

SMOKY LAKE COUNTY



Title: Agricultural Service Board Strategic Plan	Policy No.: 10-01
Section: 62	Page No.: 1 of 15

Legislation Reference:	<i>Alberta Provincial Statutes</i>
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Purpose:	To establish a three-year Strategic Plan for the Smoky Lake County Agricultural Service Board.
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Policy Statement and Guidelines:
<p>STATEMENT</p> <p>The Smoky Lake County Agricultural Service Board (ASB) is in the business of providing its residents with agricultural programming to enhance the environment, farm income and quality of life. This is achieved through Roadside Vegetation Management Programming, Agricultural Extension Programming, Problem Wildlife Programming, Pest Control and Monitoring as well Government Lobbying.</p> <p>The Agricultural Service Board is also responsible for enforcement of Provincial Legislation such as the <i>Weed Act</i>, <i>Agricultural Pest Act</i>, <i>Agricultural Service Board Act</i>, <i>Soil Conservation Act</i> and the <i>Animal Health Act</i>.</p> <p>VISION STATEMENT:</p> <p>To encourage sustainable agriculture, environmental integrity and improved quality of life in Smoky Lake County.</p> <p>MISSION STATEMENT:</p> <p>To provide services, policies and education for Agricultural families, businesses and the public to enhance the environment, farm income and quality of life.</p>

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STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

The Smoky Lake County Agricultural Service Board identifies the following priorities:

- One: Vegetation Management.
- Two: Invasion Species.
- Three: Environmental Stewardship.
- Four: Problem Wildlife.
- Five: Agricultural Extension.
- Six: Pest Management.
- Seven: Viable Livestock Industry.
- Eight: Soil Conservation.
- Nine: Intergovernmental Co-operation.

IMPLEMENTATION:

1. Smoky Lake County Agricultural Service Board shall review annually and as required by Alberta Agriculture.
2. Smoky Lake County Agricultural Service Board staff will consider and follow the priorities of the Strategic Plan when creating budgets and work plans.

The Smoky Lake County Agricultural Service Board
Strategic Plan 2011 – 2013
forms part of
Policy Statement 62-10: Agricultural Service Board Strategic Plan.

	Date	Resolution Number
Approved	December 17, 2010	# 184-10 - Page # 9570
Amended		
Amended		
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Amended		



SMOLKY LAKE COUNTY
AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARD

STRATEGIC PLAN
2011 - 2013

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Overview of Statements.

STATEMENT:

The Smoky Lake County Agricultural Service Board is in the business of providing its residents with Agricultural Programming to enhance the environment, farm income and quality of life. This is achieved through Roadside Vegetation Management Programming, Agricultural Extension Programming, Problem Wildlife Programming, Pest Control and Monitoring as well as, Government Lobbying. The Agricultural Service Board is also responsible for enforcement of Provincial Legislation such as the *Weed Act*, *Agricultural Pests Act*, *Agricultural Service Board Act*, *Soil Conservation Act*, and the *Animal Act*.

VISION STATEMENT:

To encourage sustainable agriculture, environmental integrity and improved quality of life in Smoky Lake County.

MISSION STATEMENT:

To provide services, policies and education for Agricultural families, businesses and the public to enhance the environment, farm income and quality of life.

VALUES:

Integrity: The Smoky Lake County Agricultural Service Board will conduct business in an ethical manner respecting the environment, public and applicable legislation.

Commitment to Service: The Smoky Lake County Agricultural Service Board will strive to provide the best service possible to its ratepayers conducting operations in an efficient and cost effective manner.

Progressive: The Smoky Lake County Agricultural Service Board will take a proactive and innovative approach in its programming examining new technologies and protocol while accepting and implementing relevant input.

Resources:Manpower:

- Agricultural Fieldman
- Assistant Agricultural Fieldman
- Municipal Conservation Technologist
- Two Weed Inspectors/Sprayer Operators (Seasonal)
- Two Mower Operators (Seasonal)

Equipment:

- 2 x 90+ horsepower FWA assist tractors with 15 ft mowers
- 1 chemical injection GPS equipped spray truck
- 2 x skid mount boomless sprayers
- 4 x ¾ ton pick-up trucks
- ATV equipped with sprayer
- ATV Trailer

1. Vegetation Management.

Goal:

To execute Integrated Vegetation Management Program on Municipal Right-of-Ways.

Strategy:

1.1 Identify Problem Areas

Activity 1.1.1 Conduct weed inspections once annually on all Municipal Right-of-Ways and re-inspect problem areas throughout the growing season.

Key emphasis will be on Prohibited Noxious and Noxious weeds as well as other invasive species and analyzing both environmental and economic threats.

Performance Measures:

- Number of Weed Inspections completed.
- Miles of Road Inspected.

Evaluation: _____

1.2 Roadside Spray Program

Activity 1.2.1 Agricultural Service Board Staff will spray 1/3 of the County each year, spot spray where necessary. Spraying on private land will be undertaken if required and only as time and budget permit.

Activity 1.2.2 Brush will be sprayed in conjunction with Public Works Department to keep Right-of-Ways brush free to enhance visibility and snow removal operations.

Performance Measures:

- Miles of Road Sprayed.
- Reduction in weed populations.
- Reduction of weed complaints on Municipal Right-of-Ways.

Evaluation: _____

1.3 Roadside Mowing Program

Activity 1.3.1 All Municipal Right-of-Ways will be mowed twice per year to increase visibility and control weed and brush re-growth. Resources, Resort and other Major Roadways will be mowed on an needed basis.

Performance Measures:

- Miles of Road Mowed.
- Reduction in mowing complaints.

Evaluation: _____

2. Invasive Species.

Goal:

To control the spread and prevent the establishment of invasive species on privately owned land through responsible communication with landowners, occupants, industry stakeholders and members of the general public.

Strategy:

2.1 Weed Inspection Program

Activity 2.1.1 Conduct weed inspections on private land in conjunction with Municipal Right-of-Ways weed inspections and as complaints arise.

Activity 2.1.2 Effectively communicate with landowners and occupants where weed issues arise.

Activity 2.1.3 Issue weed notices as a last resort method when all other avenues have been exhausted.

Performance Measures:

- Number of Weed Inspections conducted on private land.
- Reduction of weed complaints.
- Reduction of Prohibited Noxious and Noxious weed infestations.

Evaluation:

2.2 Establishment of a Weed Awareness and Education Program

Activity 2.2.1 Offer workshops to agricultural producers, landowners, occupants, industry stakeholders and members of the general public in the identifications, control and impact of invasive species and the *Weed Control Act*.

Activity 2.2.2 Produce and circulate information sheet on Invasive species to County residents through Mail as well as at Community events.

Activity 2.2.3 Make individual farm calls on an as needed basis to assist producers with the identification and control of invasive species.

Performance Measures:

- Reduced populations of invasive species within the County.
- Reduced amount of weed complaints.

Evaluation:

3. Environmental Stewardship.

Goal:

To develop and deliver collaborative environmental stewardship initiatives that result in sustainable growth of Smoky Lake and Thorhild Counties farm and ranch industry.

Strategy:

3.1 Ensure the stability of safe, healthy ground water and surface water within Smoky Lake and Thorhild Counties.

Activity 3.1.1 Work with local producers and the local Health Unit to develop a water monitoring program by Collecting benchmark information of bored and drilled well ground water quality.

Activity 3.1.2 Work with Agriculture and Rural Development to host Working Well workshops and provide expertise to producers on well construction, proper maintenance techniques and proper ways to decommission old abandoned wells.

Activity 3.1.3 Collect basic benchmark information annually on surface water quality from all recreational lakes within Smoky Lake and Thorhild Counties.

Performance Measures:

- Record of ground water quality will be started and maintained.
- Landowners will begin to plan for the decommissioning of abandoned wells.
- Abandoned wells in the Counties will start to be decommissioned.
- Record of surface water quality will be started and maintained.
- Producers will adopt practices to ensure safe and secure drinking water.
- Increased awareness of the importance of ground water quality and proper well construction and maintenance.

Evaluation: _____

3.2 Increase the adoption of grazing management plans in Smoky Lake and Thorhild Counties.

Activity 3.2.1 Increase producer awareness about beneficial Management practices relating to pasture Management systems through newsletters, field days, workshops, grazing schools, etc.

Activity 3.2.2 Work one-on-one with producers to help develop a pasture plan for their operation (including annual pasture health assessments, balancing stocking rates and forage production, discussing management decisions, etc.).

3. Environmental Stewardship. - *Cont.*

Activity 3.2.3 Assist local producers in completing their Environmental Farm Plans and applying for Funding under the Growing Forward program.

Performance Measures:

- Increased pasture health.
- Increased adoption of beneficial management practices by producers.
- Completed and approved Environmental Farm Plans.
- Projects funded through the Growing Forward Program.

Evaluation:

3.3 Increase the adoption of integrated crop management practices in Smoky Lake and Thorhild Counties.

Activity 3.3.1 Partner with cropping agencies to promote the adoption and benefits of variable rate technology, improved pest management, improved seeding systems and safe product storage.

Activity 3.3.2 Increase producers awareness about beneficial management practices relating to integrated crop management.

Activity 3.3.3 Assist producers in completing their Environmental Farm Plans and applying for Funding under the Growing Forward program.

Performance Measures:

- Improved safe product storage.
- Cropping inputs will be maximized and environmental Risk reduced.
- Completed and approved Environmental Farm Plans.
- Projects funded through the Growing Forward Program.
- Increased adoption of beneficial management practices by producers.

Evaluation:

4. Problem Wildlife.

Goal:

To co-operate and execute and Problem Wildlife Management Program.

Strategy:

4.1 Agricultural Land Flooding Control Program

- Activity 4.1.1 The Agricultural Service Board will provide the services to facilitate the removal of beaver dams with explosives where there is flooding of agricultural land and other methods of removal and control will not work.
- Activity 4.1.2 The Agricultural Service Board will provide information to landowners through mailouts, county website and on farm visits on alternate methods of beaver and flood control.
- Activity 4.1.3 Water level stabilization devices will be installed in areas where repetitive blasting is required to reduce costs and environmental footprint.
- Activity 4.1.4 Agricultural Service Board will assist Public Works Department when County roads are affected by beaver dam flooding.
- Activity 4.1.5 The Agricultural Service Board will continue to offer a bounty of Ten Dollars per beaver tail removed from flooded agricultural land.
- Activity 4.1.6 Landowners will be offered a list of County approved trappers to help facilitate removal.

Performance Measures:

- Reduced flooding complaints.
- Participation in Bounty Program.
- Reduction in the amount of blasting product used.

Evaluation: _____

4.2 Control Coyote Predation of Livestock.

- Activity 4.2.1 Toxicants (i.e., 1080) will be available to livestock producers who have coyote predation in their herds. This will be a last resort after all other methods of control and management have been explored.
- Activity 4.2.2 Educate livestock producers on herd management strategies to prevent losses from coyote predation via mailouts or producer workshops.

4. Problem Wildlife. - *Cont.*

4.3 Nuisance Pest Management.

Activity 4.3.1 Magpie and mole traps will be available for purchase from the Agricultural Service Board.

Activity 4.3.2 Richardson ground squirrel control methods (i.e., strychnine) will be available for purchase as availability permits.

Performance Measures:

- Number of traps sold.
- Amount of Richard Ground Squirrel product sold.

Evaluation:

4.4 Alternate Control Methods.

Activity 4.4.1 Agricultural Service Board staff will continue to look into alternate control methods for all problem wildlife. This will be achieved through attending annual IST, as well as accessing government research, private research and other available learning tools.

Performance Measures:

- Reduction in the use of conventional control methods and/or increased adaption of new alternative methods.

Evaluation:

5. Agricultural Extension.

Goal:

To communicate with and educate agricultural producers through an agricultural extension program which offers viable information to enhance all areas of agricultural production and rural life.

Strategy:

5.1 Facilitate the flow of current information to agricultural producers.

Activity 5.1.1 Identify current topics and information which will be informative and relevant to agricultural producers.

Activity 5.1.2 Present topics to agricultural producers in formats which will be well accessed, informative and interesting.

Activity 5.1.3 Update producers on municipal policy or Legislative changes in conjunction with other Workshops or via mailouts and website updates.

Activity 5.1.4 Post updated information on the Smoky Lake County website.

Activity 5.1.5 In the event of an agricultural emergency every effort will be made to get relevant information out to producers in a timely manner.

Performance Measures:

- Attendance at workshops.
- Increased producer awareness.
- Positive feedback.

Evaluation: _____

5.2 Host producers appreciation events.

Activity 5.2.1 Host farmer appreciation day BBQ in conjunction with 4-H Achievement Day.

Activity 5.2.2 Investigate other producer appreciation events; i.e., golf tournaments, suppers, breakfast meetings and other types of events.

Performance Measures:

- Event attendance.
- Positive feedback.

Evaluation: _____

6. Pest Management.

Goal:

To provide Smoky Lake County agricultural producers with responsible pest management strategies, pest monitoring and enforce control of declared pests.

Strategy:

6.1 Participate in pest monitoring program.

Activity 6.1.1 Conduct clubroot surveys on an annual basis.

Activity 6.1.2 Agricultural Service Board staff will monitor conditions on an on-going basis throughout the growing season and if conditions permit surveys or inspections will take place.

Activity 6.1.3 Conduct other pest surveys as directed by Alberta Agriculture or as other agronomic or Climatic conditions dictate (i.e., weed survey, fusarium survey, etc.).

Performance Measures:

- Surveys completed.
- Pests identified.

Evaluation: _____

6.2 Develop and execute pest management strategies to protect Agricultural commodities.

Activity 6.2.1 Advise agricultural producers on clubroot management plan and policy and enforce as per the *Pest Control Act*.

Activity 6.2.2 Agricultural Service Board will rebate growers for applying insecticide in Municipal Right-of-Ways where grasshoppers are considered above the economic threshold and are applying insecticide in the adjacent field.

Activity 6.2.3 Agricultural Service Board staff will apply Eco Bran Bait in Municipal Right-of-Ways Where insecticide is not permitted or practical if the landowner is applying insecticide on the adjacent field.

Activity 6.2.4 Eco Bran Bait will be retailed and Eco Bran Bait spreaders will be available for rent.

Activity 6.2.5 Create pest management strategies to combat other pest problems as they arise.

Activity 6.2.6 Act as Officers to enforce the *Pest Control Act*.

Performance Measures:

- Clubroot status within the Municipality.
- Participation in the insecticide rebate program.
- Number of miles treated with Eco Bran Bait.
- Number of enforcements.

Evaluation: _____

7. Viable Livestock Industry.

Goal:

To support a viable livestock industry in Smoky Lake County.

Strategy:

7.1 Cattle Scale.

Activity 7.1.1 Agricultural Service Board will provide a cattle scale for use at no cost to livestock producers who reside within the Municipality as per County Policy.

Performance Measures:

- Amount of scale usage.

Evaluation:

7.2 Offer workshops and other events to assist and enhance livestock industry.

Activity 7.2.1 Workshops will be offered to livestock producers on an as needed basis. If emergency situations arise information will be distributed via workshop (i.e., drought, feed shortage, disease outbreak, marketing situations, etc.).

Activity 7.2.2 Explore other options to support cattle industry such as cattle sales, fairs, tradeshow, etc..

Performance Measures:

- Number of workshops held.
- Other events held.
- Positive feedback from ratepayers.

Evaluation:

8. Soil Conservation.

Goal:

Protect the quality and integrity of agricultural soils in Smoky Lake County.

Strategy:

8.1 Roadside Seeding Program.

Activity 8.1.1 Agricultural Service Board staff will seed Municipal Right-of-Ways where construction Projects have taken place.

Activity 8.1.2 Grass seed will be provided to adjacent Landowners if construction on a County Right-of-Way has affected their farming operations and they wish to do the seeding themselves.

Performance Measures:

- Number of miles of roadside seeding.
- Amount of grass seed distributed.

Evaluation:

8.2 Soil Conservation Act.

Activity 8.2.1 Agricultural Service Board staff will be designated officers under the *Soil Conservation Act* and enforce applicable legislation as situations arise.

Performance Measures:

- Number of complaints.

Evaluation:

9. Intergovernmental Co-operation.

Goal:

Pursue intergovernmental co-operation.

Strategy:

9.1 Actively lobby Government agencies to protect the interests of the Smoky Lake County agricultural community.

Activity 9.1.1 Agricultural Service Board to participate in drafting and passing resolutions at Regional and Provincial Agricultural Service Board Conferences.

Activity 9.1.2 Every effort will be made to convey agricultural concerns from the agricultural committee to relevant government agencies via face-to-face interactions, letter writing or any other available means.

Performance Measures:

- Government response.
- Positive feedback.

Evaluation:
