

Environmental Farm Plan 2023-2024 Annual Report

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About Alberta EFP	2
What is an EFP?	2
From the Director's Desk	3
Stakeholder Advisory Committee	4
EFP Success	5
EFP Reach	5
Technicians Network	6
Communication Highlights	7
Program Highlights	9
EFP Version 4.0 Launch	9
EFP+ Program	10
Habitat & Biodiversity Assessment	11
Planning for the future	12

Funded in part by the Government of Canada and the Government of Alberta under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative.



YOUR FARM, YOUR PLAN, YOUR FUTURE:

What is an Environmental Farm Plan?



Risk Assessment

Identify and address potential environmental risks on your farm.



Confidential

All of your information remains confidential between you and your technician.



Free & Voluntary

Completing an EFP is completely voluntary and free.



Ongoing Support

Your regional technician is available before, during and after completing your EFP.

Change does not have to happen rapidly or be shouldered alone to have a lasting impact. Alberta EFP provides a free, confidential, whole-farm self-assessment tool for producers to understand the environmental risks on their farm and how to address those risks. Completing an EFP allows for greater awareness, education, and access to market opportunities for producers across the province. Once an EFP is completed, it is valid for 10 years and provides producers with an action plan that they can implement as time and resources allow.



"I love hearing people say when we work on the EFP together "Wow, that wasn't so bad, I wish I would have done this sooner!"

-Sara Miller, EFP Technician,
County of Two Hills



"The EFP provides perspective, highlighting potential on farm risks and providing valuable insights for sustainable farming."

-Matthew Wells, EFP Technician,
Lethbridge County

The process was simple and efficient - way easier than expected.

— KEVIN GOUTBECK, GRAIN/POTATO FARMER, STURGEON COUNTY

I feel responsible for good stewardship and the EFP process is part of building a legacy.

— DENIS KENNEDY, RETIRED AGROLOGIST

It is important to protect our land and the environment to maintain profitability and for future generations. It was valuable to [reinforce] what I have been doing is correct and positive.

— GORDON ELLIS, CROP FARMER, MOUNTAIN VIEW COUNTY

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From the Director's Desk

The 2023-2024 fiscal year has certainly been a year of innovation and progress, marked by the launch of two big updates. It is an exciting time to have an EFP.

1. **The new streamlined EFP Workbook**

4.0. This latest version represents a significant achievement in our commitment to agricultural education and sustainability. By staying updated, EFP equips producers with both practical and forward-thinking knowledge, fostering an environment of continuous improvement and sustainability in farming operations across Alberta.

2. **Updated EFP 4.0+ initiative.**

Benchmarked to SAI Platform's Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA) 3.0, the EFP+ program enhances the EFP workbook for producers and showcases Alberta agri-food products on a global stage.

We have also made great strides in the **Habitat & Biodiversity Assessment Tool** (HBAT) update project. The project will allow us to deliver the valuable information from within the tool in a more effective way.

The success with our Alberta HBAT has supported the duplication of the tool in several other provinces in Canada, initiated by the Canadian Forage & Grasslands Association (CFGGA).

We made a dedicated effort on the communication front, with an overhaul of our social media strategies and the introduction of a newsletter. These endeavors have proven successful, reflective in the consistent growth and engagement levels across our platforms.

I want to express my gratitude to our dedicated EFP technicians and program staff in Alberta. Their unwavering commitment to assisting agricultural producers and nurturing environmentally conscious stewards in our food system is truly commendable.

Lisa Nadeau

Below from left to right, Lisa Nadeau (EFP Director), Sonja Shank (Program Coordinator), Devon Lloyd (EFP Program Manager), and Tanya Moskal-Hebert (EFP Special Projects).



STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY

The Alberta EFP acknowledges the importance of industry engagement to enhance the program and better serve all Alberta producers. Through the Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC), the Alberta EFP Program receives valuable guidance to strengthen the EFP program, laying the groundwork for farm sustainability that transcends commodity-specific boundaries. The SAC plays a key role in ensuring alignment of the program's strategic direction with Alberta's agricultural industry's needs. We extend our appreciation to the organizations involved for their time and dedication.

- Dallas Jenson and Alan Hall, Agricultural Research and Extension Council of Alberta
- Karen Clark, Agriculture and Agri-food Canada
- Sebastien Dutrisac, Alberta Agricultural Service Board Provincial Committee
- Bret Kennedy, Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation
- Brad Dubeau, Alberta Beef Producers
- Grace MacGregor, Alberta Federation of Agriculture
- Tasha Alexander, Alberta Grains
- Morgan Hobin, Alberta Milk
- Maria Alkayed, Canadian Federation of Agriculture
- Rebecca Wieler, Potato Growers of Alberta
- Kevin Wrista, Rural Municipalities of Alberta



EFP REACH

Alberta EFP experienced its busiest year on record, with 659 workbooks completed, surpassing the annual target of 550 EFP completions! Additionally, there was a noticeable shift as producers started moving back to in-person workshops. To enhance accessibility for producers, online workshops are still being provided as part of the program.

Over **25%**

of agricultural acres in Alberta are covered by a current EFP



659

Approved EFP Workbooks



46

In-person workshops



12

Online workshops



278

In-person attendees

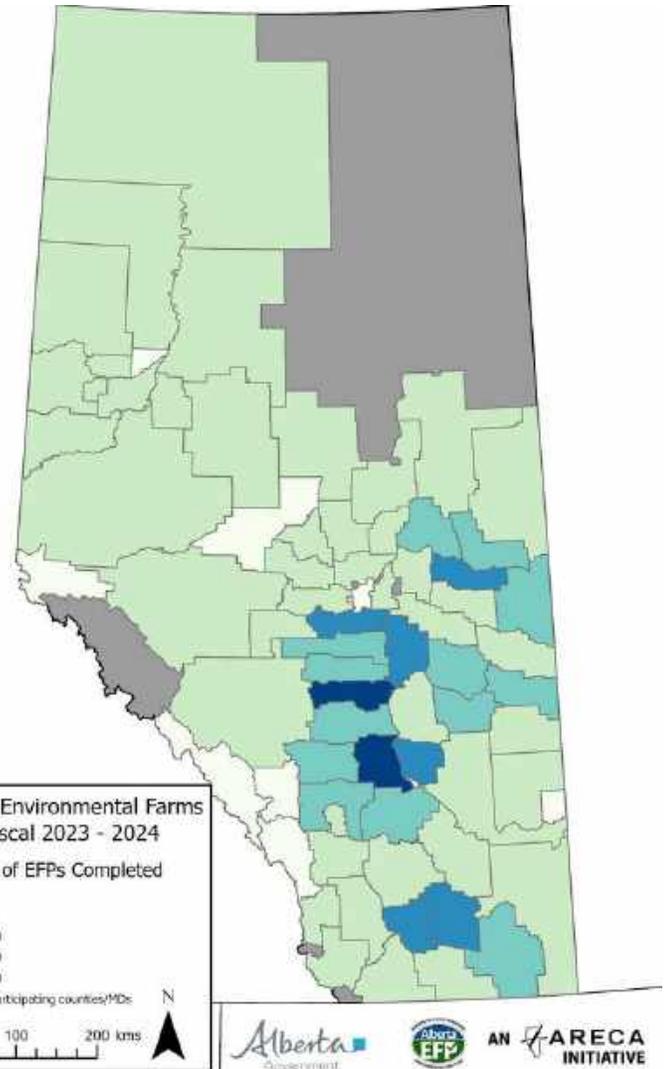


22

Online attendees

TOP COMMODITIES

Crops	82%
Perennial forage	61%
Beef	50%
Other livestock	33%
Irrigation	13%



Alberta EFP recognizes that Alberta is the traditional territory of various peoples, including the Blackfoot Confederacy, Cree, Dene, Saulteaux, Nakota Sioux, Stoney Nakoda, Tsuu T'ina Nation, and the Métis. This acknowledgment honors the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit who have cared for these lands for generations. We express gratitude to Knowledge Keepers and Elders, emphasizing reconciliation and a shared commitment to protecting water and natural resources for future generations.

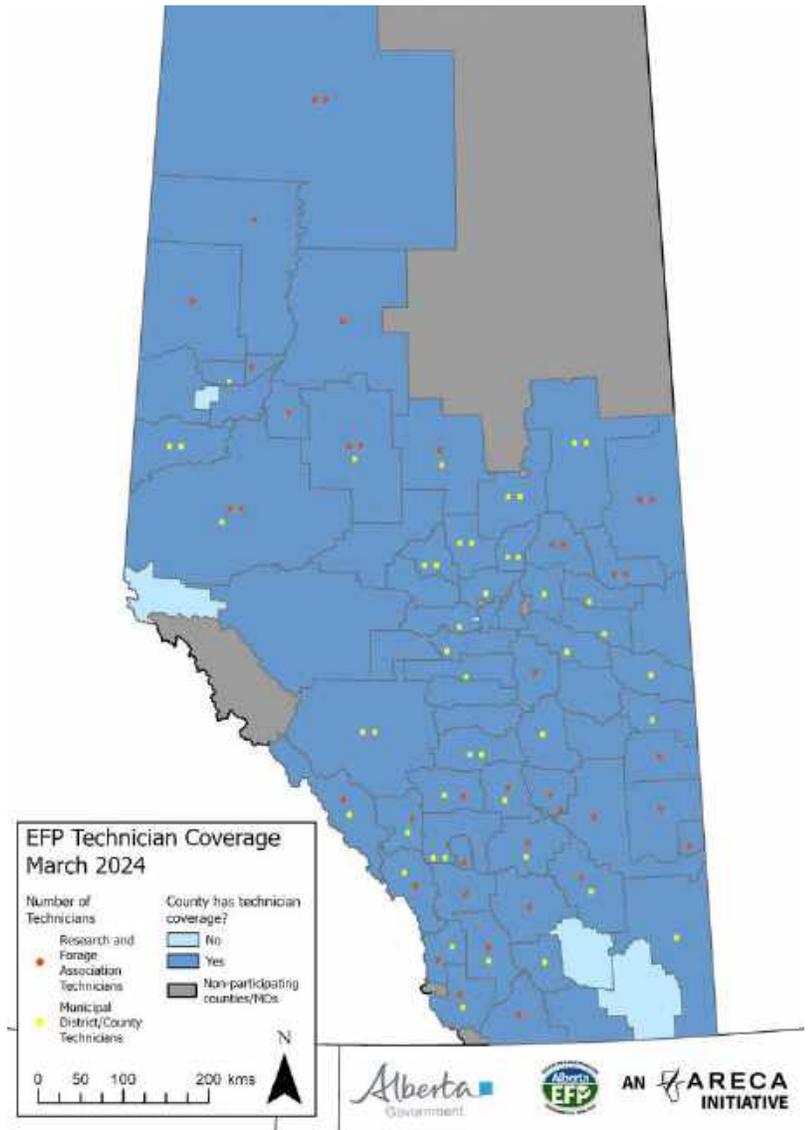


TECHNICIANS NETWORK

The Alberta EFP program aids producers by assigning skilled EFP Technicians to provide assistance. These technicians offer guidance, resources, and review the final workbook as producers go through the program. They deliver personalized or group assistance, ensuring that workbooks and action plans are completed successfully. These technicians, working for municipalities or associations, are instrumental in encouraging program participation and assisting producers across different areas.

Additionally, the EFP Program engages "rover" technicians to deliver EFPs in areas lacking coverage or experiencing high demand.

“The technicians were excellent in helping me complete the EFP 4.0+. They answered all of my questions. Thank you for all your help in updating my EFP.”
— NEIL BOLES, GRAIN FARMER, KNEEHILL COUNTY



"The EFP is foundational for me in building relationships with producers, so I am further able to assist them in achieving their environmental goals, and I appreciate that it is providing an avenue for the agricultural sector to demonstrate their commitment to sustainability."

-Lorelee Grattidge, EFP Technician,
Mountainview County



COMMUNICATION HIGHLIGHTS

Alberta EFP has been proactive in enhancing its communication strategies this past year. The new communications plan aligns program messaging with organizational goals, and incrementally **increasing reach and engagement** on Facebook and Twitter/X platforms are positive indicators. ARECA will continue to monitor post engagement to provide valuable insights for future communications. Additionally, the **new EFP newsletter** initiative has been a great way to keep subscribers informed about program updates, educational resources, and funding opportunities related to beneficial management practice implementation. The **AlbertaEFP.com website** has been updated to align with the new EFP branding and improve user navigation. Highlighting essential content like the events calendar, FAQs, and EFP process information ensures visitors can find relevant information easily. The communication statistics below summarize efforts through the various EFP communication channels for the time period of April 1, 2023 - March 31, 2024.

Social Media Engagement Facebook and X (Twitter)

 **1,465**
Followers

 **1,004**
Posts added

 **25,517**
Social Media Interactions

YouTube Engagement

 **4242** Views
 **142.9** View Time (hours)

Top Videos Viewed

Chapter 1 Tutorial	530
Getting Started on Your Workbook	334
Navigating Your Webbook	304

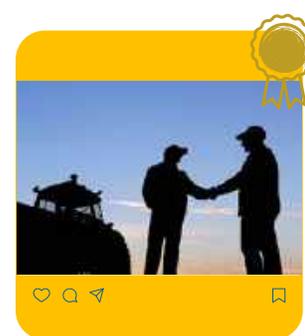
Top Performing Social Media Content:



Meet Your EFP technician, Kim Barkwell (843)



Virtual Workshops for November (1206)



Join Us! EFP is hiring (16,695)



EFP Newsletter



3

Published



654

Subscribers



1114

Engagement

EFP Technician Updates



9

Published



97

Subscribers



EFP Website
Visits

32,836

Note from the ED

Managing our environment is critical to long term success of agriculture. It affects our profitability, productivity, helps reduce production and market risks, and helps to leave our farms/ranches in better shape for the next generation. The significant uptake and continued support of EFP by producers is a strong indication of its usefulness in these endeavors. The combination of the financial support from Alberta Agriculture & Irrigation, our EFP Stakeholder Advisory Committee, our many volunteer EFP Technicians, our collaborations with Commissions and others, and our dedicated staff have made it possible for ARECA to continue to successfully bring EFP to our agricultural sector. Here at ARECA we consider this to be both a pleasure and a privilege. Wishing everyone a wonderful next year!



Alan Hall

ARECA Executive Director

91%

of survey respondents said they would recommend an EFP to a fellow producer

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EFP VERSION 4.0 LAUNCH

Keeping the EFP workbook relevant in a dynamic industry.

Alberta EFP is dedicated to providing an educational experience that remains at the forefront of agricultural beneficial practices. To achieve this, we have pledged to conduct comprehensive content reviews of the workbook **every five years**. This systematic approach ensures that the material is not only relevant to today's agricultural landscape but also anticipates future trends and challenges.

In May 2023, the Alberta Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) proudly introduced an updated version of the EFP workbook. Each chapter has undergone meticulous scrutiny and enhancement by a panel of seasoned experts and EFP technicians. The revision process considered the **current relevance** of every question, integrating the latest advancements in **farming technology and research**. Additionally, valuable **feedback from our users and stakeholders**, accumulated over several years, played a crucial role in shaping the content. This ensures that the workbook is not just a reflection beneficial practices but also a tool that evolves with the industry's dynamic nature. The result is a comprehensive guide that assists producers in navigating the ever-changing landscape of agriculture with confidence and insight.

Version 4.0 includes:

- An 18% reduction in questions allowing a more efficient experience for producers. We streamlined the content without sacrificing any of the important educational pieces.
- A new Beekeeping Chapter. [Beekeeping Alberta \(albertaefp.com\)](http://Beekeeping Alberta (albertaefp.com))
- A new online renewal feature, allowing producers to renew online EFPs in a simple, meaningful way without having to go through the process of completing a new workbook. EFPs are currently valid for 10 years.

To learn more: [EFP 4.0 \(albertaefp.com\)](http://EFP 4.0 (albertaefp.com)).



“As an EFP Technician, I enjoy talking with producers about novel or new-to-the farm practices that can be implemented to improve their environmental stewardship.”

-Karin Roen, EFP Technician, Chinook Applied Research Association

EFP+ PROGRAM

Global Equivalency in Sustainability for Alberta Producers

In May 2023, the Alberta Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) was honored to receive recognition from the Sustainable Agriculture Initiative Platform (SAI Platform) that the Alberta EFP aligns with the Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA) at the **FSA Gold Level**. In conjunction with this alignment for content, the Alberta EFP meets the FSA standards for verification requirements.

We mapped and scored the EFP+ questions to the FSA. As a result, producers who fulfill the requirements of the EFP+ workbook are concurrently **recognized for completing the FSA workbook**, streamlining their journey towards sustainable farming practices.

For companies interested in using the EFP+, an **EFP+ information package** has been developed. This package clearly outlines the process, providing a roadmap for engagement with the EFP+ framework. Currently both Rahr Malting Co. and Alberta Sugar Beet Growers use the EFP+ to reach their sustainability goals.

The EFP+ offers the agricultural industry of Alberta an additional avenue to assert sustainability claims and strengthen the credibility of Alberta's agricultural practices by showcasing alignment with global sustainability standards.

To learn more about EFP+, visit <https://www.albertaefp.com/alberta-efp-program/efp-plus/>



- Built for Alberta Farmers
- Ability to make globally recognized sustainability claims
- Workbook supported by local EFP technicians
- EFP provides support for verification process



“The EFP team’s hard work and dedication to our program has allowed us to let all of our customers and industry partners know that we have one of the best sustainability groups in the industry.”

-Kerby Heintz, Rahr Malting Co.



HABITAT & BIODIVERSITY ASSESSMENT

The EFP Program has secured funding from support from Environment and Climate Change Canada through the Priority Places Initiative to enhance the Habitat & Biodiversity Assessment Tool (HBAT) within the Environmental Farm Plan workbook. This project encompasses four key components:

- 1. Species at Risk Data Update:** Update data for current species and Incorporating 28 newly listed species, bringing the total to 90 species.
- 2. Stewardship Opportunity Review:** Evaluating the language and effectiveness of beneficial management practices to ensure they are relevant and practical for Alberta farmers.
- 3. Online Tool Enhancements:** Improving the tool's features and functionality to enhance user experience.
- 4. Habitat Management Report:** Developing a clear and useful report for producers to aid in habitat planning on their farms.

This initiative aims to provide Alberta farmers with better resources for managing and conserving biodiversity on their lands.

This project was undertaken with the financial support of:
Ce projet a été réalisé avec l'appui financier de :

 Environment and Climate Change Canada Environnement et Changement climatique Canada



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PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE, ONE EFP AT A TIME

The EFP Program shows no signs of slowing down. We expect ongoing growth as more companies and organizations turn to EFP to showcase Alberta producers' dedication to environmental stewardship. Initiatives such as Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership programs, new sustainability criteria for AgriInvest eligibility, and other comparable programs are driving the rising demand for EFPs throughout Canada.



Upcoming projects for the EFP include:

- **Water Stewardship** Module: This initiative will link producers to their local watersheds, helping them comprehend how their operations influence and are influenced beyond their property boundaries.
- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions** (GHG) Tool: Utilizing a simplified version of the HOLOS model, this tool will estimate and clarify how various management practices affect GHG emissions on the farm.
- **Enhancing Adult Learning**: The EFP program will be adapted to accommodate diverse learning styles, ensuring that producers get the most out of their time spent on the EFP workbook.

Alberta EFP will also work towards reconciliation by engaging with Indigenous farmers and land stakeholders. The Alberta EFP program will continue promoting Alberta and Canada as **global leaders** in sustainable agriculture and agri-food production by enhancing education and raising awareness about environmental risks.



"I remember visiting my family farm a lifetime ago, back when the EFP was on paper. I asked my grandfather about it, and he told me the story of our farm, what an EFP was, and why it is important to work to protect what we have before it is gone. His passion and stewardship set me on my path, and I am so proud to be a part of EFP, so many years later."

-Kate Lovsin, EFP Technician, Lesser Slave Watershed Council



WANT MORE INFORMATION?

Find us at

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www.albertaefp.com

We offer one-on-one assistance!

Reach out for help with your EFP



Scan the code to join our events