



AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

OCTOBER 16, 2019 PREPARED BY: CATHIE ERICHSEN ARYCHUK

2019 3RD QUARTER HIGHLIGHTS:

WEED CONTROL ACT

- Completed roadside spraying in Area 1 (northeast) on Sept. 17. 1440 km (895 miles) of road was managed by blanket spraying where needed for brush/noxious weeds/visibility.
- Completed contracted roadside mowing on Sept. 9. Contractor mowed 3260 km (2026 miles) of road. Majority received a 12' shoulder cut, 65 miles of Class A roads were mowed as close to full ditch as possible given vegetation, slope and water levels.
- Weed Inspectors checked and managed 80+ sites specifically for noxious weeds, including 50 ha of weed patches on roadsides that were spot sprayed. 30 of the sites were managed using the spray truck or UTV sprayer, while 20 were managed by hand.

AGRICULTURAL PESTS ACT

- Completed clubroot of canola survey within municipality, sampling 200 fields by Oct. 11. Found three new unconfirmed positive fields – one each in Division 3, 4 and 5.
- Along with clubroot surveying, 16 fields were sampled for Alberta Agriculture and Forestry for canola disease testing.
- CVR is a partner in the Northeast Regional CAP Clubroot Surveillance project, which is examining wind movement of clubroot spores, sampling clubroot pathotypes within the region, and increasing clubroot extension. Vermilion River had a wind-borne spore trap set up for 4 weeks in September, and we will test here again in spring and fall of 2020 and 2021. We will also be providing a positive clubroot sample for the regional clubroot pathotype survey.
- Beaver management has been ongoing all summer. The Devonian drainage ditch has required continuous management this summer due to high water levels. Staff installed a pond leveler in a private beaver dam downstream from Morning Gold to manage the risk of future flooding due to high water levels. Ag staff have breached 10 dams so far, and have removed 155 beavers from infrastructure. Beaver management will continue this fall as required.

ALUS-VERMILION RIVER/GREEN ACREAGES

- Staff are submitting a grant application to Wildlife Habitat Canada for \$50 000, which would be used to increase ALUS participant recruitment using peer-to-peer outreach and to supplement project establishment costs. If grant money is received, it will augment ALUS Canada contributions.
- 4 new ALUS projects have been completed this year, with 6 more approved for completion in 2019. Staff also have an additional 10 more projects approved or likely to be approved for construction in 2020.
- One CVR producer is seeding two grassed approaches on cropland for clubroot management with assistance from the Ag Department and ALUS Vermilion River.

ASB – ENVIRONMENTAL STREAM

- CVR was selected as a Regional Collection Site for Alberta's Ag Plastic Recycle It Pilot Program. For 2019, 20 sites were selected across Alberta, including CVR, MD of Bonnyville and Ryley Regional Landfill. We have collected about 18 tonnes of grain bag plastic in 2019, which must be managed outside of the pilot project.
- The Todd Hames Family will receive a BMO Farm Family Award on November 9, 2019 during Farmfair International.
- Staff were very kept busy at the County's Agriculture & Environment Department booth in the "AgVenture" section of the Vermilion Ag Society Fair.
- Staff hosted 2 "Wetland Explorer" Days at Lindsay Evans Park and Vermilion Provincial Park for families to learn about wetlands and environmental management.

ENVIRONMENT

- Consultant sampled the PW Yards groundwater monitoring wells, retention pond and Tyler Lake in June 2019. They reported that elevated chloride levels continue to be present in groundwater and collection ponds at the PW Yard. The due diligence recommended by the Consultant on an active site is to use Best Management Practices for salt storage and handling to control new contamination, and continue to monitor the past issue at least every second year.

EXPECTED IN 4TH QUARTER:

- Inventory and work order accounting for 2019
- Seed Cleaning Plant Inspections and Licensing
- Fall rat inspections in range 1 and rat bait distribution in ranges 1 and 2 by request
- Beaver management
- Ag plastic management (rolling/bagging)
- Producer/ratepayer workshops and extension activities
- Staff training
- Set up BioBed and plumbing at Ag Chem Building for use in 2020

COMING EVENTS

- *October 31: Northeast Region ASB Conference, Wainwright*
- *November 7: Harvest Festival, Lloydminster*
- *November 9: BMO Farm Family Awards Ceremony, Edmonton*
- *November 15: Supporting Rural Communities, Kitscoty*
- *November TBD: ALUS PAC Meeting*
- *November 28: Working Well Workshop, Blackfoot*
- *December 2-5: AAAF In Service Training – staff*
- *December TBD: Regenerative Agriculture, Vermilion*
- *December 10-12: Western Canadian Grazing and Soil Health Conference, Edmonton*
- *January 21-24, 2020: Provincial ASB Conference, Banff*