



AGENDA

Agricultural Service Board Meeting
March 12, 2025

Immediately following the Committee of the Whole Meeting

1. Call to Order

2. Changes to Agenda and Adoption of Agenda

3. Confirmation of Minutes

3.1 January 23, 2025 Agricultural Service Board

4. Delegations

4.1 Christine Campbell, ALUS and
Eldon Kozak, County of Two Hills – 11:30 a.m.

5. Reports for Discussion

5.1 ASB Strategic Plan

Administration Presenter:

Quentin Bochar, Agriculture and Municipal Services Manager

6. Reports

6.1 Agricultural Fieldman

7. Correspondence and Information Items

7.1 ASB 2026 Summer Tour

7.2 Letters of Complaint to ASB Provincial Committee

8. Adjournment



AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARD MEETING MINUTES
January 23, 2025

Members Present: Member Joey Nafziger
Member Eric Anderson
Member Roger Konieczny
Member Cliff Wowdzia
Member Tara Kuzio
Member Carl Ogradnick
Member Kevin Bentley

Administration Present: Pat Podoborzny, Chief Administrative Officer
Norm De Wet, Director of Operations
Quentin Bochar, Manager of Agriculture and Municipal Services
Audra Kropielnicki, Executive Coordinator

1 CALL TO ORDER

Agricultural Service Board Chairperson Member Anderson called the meeting to order at 12:28 p.m.

2 ADOPTION OF AGENDA

2025-ASB001

Moved by: Member Nafziger
THAT the January 23, 2025, Agricultural Service Board Meeting Agenda be adopted as presented.

Carried

3 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

3.1 December 11, 2024 Agricultural Service Board

2025-ASB002

Moved by: Member Wowdzia
THAT the December 11, 2024, Agricultural Service Board meeting minutes be adopted as presented.

Carried

4 DELEGATIONS

5 REPORTS FOR DISCUSSION

5.1 Coyote Harvest Incentive Program

Administration Presenter:

Quentin Bochar, Manager of Agriculture and Municipal Services

2025- ASB003

Moved by: Member Bentley
THAT the Agriculture Service Board recommends Administration investigate and develop a Coyote Harvest Incentive Program policy pending funding availability from Alberta Professional Outfitters Society (APOS).

Carried

5.2 Draft Strategic Plan for Agricultural Services Board

Administration Presenter:

Quentin Bochar, Manager of Agriculture and Municipal Services

2025-ASB004

Moved by: Member Konieczny

THAT the Agriculture Service Board recommends administration prepare an RFD for a future Council meeting to approve the vision, mission, values and strategic priorities for the ASB as presented.

Carried

6 REPORTS

6.1 Agricultural Fieldman

Administration Presenter:

Quentin Bocher, Manager of Agriculture and Municipal Services

2025-ASB005

Moved by: Member Nafziger

THAT Administration arrange ALUS Advantage to attend a future ASB meeting to provide members with an overview.

Carried

2025-ASB006

Moved by: Member Ogradnick

THAT the Agricultural Fieldman report be accepted as presented.

Carried

7 CORRESPONDENCE AND INFORMATION ITEMS

7.1 Moisture Situation Update as of December 11, 2024.

2025-ASB007

Moved by: Member Bentley

THAT the correspondence and information items be accepted as presented.

Carried

2025-ASB008

Moved by: Member Kuzio

THAT the next Agricultural Service Board meeting be held March 12, 2025 immediately following the Committee of the Whole Meeting.

Carried

8 ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Member Anderson declared the meeting adjourned at 1:09 p.m.

Chairperson

Chief Administrative Officer



AGRICULTURE SERVICES BOARD STRATEGIC PLAN DISCUSSION PAPER

Topic: Draft Strategic Plan for Agricultural Services Board (ASB)

Date: March 3, 2025

Background

At the December 11, 2024 ASB meeting, there was discussion about the future of the ASB and the priorities Council wanted to see in the new Strategic Plan. Council agreed they were interested in more education and outreach as well as agricultural sustainability and pest and weed management.

Based on the discussion, a draft Strategic Plan has been created with a need to approve the draft plan so it can be circulated to key community stakeholders for feedback.

Information for the Committee

The draft Strategic Plan consists of some background on the County's agriculture practices and trends, summary of conversations with the local agricultural societies and Lavoy Action Society, summary of conversations with members of Council and draft vision, mission, values and priorities.

At the January 23, 2025 ASB meeting the vision, mission, values and priorities were approved, the draft Strategic Plan was finalized, graphically designed and prepared for public consultation and circulation at the February 18 and 19, 2025 public open houses in Lavoy and Minburn. There was no extra feedback from key community stakeholders on the draft plan given at the open houses.

Recommendation

THAT the Agricultural Services Board recommend to County Council to approve the County of Minburn ASB 2025 to 2029 Strategic Plan.

Attachment: Draft 2025-2029 ASB Strategic Plan

2025-29



2025-29 STRATEGIC PLAN

County of Minburn Agricultural Services Board



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Types of Agriculture in the County of Minburn

The County of Minburn contains 694,304 acres of land with approximately one half million acres cropped annually or seeded to tame forage. The balance is made up of both improved and unimproved pastureland and native bush. Grain and cow/calf production is the majority of our agricultural production.



KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF AGRICULTURE IN THE COUNTY OF MINBURN

1. Grain & Oilseed Farming

- The County of Minburn is primarily known for its production of cereal grains such as wheat, barley, oats, and canola, which are well-suited to the soil and climate. These crops are staples in the region, contributing significantly to the local economy and the wider agricultural market in Alberta.
- Canola is particularly important, with its strong demand both domestically and internationally, used for oil production and animal feed.

2. Livestock Farming

- Livestock, particularly cattle ranching, is another significant component of County of Minburn's agricultural profile. With wide open spaces and pastureland, the region supports beef cattle production, which serves both local and export markets.
- In addition to beef, the County also supports pork and poultry farming, adding diversity to its livestock sector.

3. Mixed Farming Operations

- Many farms in the County engage in mixed farming, where they balance crop production with livestock. This integrated approach helps farmers manage risk and improve sustainability by using crop by-products for animal feed and utilizing livestock manure for fertilization.

4. Forage Crops

- Forage crops, such as alfalfa and hay, are also significant in the county, particularly for supporting the livestock sector. These crops provide essential feed for cattle and other animals during the winter months when grazing is not possible.

5. Challenges & Opportunities

- **Climate Variability:** Farmers in the County of Minburn, like many other rural areas in Alberta, face challenges due to weather variability. Droughts or heavy rain can impact both crop yields and livestock health, requiring adaptive strategies.
- **Technological Advancements:** Many farms are incorporating ag-tech solutions such as precision farming, advanced irrigation, and more efficient machinery to increase productivity while minimizing environmental impact.
- **Sustainability Efforts:** There's growing attention to sustainable practices, including soil conservation, water management, and the use of cover crops to enhance biodiversity and reduce erosion.

6. Community & Agricultural Support

- The community has a strong network of cooperatives and local organizations to support agricultural businesses and foster collaboration among producers.



Technological Trends in County of Minburn Agriculture



TECHNOLOGICAL TRENDS IN COUNTY OF MINBURN

Precision Farming and Ag-Tech

- Farmers in the County of Minburn are increasingly adopting precision farming techniques. These involve using data-driven technologies like GPS-guided equipment, drones, and satellite imagery to optimize planting, fertilization, and irrigation. The goal is to improve yields, reduce waste, and lower input costs by applying resources more efficiently.
- Soil sensors and remote monitoring systems help track soil moisture and nutrient levels, which aids in more precise decision-making for crop management.

Drones and Aerial Surveillance

- Drones are being used for a variety of tasks such as monitoring crop health, assessing field conditions, and identifying pest or disease outbreaks. This allows farmers to respond quickly to any issues, minimizing potential losses.
- Drone imagery helps farmers map their land with precision, enabling better planning for crop rotations, fertilization, and water usage.

Robotics and Automation

- In large-scale grain operations, farmers are exploring the use of automated machinery like autonomous tractors, sprayers, and seeders. These technologies reduce labor costs and increase efficiency, especially during peak planting and harvest seasons.
- Automated feeding systems for livestock are also becoming more common, ensuring that animals receive consistent nutrition with minimal human labour.
- Smart Irrigation Systems
- Given the variability of Alberta's climate, water management is crucial. Smart irrigation systems, which use real-time data from weather forecasts and soil sensors, help farmers in the County of Minburn conserve water by only irrigating when and where it's needed.
- These systems reduce water wastage and improve crop health by delivering precise amounts of water.



Agricultural Policies Affecting the County of Minburn



AGRICULTURAL POLICIES IMPACTING THE COUNTY OF MINBURN

Samples of Provincial Support Programs

- **Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC):** The Alberta government, through the AFSC, offers financial support, including insurance programs, loans, and disaster recovery assistance for farmers facing adverse conditions such as droughts, floods, or disease outbreaks.
- **Farm and Ranch Safety Grants:** These grants help County of Minburn farmers implement health and safety measures on their operations, particularly for high-risk tasks like operating heavy machinery or managing livestock.
- **Small Community Opportunity Program Grants:** These grants are for non-profits, Indigenous, and small communities to help build capacity in agriculture, small business and local economic development.

Environmental and Sustainability Initiatives

- **Environmental Farm Plan (EFP):** This is a voluntary, confidential self-assessment tool that helps farmers identify and reduce environmental risks on their farms. Many County of Minburn farmers participate in the EFP to maintain soil health, protect water sources, and manage biodiversity.
- **Climate Change Adaptation:** As part of Alberta's broader climate change strategy, farmers are being encouraged to adopt sustainable practices. This includes the use of cover crops, no-till farming, and strategies to improve soil carbon storage, which reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build long-term resilience.

Local Agricultural Policies and Support

- The County of Minburn is involved in several regional collaborations aimed at supporting agriculture. These include policies that encourage land stewardship and sustainable development, while also maintaining the balance between agricultural, residential, and industrial land use.
- **Agri-Tourism and Diversification Initiatives:** The County supports some efforts to diversify the agricultural economy by promoting agri-tourism. This includes farm tours, harvest festivals, and developing value-added products like artisanal foods, which offer alternative income streams for farmers.
- Market Access and Export Support
- Alberta's government supports international trade efforts, helping farmers in the County of Minburn gain access to global markets, particularly for grains and oilseeds like wheat and canola.
- Programs such as Growing Forward 2 (GF2) provide funding for initiatives that enhance productivity and competitiveness in both local and international markets.

Summary of Interviews with Council, CAO and Agricultural Societies

In the fall of 2024, members of Council, the CAO, and community stakeholders were interviewed one-on-one for their perspectives on what is currently working well in terms of support for agricultural services, what areas could be improved, and any vision they have regarding the future of agricultural services and the Agricultural Services Board.





SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS WITH COUNCIL MEMBERS AND THE CAO IN THE COUNTY OF MINBURN

In the fall of 2024, members of Council and the CAO were interviewed one-on-one for their perspectives on what is currently working well in terms of support for agricultural services, what areas could be improved, and any vision they have regarding the future of agricultural services and the Agricultural Services Board. The following is a summary of the findings:

What's Working Well: Council members emphasized the effectiveness of crop monitoring, noxious weed management, and infrastructure maintenance. They also noted the value of audits at seed plants, monitoring grain terminals, and the current agricultural societies' efforts.

Areas for Improvement/Vision Moving Forward: Suggestions included increasing funding for noxious weed management (other parties paying), expanding educational programs on funding opportunities, and incorporating AI and new technologies into agricultural practices. The number one consistent area that was mentioned by several Council members was interest in hosting more open houses and demo days to showcase available resources, and there was a strong desire for more proactive lobbying.

County Role/Other Stakeholders: The County is seen as playing a supportive role, with a focus on continuing its current programs and exploring new initiatives. There is openness to involving the public more in the Agricultural Service Board (ASB) and fostering growth in rural tourism and local agri-business. However, there is also some hesitation about getting too involved in the operations of agricultural societies, preferring to let them manage their own activities. There is an opportunity for greater collaboration between the five agriculture societies in the area.



SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS WITH COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS IN THE COUNTY OF MINBURN

In the fall of 2024, each agricultural society in the County of Minburn, as well as the Lavoy Action Society were interviewed one-on-one for their perspectives on what is currently working well in terms of support for agricultural services, what areas could be improved, and any vision they have regarding the future of agricultural services and the Agricultural Services Board. The following is a summary of the findings:

What's Working Well: Each of the agricultural societies said they appreciated the funding from the County of Minburn and wished for funding to continue.

Areas for Improvement/Vision Moving Forward: Collectively, there were a few themes that emerged. They would like to see: More engagement and presence of Council members/County at events and meetings, more knowledge sharing on what's happening at the County – perhaps promote more Agri-tourism and awareness of community events and more opportunities for more recreational spaces for youth/families in some areas.

County Role/Other Stakeholders: They agreed with expanding educational programs/workshops on funding opportunities to showcase available resources and asked to bring together agricultural societies for some joint meetings to help in collaboration and support a Women in Agriculture Program.

DECEMBER 11, 2024 COUNCIL MEETING DISCUSSION SUMMARY

A new **Terms of Reference** was passed for the Agricultural Services Board (ASB) at the December 11, 2024 ASB meeting. Council agreed the ASB will be comprised of all members of Council with no public members. They agreed their purpose was to fulfill the mandate set out in the *Agricultural Service Board Act*, RSA 2000, c.A-10 and to promote the importance of agriculture in the County of Minburn.

They also agreed that duties of the ASB would follow the Act as below:

- To act as an advisory body and to assist Council and the Minister, in matters of mutual concern.
- To advise on and to help organize and direct weed and pest control and soil and water conservation programs.
- To assist in the control of animal disease under the *Animal Health Act*.
- To promote, enhance and protect viable and sustainable agriculture with a view to improving the economic viability of the agricultural producer.
- To promote and develop agricultural policies to meet the needs of the municipality.
- In addition to the duties set out in the Act, Council agreed that ASB is responsible for the following:
 - Ensuring that all Provincial Statutes (*Agricultural Pests Act*, *Agricultural Service Board Act*, *Soil Conservation Act*, and the *Weed Act*) are administered to the benefit of all municipal residents.
 - Communicating the successes of the County's agricultural services.
 - Educating the public on the importance of agriculture to the County.

At the December 11, 2024 meeting, strategic priorities were discussed, and it was agreed that priorities should be around education and outreach, pest and weed control, and sustainability.

Based on the discussion and the agreed-upon direction, a proposed vision, mission, and strategic priorities were developed. It was decided that this information should be shared with residents to ensure it aligns with the community's values. Additional revisions may be necessary once feedback is gathered. It was also agreed that Council members could seek further input from their constituents and report back, while a draft copy will be sent to the agricultural societies for their feedback.

Strategic Plan 2025-26 County of Minburn's Agricultural Service Board





VISION

To cultivate a resilient, sustainable agricultural sector that drives economic growth, preserves environmental health, and fosters community engagement.



MISSION

To provide leadership, education, and resources that support sustainable farming practices, promote economic vitality, and ensure environmental stewardship.



VALUES

Sustainability, Collaboration, Integrity, Innovation, and Education

SUSTAINABILITY: Committing to environmentally responsible practices that ensure the long-term health of agricultural ecosystems and resources.

COLLABORATION: Building strong partnerships with farmers, community stakeholders, and other organizations to address agricultural challenges and opportunities.

INTEGRITY: Operating with honesty, transparency, and fairness in decision-making and interactions with stakeholders.

INNOVATION: Encouraging the adoption of new technologies and farming practices that improve efficiency, productivity, and environmental stewardship.

EDUCATION: Promoting continuous learning and knowledge sharing to empower farmers and rural communities with the tools and information they need for success.

PRIORITY 1: AGRICULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Goal: Promote environmentally sustainable agricultural policies and practices.

Actions:

- Conserve wetlands and riparian areas.
- Ensure a drought management plan is in place.
- Encourage water conservation practices in farming including implementing water-efficient irrigation systems and assessing water availability regularly.
- Provide guidance on sustainable crop rotation and pest management.
- Stay current on Provincial Acts, regulations and land use policies.
- Ensure strong internal policies and programs to support responsible agricultural land production.
- Enforce policies and bylaws that are mandated by the *Agricultural Service Board Act*, *Weed Control Act*, *Agricultural Pest Act*, *Soil Conservation Act*, and *Animal Health Act*.

Measures of Success: Compliance with legislation and increased adoption of soil and water conservation.

PRIORITY 2: PEST AND WEED MANAGEMENT

Goal: Maintain effective control of agricultural pests and weeds.

Actions:

- Implement regular inspections and enforce the *Weed Control Act* and *Agricultural Pests Act*.
- Offer education on identifying and managing invasive species. Include education on early detection and rapid response to invasive species to prevent the spread of new pests.
- Develop a monitoring system to track the effectiveness of pest and weed control measures over time.
- Collaborate with neighboring municipalities on regional pest control initiatives.

Measures of Success: Reduction in invasive species reports, improved community compliance with pest control regulations.

PRIORITY 3: EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Goal: Provide ongoing education, outreach and advocacy for the local agricultural and rural communities.

Actions:

- Host information and training sessions on innovative farming techniques, pest management, grant opportunities and soil health.
- Create partnerships with agricultural research and government bodies to deliver workshops.
- Provide timely and regular communication to the community on the County's agricultural services' initiatives and progress.
- Explore digital platforms and online resources to expand outreach and education on rural living to a broader audience, especially younger farmers or those in remote areas.
- Foster peer-to-peer learning by encouraging mentorship programs where experienced farmers can share knowledge with newcomers or younger generations.

Measures of Success: Increased attendance at educational events, increased awareness of County's agricultural services and low level of complaints. Increased number of new partnerships or collaborations formed through outreach efforts.





COUNTY OF
MINBURN

A decorative flourish consisting of a curved line with three leaf-like shapes at the end, positioned below the word 'MINBURN'.



Agricultural Fieldman Report

Name: Quentin Bochar

Department: ASB

Reviewed by: Norm De Wet

For Presentation at: March 12, 2025 ASB Meeting

From Date: January 1, 2025

To Date: March 12, 2025

January

- Brushing Program has completed 9200 metres.
- Continue investigating requests for brushing at various locations in the County.
- ASB Grant application for the 2025-2029 cycle has been completed and submitted.
- Attended an Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation Wild Boar Webinar January 15, 2025.
- Attended the Alberta Provincial ASB Conference in Edmonton January 20-22, 2025.
- Attended ASB meeting January 23, 2025.

February

- Brushing Program has completed 17,000 metres.
- Continue investigating requests for brushing at various locations in the County.
- Attended the Alberta Invasive Species Council (AISC) "Pests in the City" Webinar February 7, 2025.
- Hosted a "Working Wells" online workshop February 13, 2025.
- Attended ASB Strategic Plan Open House meetings February 18, 2025 in Lavoy and February 19, 2025 in Minburn.
- Attended the Professional Vegetation Manager's Association (PVMA) Spring Conference in Edmonton February 25-27, 2025.
- Receiving calls about coyote predation on livestock.



Office of the Chair, Wheatland County Agricultural Service Board

February 4, 2025

The Association of Alberta Agricultural Fieldman President Stephen Bevans
Box 580
Cardston, AB
T0K 0K0

RE: Provincial Agricultural Service Board Tour

The Wheatland County Agricultural Service Board is pleased to express its interest in hosting the Provincial Agricultural Service Board Tour in 2026.

Although Wheatland County was originally scheduled to host the Tour in 2022, unforeseen budget constraints and uncertainty surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic led to the difficult decision to withdraw our name at that time. However, we are now confident in our ability to proceed with hosting the event in 2026.

We are excited about the opportunity to showcase Wheatland County's agricultural industry and the many highlights of our region. We look forward to welcoming Agricultural Service Boards from across the province and sharing what Wheatland County has to offer.

Sincerely,

Shannon Laprise
Agricultural Service Board Chair, Wheatland County



COUNTY OF Northern Lights

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The Agricultural Service Boards
Provincial Committee
C/O Quinton Beaumont
Box 1270
Stettler, AB
T0C 2L0

15.40.10

January 24, 2025

Re: 2025 ASB Conference

The County of Northern Lights ASB recently attended the 2025 ASB Provincial Conference in Edmonton and was represented by 4 board members and the Agricultural Fieldman. This conference is always much anticipated by our board members as it offers many valuable updates, keynote speakers, networking opportunities, tradeshow and most importantly, the chance to present resolutions.

Resolutions have a long history of bringing regional and provincial agricultural matters forward. After a democratic process of presenting the resolutions, they are often debated, amended and then put to the assembly for a vote. Those that are approved then go to the ASB Provincial Committee, who in turn send them out for responses, grade the responses and then advocate for the resolution's intent. I want to bring attention to some inappropriate conduct during the resolution session on January 22nd. The County of Northern Lights brought forward 2 resolutions; one (8-25) was presented on the January 21st, and the second (13-25) on January 22nd. We always welcome debate and potential small amendments during the presentation and understand that in true democratic fashion, the subsequent vote determines whether the resolution passes or fails. What we do not agree with is condescending and disrespectful remarks.

These actions were displayed by an ASB member from Vulcan County who provided opposition to 13-25 and seemed frustrated that the resolution process was taking too long, as indicated by his comments and theatrical behavior regarding resolution 3-25 the day before. The comments that were made did not attempt to debate ideas, but attacked the resolutions as a waste of time, burdensome and that certain municipalities were sponsoring too many resolutions. "It is only an issue for a municipality that sponsored over half the resolutions" was the comment, while it doesn't sound too terrible on paper, the leadup, sentiment and delivery was enough to draw audible gasps and muttering from the crowd. After the conclusion of the Resolution Session, we received numerous commiserations for the exaggerated reaction, as it went too far.



COUNTY OF
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Our feeling is, if this type of behaviour is allowed to continue with no intervention from the board, the potential for mudslinging and chaos will be inevitable and credibility of this great organization will be compromised. I have been approached by many ASB's that were witness to this uncalled-for comment, who strongly agree that it was totally inappropriate and needs to be addressed. These types of comments stifle debate, lead to less participation and dissuade future resolutions in fear of humiliation and ridicule.

These types of sessions are critical to generating solutions and change, if you disagree with an idea then say why you are against it—it doesn't need to be turned into a personal indiscretion against another municipality that is sponsoring the idea. The main purpose of the conference is to debate the resolutions, and debate should follow the correct code of conduct.

Thank you for your consideration,

Terry Ungarian
Reeve and ASB Chair,
County of Northern Lights

Cc: AAAF and ASB's of Alberta



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The Agricultural Service Boards
Provincial Committee
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February 14, 2025

The Chair, two members and the Agricultural Fieldman of the Municipal District of Spirit River's Agricultural Service Board recently attended the 2025 ASB Provincial Conference in Edmonton. The MD of Spirit River's ASB can appreciate the time, effort, and care that goes into preparing important resolutions to be presented at the conference year after year. These resolutions help bring regional and provincial agricultural matters forward, and offer innovative solutions that contribute to the viability, sustainability, and prosperity of agriculture in rural Alberta.

The County of Northern Lights brought forward two resolutions, 8-25, and 13-25, to be heard at the conference, giving ASB members the ability to vote in favour of or against. This process enables ASB's to have an active role in important agricultural decision-making, and has long been a respected process.

Unfortunately, an ASB member from Vulcan County displayed inappropriate behaviour by verbally attacking the proposed resolutions, citing them as a waste of time. The comments and behaviour produced by this particular member were disrespectful and a far cry from the code of conduct expectations of all members. Although resolution processes spark important conversations and debates, it is expected that these are conducted in a respectful manner and are productive for the purpose of agricultural progression and development.

Therefore, the Municipal District of Spirit River's Agricultural Service Board is in support of the County of Northern Lights and their belief that the code of conduct be upheld for all ASB's and their members, to ensure respect is maintained and so the conference itself can have continued success leading to effective decision making and the generation of valuable agricultural solutions.

Sincerely,

Tony Van Rootselaar
Reeve, MD of Spirit River No.133

Cc: AAAF and ASB's of Alberta