



AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

MARCH 15, 2019

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AGRICULTURE SERVICE BOARD (ASB) ACT

- Northlands and BMO are requesting nominations of a County of Vermilion River outstanding farm family for the 2019 Farm Family Award by May 31, 2019.
- Advertising and interviewing for Agriculture staff.
- Prepared articles on strychnine sales and vegetation management for spring newsletter.

AGRICULTURAL PEST ACT

- County of Vermilion River and partnering municipalities (County of St Paul, Lac La Biche County, MD of Provost, County of Two Hills and Lamont County) received almost \$250 000 from the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) – Surveillance Program Grant to support detailed municipal clubroot surveillance, clubroot pathotype monitoring, clubroot extension activities and research into movement of clubroot spores by wind erosion. Partnering municipalities will match this amount through In-Kind contributions, allowing for enhanced clubroot management.
- Strychnine sale is running from March 11 to May 15, 2019, for \$11/bottle (includes GST). Purchase amount is capped at either the maximum amount purchased by the farm in past years or 2 cases per farm. Health Canada and the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) continue to review the strychnine registration, with a decision expected by November 2019.
- Working on a CVR program through Pest Control and ALUS Vermilion River to encourage area farmers to take steps to proactively prevent/manage clubroot on their farms by establishing perennials at field entrances, in grassed waterways, and low/wet areas at increased risk of clubroot introduction or spread. Farmers are encouraged to seed an area at the field entrance to perennials to provide a non-host area to remove soil from equipment and park equipment to reduce soil movement between fields. They could also seed water runoff channels to perennials to reduce the introduction of clubroot spores through runoff. These perennial areas seeded to a diverse, easily managed grass/legume/forb stand could be enrolled as ALUS Vermilion River projects, making farms eligible for assistance in establishment costs and even land payments for ecosystem services provided, including carbon sequestration and pollinator habitat.

CVR Pest Control could partner with ALUS Vermilion River to provide access to a diverse blend of perennial seed to farmer participants for clubroot management. This would provide area farmers the opportunity to enter into a proactive clubroot management program with minimal effort, improve clubroot management for both their operation and the county overall, and get some cash return on the seeded area.

WEED CONTROL ACT

- Sent out Request for Quotes for purchase of a side-by-side for roadside spraying, as per 2019 Agriculture Capital Budget.
- Preparing herbicide order for spring.

ALUS VERMILION RIVER

- Working with the ALUS Vermilion River PAC to update their Strategic Plan for 2019-2021.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

- Video documenting the CVR/Minburn Ag Plastics Recycling Program has been sent for final editing.

ENVIRONMENT

- Editing/review of “An Evaluation of Municipal-Provincial Wetland Management Partnerships in Alberta” report summarizing the experiences of municipal Wetland Restoration Agents and examining opportunities and constraints for future municipal-provincial partnerships in wetland management.
- Working on advocacy of wetland restoration and wetland enhancement opportunities with AEP, including presentation of Fiera report at the 2019 RMA Spring Convention.
- Preparing for BioBed construction outside of the Ag Chem Building to assist in managing herbicide contamination and residue in an environmentally friendly manner and demonstrate opportunities for crop producers.
- Planning for Spring/Summer workshops (shared Green Acreages/ALUS):
 - Native Pollinator workshop (with bee house construction)
 - Bat Viewing (maybe with bat house construction workshop)
 - Dutch Elm Disease, Emerald Ash Borer workshop

COMING EVENTS

- *March 14: Wetland Education Network Workshop, Nisku*
- *March 19: Alberta Invasive Species Council Meeting, Lacombe*
- *March 20: RMA Wetland Restoration Presentation, Edmonton*
- *March 21: Alberta Farm Animal Care Conference and TLAER (Technical Large Animal Emergency Rescue) workshop, Olds*
- *April 17: Young Farm Worker Safety Training, Lakeland College, Vermilion*