support programs and infrastructure should review these updates to ensure ongoing compliance.

Details for Members

The AGLC has released an updated Charitable Gaming Policies Handbook, with a full policy review aimed at reducing administrative red tape and offering greater flexibility for charities like Agricultural Societies. This includes:

- A consolidated structure making the Handbook easier to navigate.
- Streamlined definitions of eligible and ineligible use of proceeds.
- Enhanced clarity on expenses related to building repairs, operations, programming, and community events.
- Introduction of a new Charity Quick Reference Guide, designed to help organizations quickly determine how funds can be used under the updated policies.

This change could affect how your Society plans and allocates funds for community initiatives, infrastructure improvements, and program delivery.

Key resources to review:

- [AGLC Bulletin & Full Handbook Overview](#)
- [Summary of Key Amendments \(PDF\)](#)
- [Charity Quick Reference Guide \(PDF\)](#)

AAAS strongly encourages all Agricultural Societies to review these documents as part of your regular financial and governance practices.

AGRICULTURE & IRRIGATION UPDATES

AGRICULTURE NEWS

Latest Ag updates
in Alberta



***Correction Notice:** Please note A previous version of this article contained incorrect information. Please refer to the official Alberta government websites for accurate grant details.

Unlocking Funding Opportunities for Agricultural Societies

Provincial grants are still available to support the work of Alberta's Agricultural Societies. These grants offer valuable funding to help sustain programming, enhance facilities, and ensure Ag Societies can continue serving as important rural hubs. The Community Initiatives Program (CIP) Operating Grant offers funding for ongoing core operations of non-profit organizations addressing social issues, making it ideal

for sustaining Ag Society programming. The Community Facility Enhancement Program (CFEP) Small provides up to \$125,000 to upgrade, expand, purchase, or build public-use community facilities, assisting with smaller-scale infrastructure projects. For more extensive endeavors, the CFEP Large grant offers between \$125,000 and \$1 million for substantial facility enhancements or new constructions.

Learn more & apply online:

[CIP Operating Grant](#) ↗

[CFEP Grant Small](#) ↗

[CFEP Grant Large](#) ↗

Protecting Alberta's Food Supply Chain

Alberta's government has announced the renewal of the Alberta Ag Plastic. Recycle It! program, reinforcing the province's commitment to sustainable agriculture. By extending this vital program until 2026, Alberta will continue to help farmers and ranchers safely recycle grain bags and

plastic twine. Since 2019, the program has already diverted more than 6,000 tonnes of ag plastics from landfills, preserving Alberta's land and water for future generations. This is another step forward in building a greener, more responsible agriculture sector.

Ag Plastic recycling program extended to 2026, keeping waste out of landfills.



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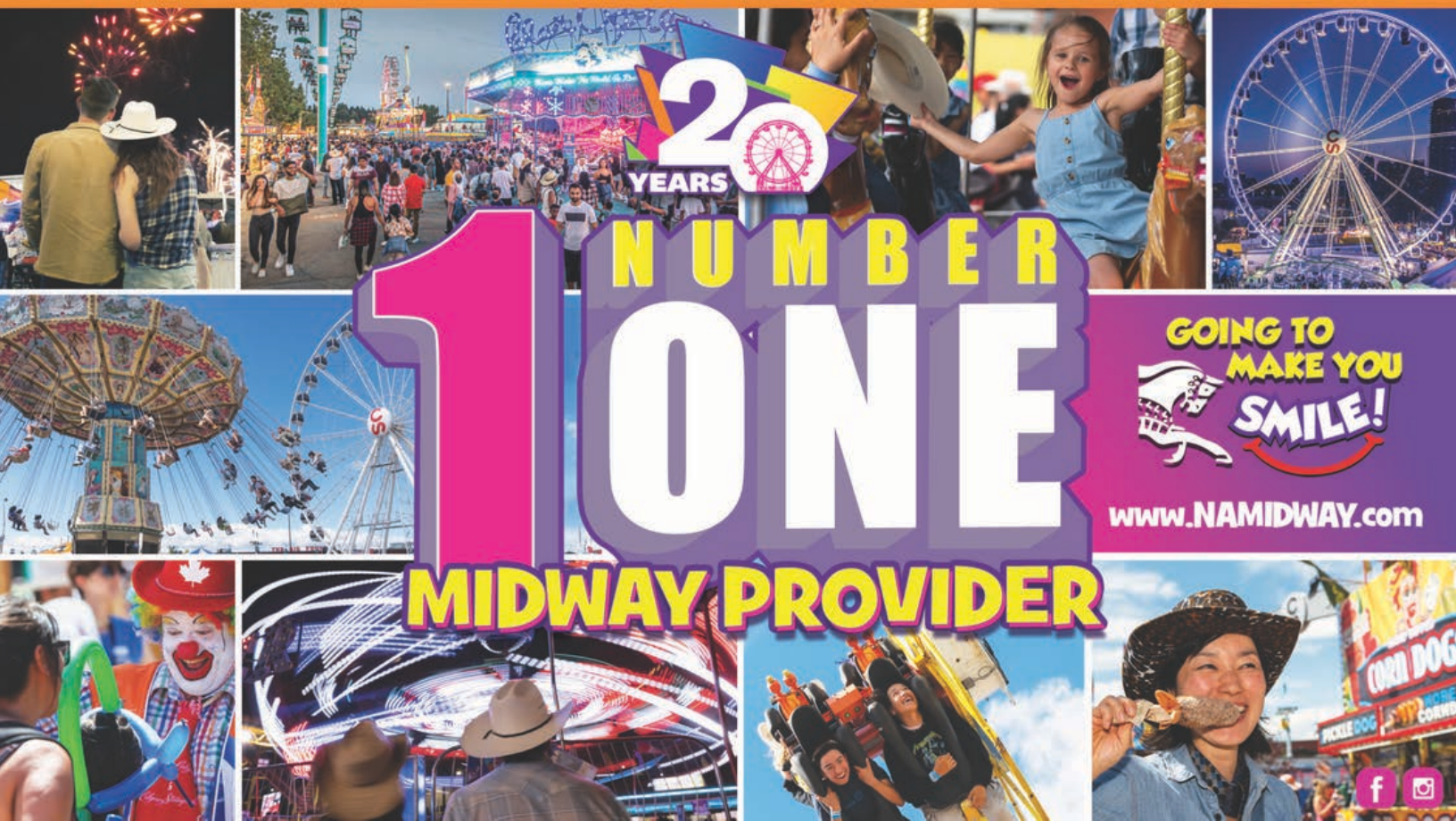
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MORE AGRICULTURE UPDATES

March 17th

FARM SAFETY WEEK

Canadian Agricultural Safety Week kicks off with a province-wide focus on safer farms.

March 17th marked the start of Canadian Agricultural Safety Week, spotlighting the importance of creating safer farms and rural communities. Under the theme “Safety is Our Promise,” this national campaign calls on all agricultural societies, farmers, and ranchers to make farm safety a top priority.

Canada Responds to China’s Tariffs on Agriculture

Federal relief rolls out as Alberta farmers brace for impact from China’s tariffs.

China has imposed 100% tariffs on Canadian canola oil, canola meal, and peas, along with 25% tariffs on pork, fish, and seafood products. This move comes after China’s ‘anti-discrimination’ investigation against Canada, and will significantly impact Alberta farmers.

Key Impacts on Alberta Producers

- Alberta is a top producer of canola and pulses (peas), which are now subject to these tariffs.
- Pork producers will also face new export barriers to China.
- The trade tension adds to ongoing challenges like U.S. trade uncertainty and animal disease risks.

Government of Canada Support

In response, the Government of Canada has introduced new measures through AgriStability to help farmers manage income losses:

The Alberta government is helping spread the message by investing in awareness programs and tools to reduce injuries and foster a safety-first mindset across the sector. Together, we are creating a stronger, safer agricultural future.

Putting Safety First Across Alberta

- Compensation rate increased to 90% (up from 80%) for 2025.
- Payment cap doubled to \$6 million.
- Faster cash flow: Eligible producers can access interim payments up to 75% of their expected AgriStability benefit.
- Targeted Advance Payments will be available for sectors or regions experiencing confirmed market disruptions.

Other Financial Tools

Farm Credit Canada is providing \$1 billion in new lending through the Trade Disruption Customer Support program to support producers affected by these tariffs and other trade challenges.

Next Steps for Alberta Farmers

Enroll or reassess your participation in AgriStability and other risk management programs.

Connect with your local ag society or business advisor for assistance.

Stay informed about export diversification and additional government actions.

Sources & More Info

- [Government of Canada News Release](#)
- [Farm Credit Canada Trade Disruption Lending Program](#)
- [AgriStability Program Details](#)

BUILDING STRONGER VOLUNTEERS

Looking to get involved in your community?

We're always looking for passionate volunteers to lend a hand—join us! Be sure to visit our Stronger Volunteers website at:

www.albertaagsocieties.ca/strongervolunteers/

The site is packed with resources designed to support both new and seasoned volunteers, as well as board members.

We offer:

- Certified Board Volunteer Training
- Bylaw Review Workshop
- Free Resources

Explore A range of templates and workbooks to guide you through essential tasks. Additionally, check out our video series: How to Make the Most of Your AGM, which offers tips and strategies to help your meeting run smoothly.

Whether you're a new volunteer or a longstanding board member, there's plenty of valuable information to ensure your success!

We provide a wealth of resources to promote leadership development and knowledge for personal growth, ensuring individuals have the tools they need to succeed.

BENCH SHOW JUDGING STANDARDS



GUIDE BOOKS



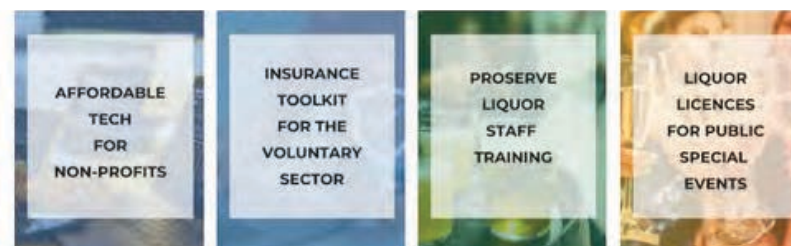
TEMPLATES AND WORKBOOKS



VIDEOS



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1. Legal Protection shields the association from lawsuits if a participant gets injured or suffers damages while involved in an event or activity.

2. Financial Security covers legal defense costs, settlements, and medical expenses, preventing the association from facing crippling financial losses.

3. Risk Management & Peace of Mind as it allows the association to focus on organizing activities without constant concern of excluded claims occurring.

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Stand on Fertile Ground



EMPOWERING ALBERTA'S RURAL COMMUNITIES: KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE 78TH ANNUAL AAAS CONVENTION

Edmonton, Alberta – March 5th, 2025



The **Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies (AAAS)** proudly reflects on the success of the 78th Annual Agricultural Societies of Alberta Convention, which brought together over 500 agricultural leaders, industry professionals, and community members from across the province. Held at the River Cree Resort from February 6-8th 2025, the convention served as a platform for collaboration, learning, and recognition of outstanding contributions to Alberta's agricultural sector.

Engaging Discussions and Informative Sessions

The convention featured a diverse lineup of engaging sessions, keynote speakers, panel discussions, and interactive workshops covering key topics such as rural sustainability, event management, technological advancements in business and agriculture, as well as community engagement. Attendees gained valuable insights from industry experts and shared best practices that will help strengthen their local agricultural societies.

Networking and Community Building

One of the highlights of the event was the opportunity for attendees to connect with like-minded professionals, fostering relationships that will support the growth and sustainability of agricultural initiatives across Alberta. The convention also provided a space for agricultural societies to exchange ideas and discuss challenges facing rural communities. The Saturday night gala added to the excitement, with attendees embracing the "Dress as Your Favourite Decade" theme, making for a fun and nostalgic evening of celebration and camaraderie.

Dynamic Tradeshow Experience

The AAAS Tradeshow was a key feature of this year's convention, bringing together a diverse range of exhibitors showcasing the latest products, services, and innovations in the agricultural and event management sectors. Attendees had the opportunity to engage with industry leaders, explore new technologies, and discover solutions to enhance their local agricultural societies. The tradeshow provided a valuable platform for networking, fostering new partnerships, and equipping agricultural societies with the tools and resources needed to drive future success.

Word from our CEO about the 78th Annual AAAS Convention

“Bringing people together from across the province is an unparalleled opportunity in all our efforts...at the end of the day, we put on great sessions, we put on great speakers [...], but the opportunity to talk to your peers and find out what is going on across the province with other agricultural societies and other communities is unmatched, and I love the positive energy that happens here! Our attendees are all pumped to [return home] and really get back into their communities to make some positive progressions.”

Tim Carson, CEO

Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies

Celebrating Excellence in Agriculture

During the convention, AAAS honoured individuals and organizations who have made significant contributions to Alberta's agricultural community. The AAAS Recognition Awards celebrated excellence in leadership, education, innovation, and community service, highlighting the dedication of those who work tirelessly to support, promote, and learn more about agriculture in the province.

Success of the Next Generation Program

This year's convention saw a remarkable turnout for the Next Generation Program, an initiative designed to engage young leaders in the agricultural sector. Sponsored by AFSC, this program provided mentorship opportunities, special workshops, and a discounted registration rate for attendees aged 18-40. Participants expressed enthusiasm about the program, citing its impact on their professional development and future involvement in agricultural societies.

Looking Ahead

As the Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies looks toward the future, the success of this year's convention reinforces the importance of these gatherings in shaping the future of agriculture in Alberta. Plans are already underway for the 79th Annual Agricultural Societies of Alberta Convention, with even more opportunities for education, networking, and recognition.

Thank You to Sponsors and Partners

AAAS extends its sincere gratitude to all sponsors, exhibitors, and volunteers who contributed to making this event a success. Their support ensures that agricultural societies continue to thrive and play a vital role in Alberta's rural communities.

For more information about the Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies and upcoming events, please visit www.albertaagsocieties.ca.

Contact:

For general, media inquiries, interviews, or additional information about the Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies and its initiatives, please reach out to us at the office here: **(780) 427-2174 | info@albertaagsocieties.ca**



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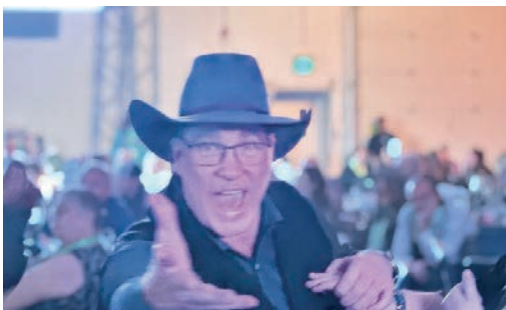
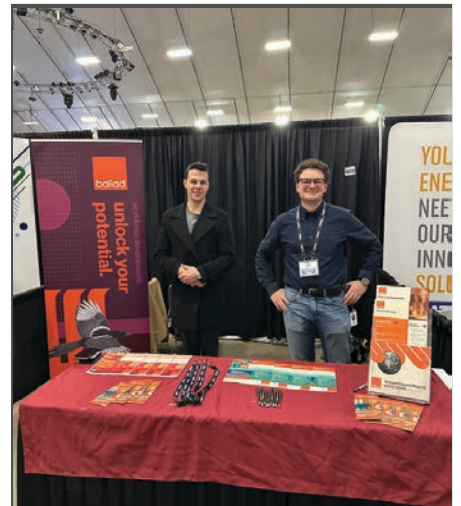


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**ALBERTA ASSOCIATION OF
AGRICULTURAL SOCIETIES
78TH ANNUAL CONVENTION
FEBRUARY 6-8, 2025
RIVER CREE RESORT & CASINO
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Thank you to all the delegates who attended the 78th Annual Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies (AAAS) Convention at the River Cree Resort and Casino from February 6-8, 2025. We appreciate your participation, insights, and commitment to strengthening Alberta's agricultural societies. Your engagement made this event a success, and we look forward to seeing you again next year!



2025 AAAS CONFERENCE & TRADE SHOW

THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR EXHIBITORS!

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- Alberta Assn. of Recreation Facility Personnel - AARFP
- Alberta Horticultural Association
- Alberta Municipalities
- Alberta Open Farm Days - AAAS
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2024 BY THE NUMBERS

ALBERTA OPEN FARM DAYS



Alberta Open Farm Days Started in 2013 with the goal of offering farmers and ranchers an opportunity to tell their story and help Albertans understand where their food comes from. This has been accomplished through the creation of a two-day event that encourages all Albertans to take a day or overnight trip within the province and experience farm life, or take in a culinary event that celebrates local food and products. Since its humble beginnings, Open Farm Days has grown and many of the hosts have grown along with it. We are confident the future will continue to provide new and fun ways to discover and experience the Alberta agriculture story.

NEXT YEAR

Join us for the 13th Annual Alberta Open Farm Days on **August 16th and 17th, 2025** at participating locations across the Province. For more information, please visit albertaopenfarmdays.ca or contact info@albertaopenfarmdays.ca

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



ASSOCIATED PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

Over the years, Alberta Open Farm Days has expanded to include unique professional development opportunities for our hosts to help them grow into successful AG-Tourism Programs.

Associated Programs Include:

- North American Farm Direct Marketing Association (NAFDMA) Scholarship
- Open Farm Days Coaching Program

QUOTES

The important factor was having people learn first hand about bison and having a First Nations representative to speak to the importance of the bison to their culture.

- **Glengary Bison Ltd.**

Visitors were genuinely interested and engaged with what was being shared. Many visitors had never heard of flower farming or alpaca raising in Alberta so it was a new experience for many.

- **Blooms on 7 Flower Farm**

Anytime a family can see where their food comes from is a good thing. Anytime a city family can see and experience rural Alberta is huge. When I was a kid many families were still on the family farm. I am one of three kids and the only one actively involved in ag, and it is not on our family farm. As people move out of the country into urban centres there is a disconnect with agriculture. People were thrilled to visit the country, and ask us questions about things we take for granted.

- **The Cherry Farm**

WHAT POSITIVE IMPACTS DID YOU SEE FROM THE EVENT?

Many people were exposed to animals and the rural way of life. They were able to interact with producers and find that they were educated, responsible, articulate and caring people with regard to the welfare of their animals and the environment.

- **Big Country Agricultural Society**

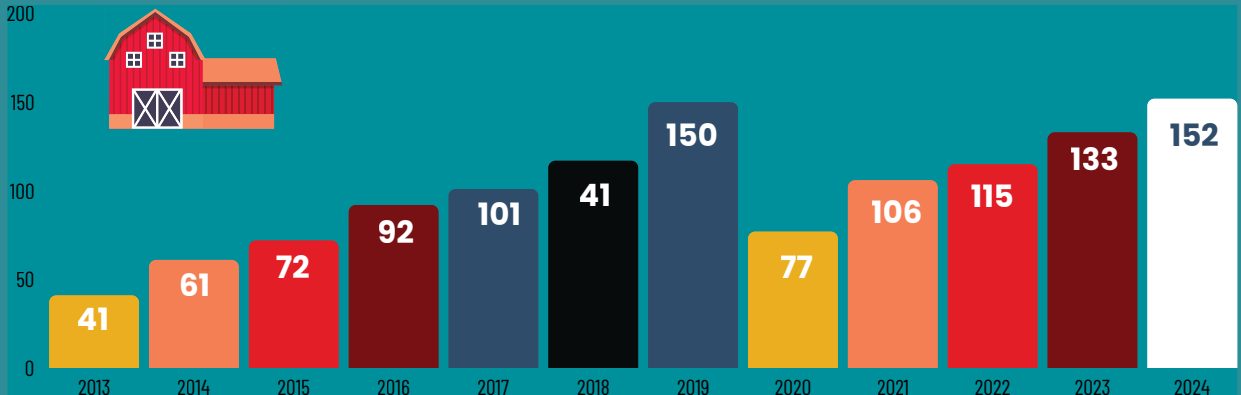
We feel that recognizing 'Open Farm Days' and the importance agriculture is to everyone right across the country, it is important to educate and bring attention to the ever growing concern of Food Insecurity. Alberta ranked as having one of the highest percentages of its population concerned about food security. That is not always evident to rural communities as we have populations of small acreages, farming families and in particular we have the Hutterite Colonies that are playing an increasing role in growing, producing and processing both meat, vegetables and fruit.

- **Stettler District Agricultural Society** 22

THE NUMBERS

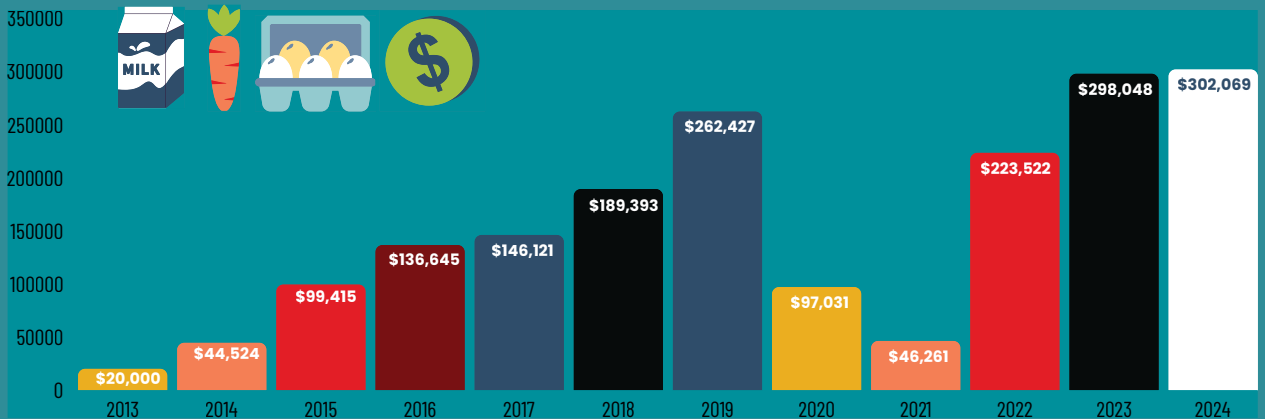
Farms enjoyed by the public

Total Farms 1217



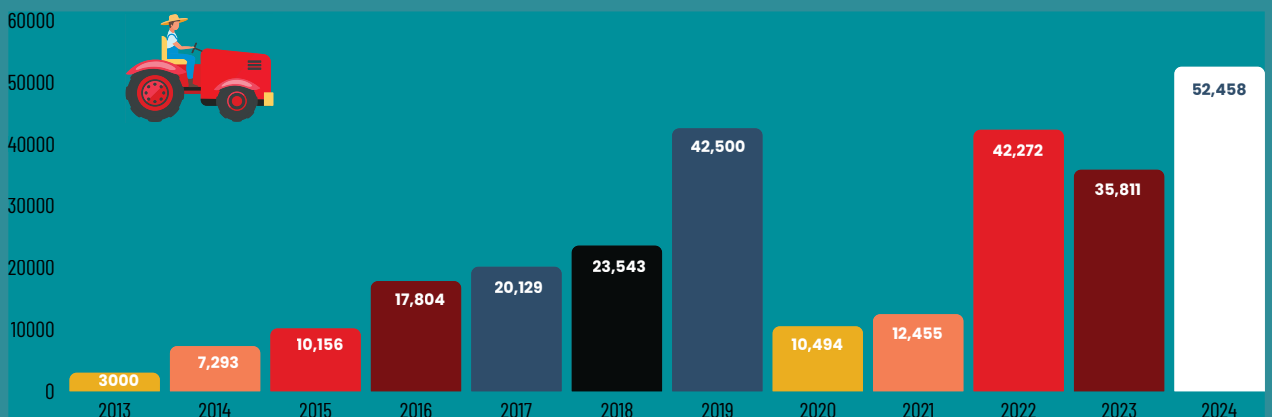
Sales spent directly supporting Alberta food and products

Total sales \$1,748,836



Visits to participating farms and culinary events across Alberta

Total visits 235,643





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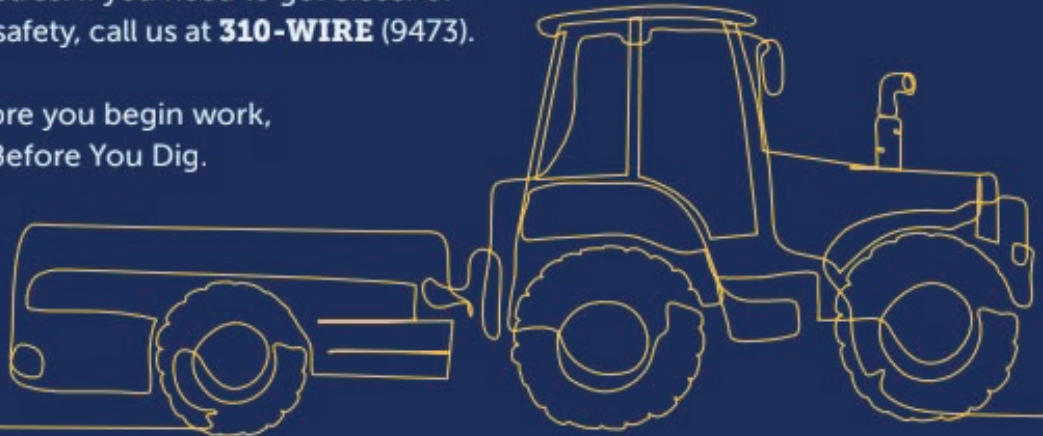
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AAAS

INDUSTRY PARTNER PROFILE



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- Every Saturday & Sunday starting April 5th
- 2 Partner Profiles posted daily!

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- Region 4: Jackie Tomayer & Sebastien Dutrisac
- Region 5: Natasha Dombrosky & Fred Young
- Region 6: Audrey Hewing

AAAS INSPIRES VIBRANCY IN ALBERTA COMMUNITIES

Education, Facilitation and collaboration creates opportunities that empower Agricultural Societies, Inspiring Rural Alberta to reach its highest potential

Excellence in direction and execution. Success through collaboration. Motivation through education and engagement. Advocacy through example. Dedicated to strengthen Agricultural Societies and their communities

RELEVANCE & GROWTH

- Membership Value & Services
- Leadership Development & Training
- Programs and Events

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

- Stakeholders Relations & Advocacy
- AG Society Support Programs
- Infrastructure Renewal Strategy

CONTACT US

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