

AGENDA
MD OF RANCHLAND NO. 66
AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARD MEETING
CHAIN LAKES PROVINCIAL PARK
May 6, 2025

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA Pages 1 - 2

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

ASB Minutes from March 4, 2025Page 3 – 6

3. BUSINESS

A. Old Business

- i. 2025 Beef "n" Bean
- ii. ASB Action Items Page 7
- iii. Coal Statement of Concern
Tabled from Mar. 4, 2025 Meeting
- iv. Westin Foundation Funding

B. New Business

- i. Bio Control Consortium
Update - Rick
- ii. Bio Control Summit
Report -Rick & Shayna
- iii. Crown Managers Forum
Report – Harry & Cam
- iv. Livestock Scale
- v. Ag. Section of MD Website
- vi. Producer Weed Assistance Program Budget
- vii. 2025 Schedule of ASB Rates & Fee Pages 8 - 9
RFD
- viii. IWMP Weed Groups Page 10
RFD
- ix. Riparian Assistance Program Terms & Conditions Page 11
RFD
- x. Weed Assistance Program Terms & Conditions Page 12
RFD
- xi. 2025 Staff Update

4. CORRESPONDENCE

Agriculture Tariffs – Minburn County	Page 13 - 14
Farmer Pesticide Certification – MD of Greenview	Page 15
BILL C-293 – Parkland County	Pages 16 - 17
AgKnow – Cypress County	Page 18
Prov. ASB Conference Decorum – Big Lakes County	Pages 19 - 20
Broadband Access – Starland County	Pages 21 - 22

5. ADJOURN

Information

Upcoming Events

Southern Alberta Grazing School for Women
July 16 – 17, 2025 – Twin Butte

NAISMA Conference
Nov. 3 – 6, 2025 – Lake Tahoe

Celebrating Rangelands
November 13, 2025 – Claresholm

MD OF RANCHLAND NO. 66
AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARD MINUTES
Tuesday, March 4, 2025

The regular meeting of the Agricultural Service Board of the Municipal District of Ranchland No. 66 was held in Council Chambers in the Municipal Office on Tuesday, March 4, 2025 commencing at 10:03am

<u>IN ATTENDANCE:</u>	Jody Wilson, Chairman Lucy Streeter, Board Member Don Mowat, Board Member Roxy Wideman, Board Member Ron Davis, Reeve Harry Streeter, Councillor Cameron Gardner, Councillor
	Rick Niwa, Agricultural Fieldman, Recording Secretary Shayna Jones, Assistant Agricultural Fieldman Erika Holowath, Ag & Enviro Stewardship Coordinator, Scribe Robert Strauss, CAO
<u>REGRETS:</u>	Donna Wilson, Board Member
<u>CALL TO ORDER:</u>	Chairman Jody Wilson called the meeting to order at 10:03 am.
<u>ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA</u>	Cam Gardner requested to add Coal Resolutions under New Business.
<u>M27/03/25</u>	Moved by Member Lucy Streeter to accept new addition to the agenda and to add Coal Resolutions under new business item 7. Carried.
<u>M28/03/25</u>	Moved by Member Roxy Wideman to accept the new agenda as presented. Carried.
<u>APPROVAL OF MINUTES</u>	Moved by Member Harry Streeter to approve the minutes from February 4, 2025. Carried.
<u>OLD BUSINESS</u>	

2025 Provincial ASB Resolutions	Board members received a verbal report on Provincial ASB Resolutions.	
M30/03/04/25	Moved by Member Don Mowat to accept the verbal report on the Provincial ASB Resolutions as information.	Carried.
Rental Equipment Policy	Board Members reviewed the updates to the Rental Equipment Policy.	
M31/03/04/25	Moved by Member Lucy Streeter to accept the Rental Equipment Policy for information.	Carried.
ASB Action Items	Board Members reviewed and discussed ASB Action Items.	
M32/03/04/25	Moved by Member Ron Davis to accept ASB Action Items for information.	Carried.
2025-2029 ASB Grant Application	Board Members reviewed the 2025-2029 ASB Grant Application.	
M33/03/04/25	Moved by Member Harry Streeter to accept the 2025-2029 ASB Grant Application as information.	Carried.
<u>NEW BUSINESS</u> SRM Conference	Members received a verbal report of the SRM Conference.	
M34/03/04/25	Moved by Member Don Mowat to accept SRM Conference as information.	Carried.
PVMA Conference	Members received a verbal report of the PVMA Conference.	
M35/03/04/25	Moved by Member Ron Davis to accept PVMA Conference as information.	Carried.
Crown Managers Forum	Members received information on the Crown Managers Forum and decided who would be attending.	

M36/03/04/25	Moved by Member Lucy Streeter to send members to Crown Managers Forum as discussed.	Carried.
2025 Schedule of Producer Weed Assistance Programs	Board members reviewed RFD for 2025 Schedule of Producer Weed Assistance Programs	
M37/03/04/25	Moved by Member Roxy Wideman to accept the proposed 2025 Schedule of Producer Weed Assistance Programs as presented and forward it to council for their consideration.	Carried.
2025 Beef 'n' Bean	Members discussed date choice and potential speakers for 2025 Beef 'n' Bean event.	
M38/03/04/25	Moved by Member Roxy Wideman to schedule the 2025 Beef 'n' Bean for September 26, 2025.	Carried.
M39/03/04/25	Moved by Member Lucy Streeter to have staff reach out to Jerry Carroll, Danny Hooper and Dan Gilles to find out availability and prices.	Carried.
Weston Foundation Funding	Members discussed Weston Foundation Funding.	
M40/03/04/25	Moved by Member Cam Gardner to accept Weston Foundation Funding for information.	
April ASB Meeting		Carried.
M41/03/04/25	Moved by Member Roxy Wideman to not hold April meeting.	Carried.
Coal Resolution		
M42/03/04/25	Moved by Member Roxy Wideman to table Coal Statement of Concern regarding coal development until next meeting for further discussion.	Carried.

CORRESPONDENCE

ASB Summer Tour – Wheatland County
Declaration of Agricultural Disaster – Northern Sunrise County
BILL C-293 - Lacombe County

M43/03/04/25

Moved by Member Lucy Streeter to accept correspondence for information.

Carried.

ADJOURNMENT

M44/03/04/25

Moved by Chairman Wilson that the agenda matters have been concluded and the meeting be adjourned at 12:37 pm.

These minutes approved this ____ day of ____ 2025.

Jody Wilson, Chairman

Rick Niwa, Agricultural Fieldman

ASB Action Items

March 4, 2025

Designate	Description	Status
Staff	Forward 2025 Schedule of Producer Weed Assistance Programs to Council	Complete
Staff	Contact Jerry Carroll, Danny Hooper & Dan Gilles for Pricing & Availability for Beef n Bean	Complete

February 4, 2025

Designate	Description	Status
Staff	Donate \$2000 to FFGA	Completed
Staff	Send letter to producers with unpaid invoices for weed control	Completed
Staff	Draft recommendations to address with unpaid weed control invoices	Pending
Staff	Update Rental Equipment Policy and forward to council for their consideration	Completed
Staff	Recommend council review the ASB Bylaw 2024-01	Completed
Staff	Recommend that council review the ASB Act	Completed

January 7, 2025

Designate	Description	Status
Staff	Present 2024 ASB Year End Report to Council	Completed

November 12, 2024

Designate	Description	Status
Staff	Create list of annual sponsorships and bring to next meeting	Completed
Staff	Apply for 2025 to 2029 ASB & Enviro Grant	Completed
Staff	Complete Farm Family Award Nomination	Completed

October 8, 2024

Designate	Description	Status
Staff	Donate \$2000 to AISC in 2025	Completed

September 3, 2024

Designate	Description	Status
Staff	Donate \$1000 to AG for Life	Completed
Staff	Agriculture and Environmental Stewardship Coordinator report on WBR Tour	Completed

June 4, 2024

Designate	Description	Status
Staff	Register & secure lodging for members and staff to attend the NAISMA conference	Completed
Staff	Add local MLA as a cc on Weed Regulation Letter and send out	Completed

May 21, 2024

Designate	Description	Status
Staff	Forward IWMP to Council for Their Consideration	Completed
Staff	Forward 2024 Schedule of ASB Rates & Fees to Council for Their Consideration	Completed
Staff	Forward 2024 Schedule of Producer Weed Assistance Programs to Council	Completed
Staff	Request that Council Direct Finance & Admin. to create a Contingency Fund	Completed
Staff	Write a letter to the MD of Ranchland regarding the Weed Reg. Review	Completed

March 12, 2024

Designate	Description	Status
ASB Staff	Confirm availability of Beef "n" Bean Speaker Bill Hanlon	Completed
ASB Staff	Present Updated Weed Control Policy to Council for Their Consideration	Completed
ASB Staff	Present Ag. Pest and Nuisance Policy to Council for Their Consideration	Completed
ASB Staff	Present Soil Conservation Act Policy to Council for Their Consideration	Completed
ASB Staff	Present Animal Health Act Policy to Council for Their Consideration	Completed
ASB Staff	Register and Secure Lodging for ASB Members and Staff to Crown Managers Forum	Completed

M.D. OF RANCHLAND NO. 66
REPORT TO THE ASB
Request for Decision (RFD)

Title: 2025 Schedule of ASB Rates and Fees

Meeting Date: May 6, 2025

Originated By: Rick Niwa, Agricultural Fieldman

Background: Rates and Fees for ASB services, equipment use, and rental rates, are outlined in the Schedule of ASB Rates and Fees. The ASB reviews the schedule on an annual basis and recommends rates and fees for councils' consideration.

Recommendation: For 2025, staff recommend the following changes,
1. Add "*Electric Backpack Sprayer*" as outlined in the attached schedule.
2. Add "*3 Point Hitch Sprayer*" as outlined in the attached schedule.

Benefits: Defines the rates and fees for ASB services, equipment use and equipment rentals.

Disadvantages: None

Strategic Pillar: 2. Infrastructure and Service Delivery
4. Financial Sustainability

Options for Action: 1. That the ASB accepts the proposed 2025 Schedule of ASB Rates and Fees as presented and forward it to council for their consideration.
2. That the ASB directs staff to adjust the 2025 Schedule of ASB Rates and Fees as directed and forward the amended schedule to council for their consideration.

Financial Considerations: None

Attachments: Proposed 2025 Schedule of ASB Rates and Fees

<u>2025 Schedule of ASB Rates and Fees</u>								
<u>Item</u>	<u>Rate per Unit</u>	<u>Unit Type</u>	<u>Damage Deposit</u>	<u>Cleaning</u>				
Rentals								
Manual Backpack Sprayer	\$10	Day	Repairs billed at cost +25%, Replacement, if necessary, billed at cost	\$10				
Electric Backpack Sprayer	\$30	Day		\$10				
3 Point Hitch Sprayer	\$100	Day		\$25				
Livestock Scale	\$100	Day	\$150 at First Use	\$50				
Equipment								
Side X Side	\$25	Hour						
1/2 Ton Truck	\$30	Hour						
3/4 Ton Truck	\$40	Hour						
Trailer	\$10	Hour						
Backpack	\$5	Hour						
Truck Mount Sprayer	\$20	Hour						
UTV Mount Sprayer	\$10	Hour						
Labour								
First Employee	\$80	Hour						
Additional Employees	\$40/per	Hour						
Other								
Weed Control Resulting From Non Compliance With a Weed Notice		Surcharge	35% of invoice not including GST					
Herbicide/Materials	Cost plus 10%							
Equipment and Staff will be invoiced on a per hour basis, in 6 minute intervals (1/10th of an hour), rounded down to the nearest interval , for each item used from the time of departure from the municipal agriculture shop until return.								
For example, if it takes 1 hour to travel to a site, 1 hour at the site and 1 hour return, each item used will be invoiced for 3 hours								

M.D. OF RANCHLAND NO. 66
REPORT TO THE ASB
Request for Decision (RFD)

Title: IWMP Updates

Meeting Date: May 6, 2025

Originated By: Rick Niwa, Agricultural Fieldman

Background: The Integrated Weed Management Plan (IWMP) is reviewed on an ongoing basis, to ensure it reflects the current status invasive weeds within the municipality and the potential introduction of new species. The plan is a living document and can be updated whenever necessary, however most revisions occur on an annual basis.

The 2025 version contains minor adjustments to weed groups as outline below.

Recommendation:

1. Move *Common Tansy* from group 3 to group 2 in all zones.
2. Move Common Mullien to Group 5 in all zones. (previously Group 3 in Zone C and Group 4 in Zones A & B)
3. Move Hawkweed to Group 5 in all zones. (previously Group 4 in Zones B & C).

Benefits: Ensures municipal weed management goals and strategies align with conditions on the landscape. Increases accountability and clarity regarding invasive species management.

Disadvantages: Changes to the IWMP, including species movement within weed groups, could create confusion for producers when applying for the assistance programs. However, ASB staff are available to assist producers with assistance applications.

Strategic Pillar:

1. Environmental Stewardship
2. Infrastructure and Service Delivery
5. Collaborative Partnerships
6. Community

Options for Action:

1. That the ASB accept the proposed revisions to the IWMP, as presented, and forward them to council for their consideration.
2. That the ASB directs staff to amend the IWMP as discussed and forward it to council for their consideration.
3. Any other action the ASB deems prudent.

Financial Considerations None

Attachments: None

M.D. OF RANCHLAND NO. 66
REPORT TO THE ASB
Request for Decision (RFD)

Title: Riparian Assistance Program Terms and Conditions

Meeting Date: May 6, 2025

Originated By: Rick Niwa, Agricultural Fieldman

Background: Terms and Conditions define program eligibility and producer obligations. No changes to the Terms and Conditions for this program are recommended for 2025.

Recommendation: Accept option 1 under Options for Action below.

Benefits: Review of Terms and Conditions on a regular basis ensures municipal programs meet desired goals.

Disadvantages: None

Strategic Pillar:

- 1. Environmental Stewardship
- 2. Infrastructure and Service Delivery
- 5. Collaborative Partnerships
- 6. Community

Options for Action:

- 1. Accept for Information
- 2. Any other action the ASB deems prudent.

Financial Considerations None

Attachments: None

M.D. OF RANCHLAND NO. 66
REPORT TO THE ASB
Request for Decision (RFD)

Title: Weed Assistance Program Terms and Conditions

Meeting Date: May 6, 2025

Originated By: Rick Niwa, Agricultural Fieldman

Background: Terms and Conditions define program eligibility and producer obligations.

Recommendation: For the 2025 program year, staff recommend adding the highlighted text as below and requiring the applicant to initial this section to ensure that producer are aware of program deadlines.

All paid contractor receipts must be submitted and municipal invoices paid **by November 1, 2025**. Failure to do so will result in a forfeit of the rebate and exclusion from the program until all invoices are paid. Initial _____

Benefits: Ensures producers are aware of program deadlines.

Disadvantages: None

Strategic Pillar:

1. Environmental Stewardship
2. Infrastructure and Service Delivery
5. Collaborative Partnerships
6. Community

Options for Action:

1. That staff add the text as outlined under the Recommendation section above and forward to council for their consideration.
2. Any other action the ASB deems prudent.

Financial Considerations None

Attachments: None



COUNTY OF MINBURN NO. 27

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March 14, 2025

Honourable Minister Lawrence MacAulay
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Honourable Minister MacAulay:

Re: Urgent Concerns Regarding China's Retaliatory Tariffs on Canadian Agricultural Products

On behalf of the County of Minburn No.27 and our agricultural producers, we write to express our deep concern regarding China's announcement on March 20, 2025 imposing a one hundred percent retaliatory tariff on Canadian rapeseed oil, rapeseed meal, and pea imports. These measures pose a significant threat to the livelihood of our farmers and the broader agricultural sector, already burdened by years of drought and escalating production costs.

Agricultural producers in our County, and across Canada, cannot afford another financial setback. Many are still recovering from consecutive years of unfavorable weather conditions, supply chain disruptions, and the rising costs of inputs such as fertilizer, fuel, and equipment. These additional tariffs not only create instability in our export markets but also place our producers in the middle of an international trade conflict beyond their control.

The County of Minburn No.27 urges the federal government to take immediate action to support our agricultural sector during this crisis. We call upon the Government of Canada to engage in diplomatic negotiations to resolve these trade tensions, seek alternative markets for our impacted commodities, and implement financial relief measures to assist affected producers. Without swift intervention, our farmers will face unsustainable economic losses that will have long-term consequences for our rural communities and the national agricultural industry.

If these tariffs come into effect on March 20, 2025 we ask that the government implement a comprehensive assistance plan for affected agricultural producers. This should include direct financial support, subsidies to offset rising input costs, emergency loan programs, and expanded market diversification initiatives. Additionally, we request an increase in crop insurance support and disaster relief funding to help mitigate the economic strain on farmers facing uncertain market conditions.

We appreciate your attention to this urgent matter and request an update on the steps being taken to mitigate the impact of these tariffs. Our producers need assurance that their voices are heard and that their concerns are being addressed at the highest level.

Thank you for your time and dedication to supporting Canadian agriculture. We look forward to your response and any initiatives that may be implemented to protect our farmers and the industry at large.

Sincerely,



Reeve Roger Konieczny

*c: Shannon Stubbs, MP for Lakeland
Jackie Armstrong-Homeniuk, MLA Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville
Brenda Knight, Chair, ASB Provincial Committee
Stephen Bevans, President, Association of Alberta Agriculture Fieldman
Kara Westerlund, President, Rural Municipalities of Alberta
Rebecca Bligh, President, Federation of Canadian Municipalities*



Municipal District of **GREENVIEW**

March 17, 2025

Minister of Environment and Protected Areas
204 Legislature Building
108000 - 97 A venue
Edmonton, AB TSK 2B6

Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation
131 Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB TSK 2B6

Attention: Honourable Minister Rebecca Schultz and Honourable Minister RJ Sigurdson
Subject: Farmer Pesticide Program and Updated Registration of Sodium Monofluoroacetate

On January 14th, Kneehill County wrote a commendable letter requesting an update to the Farmer Pesticide Program that detailed required amendments to the certification. The letter specified the programs reliance on municipal facilitators for delivery, as opposed to provincial representatives or inclusion in the Lakeland College's suite of pesticide certification programs. The Farmers Pesticide Certification is the only pesticide certification program in Alberta outside of the Colleges purview.

With the changes announced to the Pest Management Regulatory Agency's registration for sodium monofluoroacetate (1080), released on March 7th, 2024 in RVD2024-04, specific actions the registrant must take for the continued registration of 1080 as regards product stewardship were listed. One of the four points within these requirements is as follows:

- Develop and implement a training program on how to properly use sodium monofluoroacetate and dispose of poisoned baits and carcasses. This includes making sure people know that they can only use the product after all other predator management methods have failed.

Training exists for municipal staff dispensing 1080, so we can only surmise that this training requirement is for producers accessing the product when all other manner of control of coyote predation have been exhausted.

We echo and agree with the concerns expressed by Kneehill County. We would like to add that in light of the changed registration of 1080, an important tool we feel needs to remain in livestock producers' toolboxes, that the required modernization and alignment with current standards for the Farmers Pesticide Certification be prioritized by both ministries. In addition, we would like to emphasize the importance of producers being able to access this training readily through Lakeland College in an online format as opposed to only being delivered by municipal facilitators.

Dave Gibbard, Chair
Greenview Agricultural Service Board

cc: Provincial Agricultural Service Boards
Alberta Association of Agricultural Fieldman



January 9, 2025

The Honourable Senators of Canada
The Senate of Canada
Senate of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A4

RE: Parkland County ASB concerns regarding Bill C-293

Dear Honourable Senators,

The Agricultural Service Board of Parkland County wishes to express its concerns and opposition to Bill C-293, an Act respecting pandemic prevention and preparedness. While we broadly support the objective of the bill, we have concerns regarding the potential negative impact on the agricultural industry.

About 40% of Alberta's farm cash receipts are from livestock production contributing over \$10 Billion in Alberta in 2023. This represents the livelihood of a significant number of farm families, a significant contribution to local food supply and an important economic contributor to our rural and remote communities. In Alberta, Agriculture Service Boards are empowered to protect the ability of farmers to farm through advocacy, policy and regulation enforcement which includes our *Animal Health Act*.

Clause 2, Section L (ii) of the Bill C-293 addresses the regulation of commercial activities, specifically mentioning industrial animal agriculture. Subsections (iii) and (iv) raise particular concerns by promoting the production of alternative proteins to reduce pandemic risks and suggesting the phase-out of commercial activities involving high-risk species. We believe that the language used in these provisions is vague and lacks the clarity necessary for a full understanding of its implications.

Our concerns center around the potential for overreach by the federal government into areas traditionally managed by provincial and municipal authorities. The agricultural sector, particularly in Alberta, is highly regulated, with world-class animal disease surveillance programs, food safety protocols, and biosecurity measures already in place. We believe that these existing frameworks should be recognized and considered within the scope of the bill, rather than introducing additional and potentially duplicative federal regulations.



In light of these concerns, we respectfully ask that the Senate revisit Bill C-293 to ensure that it is clear, concise, and respectful of the jurisdictional responsibilities of provincial and municipal authorities. We also request that the bill be revised to ensure fairness and equity for all industries, particularly agriculture, which plays a crucial role in both our provincial and national economies.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We trust that the Senate will give careful consideration to our concerns and work toward an outcome that strengthens pandemic preparedness without unintended negative impacts on the agricultural sector.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Jespersen".

Ben Jespersen
Parkland County Agricultural Service Board
Vice Chair

Cc: The Honourable Danielle Smith, Premier of the Province of Alberta
The Honourable R. J. Sigurdson, Alberta Minister of Agricultural and Irrigation
The Honourable Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
The Honourable Mark Holland, Minister of Health Canada
Mr. Dane Lloyd, MP Sturgeon River-Parkland
Mr. Gerald Soroka, MP Yellowhead
Alberta Agricultural Service Boards
Agricultural Service Board Provincial Committee



CYPRESS COUNTY

816 — 2nd Avenue, Dunmore, Alberta T1B 0K3
Phone: (403) 526-2888 | Fax: (403) 526-8958 | www.cypress.ab.ca

April 22, 2025

Honourable RJ Sigurdson
Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation
Office of the Minister
Agriculture and Irrigation
Executive Branch 131 Legislature Building
10800-97 Avenue NW
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

RE: Cypress County Letter of Support for AgKnow

To The Honourable Minister RJ Sigurdson, via email: (AGRIC.Minister@gov.ab.ca),

The Cypress County Agricultural Service Board wishes to extend our strong and unwavering support for the AgKnow Program and to advocate for its continued funding by the Government of Alberta.

Many other municipalities have expressed their support of AgKnow to the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation as well, and we all are hopeful for the outcome. Mental health needs for agricultural producers are a major concern since there is this stigma that they are a resilient demographic. AgKnow plays a vital role in offering essential support to agricultural producers who are facing serious mental health crisis. Stable funding for the program would ensure producers have support available that is accessible online and at any time they need it.

Agriculture is a key industry in Cypress County and a vital part of Alberta's economy. The implications of losing this program could be devastating to the producers in the province.

We thank-you for your continued support of the Agriculture Industry and we wholly support and urge you to consider advocating and funding the very important AgKnow program.

Sincerely,

Shane Hok
Agricultural Service Board Chairman
Cypress County

February 6th, 2025

Provincial Agricultural Service Board Committee

RE: Provincial Conference procedure, conduct, and preparation

Dear committee members,

Our ASB left this year's Provincial ASB conference with three concerns regarding our resolution sessions: parliamentary procedure, conduct, and preparation.

We felt that the handling of debate and amendments could have been handled with greater leadership and procedural adherence. This did hamper the effective handling of some resolutions (like 3-25) and left many members on the floor frustrated. As such, we ask that the Provincial ASB Committee take measures to ensure effective proceedings are utilized and enforced to facilitate discussion and changes to resolutions more productively.

This leads us to our second concern: appropriate and constructive conduct by participants. The County of Northern Lights and Northern Sunrise County both have written letters to address the specifics of the poor decorum exhibited around resolution 13-25. We would like to add another layer to the consequences of poor decorum.

Our resolution process asks for humility and trust in each other to have meaningful and respectful discussions on topics prioritized by each region. Our geographic differences naturally lend to differences of opinion and priority across a province as vast as ours. But these differences should be treated with respect and with trust for the regional process to avoid the potential for regional rifts. The events of the resolution session fully violated said trust and increased the risk of regional divides within the province which risks jeopardizing our voice as a unified provincial organization. One of the critiques around resolution 13-25 was the suggestion that too many resolutions came from one municipality. Such criticism undermines our regional process, a process that requires regions to debate and vote on local resolutions put forward so to act as regional filters before resolutions come to the provincial level. If there is concern about the quantity or quality of resolutions coming from a region, it is better addressed through the Provincial Committee. These critiques are not suited to the provincial conference floor, or to be used as tools to shame or denigrate another municipality. Discussion must be meaningful and respectful, and this can only be achieved when individuals can trust that the debate has originated from positions of good faith. This leads to our final concern: preparation.

We are often asked to support regionally specific challenges in the context of a wider provincial lens. This often requires actions to be taken to further our knowledge, understanding, or sense of priority associated with a resolution. This year provided plenty of time between the release of the resolution package and the conference itself to undertake thorough pre-briefing and discussion regarding the



February 6, 2025

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resolutions. Some revisions and amendments will always bubble up from the energy and creativity of quality discussion on the floor, but many revisions and amendments can be carefully considered, crafted, and pre-communicated to enhance the quality of debate and to ease the process of forwarding amendments (friendly or otherwise). Open communication between municipalities ahead of resolution sessions benefits all parties involved, whether it be to challenge, clarify, or sponsor a resolution.

A role common to all of us ASBs is the legislated responsibility to advise the Minister responsible for agriculture. As much as this is a legislated responsibility, we should not take this role for granted. By ensuring we achieve quality procedural dynamics, adhere to high standards of conduct, and do our best to be as prepared as possible, we help gain and maintain a reputation for both the quality of resolutions forwarded and the quality of discussions and deliberation that go into refining and passing them. This would make attendance at our conference a meaningful and desired space for Ministers to allocate their scarce time.

Sincerely,



Tyler Airth
Big Lakes County Reeve and ASB Chair

CC: all provincial municipal Agricultural Service Boards



March 4, 2025

Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation

Members of Executive Council

Executive Branch

131 Legislature Building

10800 - 97 Avenue

Edmonton, AB

T5K 2B6

Dear Honourable RJ Sigurdson,

The Starland County Agricultural Service Board is writing to express our concern with the current state of high-speed internet access throughout rural agricultural regions in Alberta, and the Broadband Initiative requirements in its current state. There are significant benefits that high-speed internet can bring to the farming community in Starland County as well as the immediate region. As we strive to enhance the productivity and sustainability of our local agriculture, it is crucial to embrace these innovations and move forward into the future.

Reliable internet connectivity is essential for modern farming operations, enabling precision agriculture, real-time data analysis, artificial intelligence technologies, and efficient resource management.

Unfortunately, many rural areas in Canada, including parts of Starland County, still face challenges in accessing high-speed internet. Addressing this digital divide is critical for ensuring that our farmers can fully leverage technological advancements and remain competitive in the agricultural sector.

The Canadian government has recognized the importance of expanding high-speed internet access in rural and remote areas, with a goal of achieving universal access by 2030. By investing in broadband infrastructure, we can empower our local farmers with the tools they need to succeed in an increasingly digital world.

Since 2023, Starland County has been working with partners involved in progressing the Broadband Initiative and obtaining funding through this stream. Initially the county was within the established guidelines for funding and completed the required costing and buildout requirements to progress to the next stage for intake. The total amount that Starland County invested under this assumption was approximately \$55,000.00. However, it was concluded before the second intake that Starland County is considered serviced with the minimum requirements of 50/10 download and upload speeds required under the criteria. These values would not be adequate for maintaining connectivity for the data heavy operations progressing in other areas of the province and country comparatively. To maintain an even playing field for our agricultural businesses and being able to remain competitive in the market, Starland feels this initiative requires further review as agriculturally based municipalities such as ours were identified as a priority for intakes and funding.

In conclusion, embracing agricultural technology advancements and improving high-speed internet access are vital steps towards enhancing the productivity, sustainability, and resilience of agriculture in



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www.starlandcounty.com

Starland County. We urge you to support initiatives that promote these advancements and help our farming community thrive.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bob Sargent".

Bob Sargent, Agricultural Service Board Chair

Starland County

CC Honourable Nate Glubish, Minister of Technology and Innovation

CC Honourable Nate Horner, Minister of Finance

CC Honourable Damien Kurek, Member of Parliament Battle River-Crowfoot