

Mackenzie County Agriculture Service Board Business Plan 2014-2016 Schedule A

INTRODUCTION

Mackenzie County consists of approximately 7.9 million hectares, which makes it the largest municipality in Alberta. There are roughly seven hundred farms within the municipality, consisting of mixed to strictly grain farms. With a large Mennonite population a lot of old fashioned values and methods are being maintained.

There is approximately 539,000 acres currently in production. This number is going to increase dramatically within the next 2 -5 years as approximately 136,000 acres of Crown Land has been sold by public auction in 2011 and 2012 with more to be sold within the next 3-5 years. As a result of this agricultural land base expansion the County has been experiencing huge requests from ratepayers to provide infrastructure to these new lands such as roads and drainage channels. This increase in demand has resulted in Council having to review, and in some cases rewrite Public Works and ASB policies to help combat the problem.

It is definitely a time of change for Mackenzie County ASB, however with strong leadership, commitment and cooperation from all parties these obstacles can be overcome.

VISION

Sustainable agriculture in our region continues with new value added agricultural farms and businesses.

MISSION

Encourage responsible and sustainable development of our agricultural industry by:

- ✦ Continually assessing and recognizing the needs and direction of the local agricultural industry;
- ✦ Establishing policies and promote practices favourable for healthy agricultural climate in the region;
- ✦ Identifying obstacles and working to resolve problems that arise;
- ✦ Work with other levels of government and stakeholders to expand the agricultural industry in our region

VALUES

- ✦ Be flexible – timely recognition when a change is needed to address agricultural industry issues;
- ✦ Be responsible – promotion of policies, practices and actions supporting sustainable local agricultural industry;
- ✦ Be fair – uniform and fair treatment for all while keeping the overall agricultural industry in mind.

GOALS

1. Encourage development of new value-added agricultural farms and agri-businesses.
2. Promote sustainable agricultural policies and practices.
3. Strong internal policies and programs to support responsible agricultural land development.
4. Appropriate land uses within the County.
5. Continuing agricultural land expansion.

GOAL 1 – Encourage development of new value-added agri-businesses.			
Strategy: Introduction of programs, seminars and activities.			
	Actions	Person Responsible	Timeline
1	Introduce local seminars & work with Rural small business advisor. a) Weed and Grasshopper Workshops	Agricultural Fieldman (request topics from farmers through the next County Image & Big Deal Bulletin).	As Required Ongoing.
2	Articles for the County Image – new trends and opportunities.	Ag. Fieldman and ASB.	Article per every issue.
3	Agricultural Fair & Tradeshow	ASB, Ag. Fieldman.	Annual
4	Bursaries for Agricultural Education & Animal Health.	Ag. Fieldman, CAO & Finance Committee.	Annual – work with Finance Committee.
5	Support Applied Research Program.	ASB, Ag. Fieldman.	Ongoing support to MARA.

GOAL 2 - Promote sustainable agricultural policies and practices.			
Strategy:			
1. Gain understanding and stay up-to-date regarding Provincial Acts, regulations and land use policies.			
2. Promote and Support Agricultural Research			
	Actions	Person Responsible	Timeline
1	Attendance of ASB Conference.	ASB members, Ag. Fieldman & CAO.	Annual.
2	Workshops to discuss new provincial regulations and policies.	ASB members, Ag. Fieldman & CAO.	Annual and Ongoing.
3	Continue to Support the Mackenzie Applied Research Association	ASB & Council	Annual and Ongoing

GOAL 3. Strong internal policies and programs to support responsible agricultural land development.			
Strategy: Provision of various programs and services, ongoing review of internal policies to assure alignment with Provincial documents.			
	Actions	Person Responsible	Timeline
1	Annual review of ASB Policies.	ASB, Ag. Fieldman & CAO.	Annual – in November.
2	ASB Programs Review (inclusive SWOT analysis, assessment and update).	ASB, Ag. Fieldman.	Annual – in November.
3	Ongoing ASB Programs, Supportive Services & Pest Control Management	ASB, Ag. Fieldman.	Ongoing.
	a) Water Pumping Program	Ag Fieldman	April -October
	b) Weed Control Act Regular inspections are done on private land and Green Zone (oilfield) to combat Noxious & Prohibited Noxious weeds. The Roadside Spraying Program consists of a three year rotation in which every road is blanket sprayed for maximum effectiveness. The County also has a roadside mowing program in which every road is mowed once a year. There are no prohibited noxious weeds reported in Mackenzie County.	Ag Fieldman, Weed Inspectors	May -October
	c) Backsloping Program (Soil Conservation Act)	Ag Fieldman	Annual
	d) VSI Program (Animal Health Act)	Ag Fieldman	Ongoing

	Actions	Person Responsible	Timeline
	<p>e) Diseased Bison (Animal Health Act) Mackenzie County is working cooperatively with Wood Buffalo National Park and Alberta Beef Producers to monitor the movement of Bison in the area. Bison periodically stray beyond boundaries and there is a possibility of contaminating domestic cattle herds with Brucellosis Tuberculosis and anthrax. At this point, there have been no reportable diseases in Mackenzie County.</p>	Ag Fieldman, CAO	Ongoing
4	<p>Inspections & Enforcement act (Soil Conservation Act) Inspections of Flood Control Ditches for Soil Erosion. Approximately 12 inspections were done in 2013. All new roads & Ditches are grass seeded to help prevent erosion and assist with Weed Control.</p>	Ag Fieldman	Fall
5	<p>Pest Control Programs (Pest Control Act) Beaver Control Mackenzie County has a \$50 bounty maintenance on flood control channels, culverts, and some water ways.</p>	Ag Fieldman, Weed Inspector	Annual
6	<p>Crop Disease (Pest Control Act) The County intends to inspect filed for Clubroot, Fusarium, and Blackleg in 2014. The County did participate in the Grasshopper Survey in 2013.</p>	Ag Fieldman, Weed Inspector	Annual

GOAL 4. Appropriate land uses within the County.

Strategy:

Ensure that agricultural land in Mackenzie County is utilized in a manner that coincides with provincial and municipal planning documents with consideration of soil classifications.

	Actions	Person Responsible	Timeline
1	Prepare for upcoming Land use framework for Lower Peace Region.	ASB, Ag. Fieldman, CAO.	April 2013.
2	Gain understanding of the County's MDP and IMDP.	ASB, Ag. Fieldman.	Ongoing.

Goal 5. Continuing agricultural land expansion.

Strategy:

Continuing to lobby Provincial government to sell more crown land for agricultural use.

	Actions	Person Responsible	Timeline
1	Identify needs for expansion (consider loss of agricultural land on provincial scale).	Ag Fieldman, ASB.	Ongoing.
2	Identify areas that can support expansion.	Ag Fieldman, ASB.	Ongoing.