



British Columbia Agriculture Council

Agriculture Environment & Wildlife Fund

Strategic Plan

November 1, 2007

The Agriculture Environment and Wildlife Fund is an Agri-Food Futures Fund program created by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. The program is administered by the BC Agriculture Council for the Investment Agriculture Foundation of British Columbia.

Canada



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Introduction

The concept for the Agriculture Environment and Wildlife Fund (AEWF) evolved from the Agriculture Environment Partnership Initiative (AEPI) that responded to increasing pressure on agriculture from environmental interests. A number of initiatives have been undertaken, but none that provided the potential for continuity and comprehensiveness as the AEPI.

Some of the issues facing government and industry include:

1. High public expectations regarding environmental stewardship on farms.
2. Increasing pressure on governments to impose and enforce environmental regulations
3. Increasing cost to farmers to provide public benefits/expectations
4. Limited ability of farmers to pass on increased costs for expenditures aimed solely for public good
5. Long standing wildlife conflicts aggravated by wildlife adapting to agricultural crops
6. High level of value by the public for wildlife viewing and hunting
7. Fewer tools available to farmers and agencies to effectively control wildlife

There are benefits to both farmers and the general public from resolution of the main issues or constraints, such as:

1. Integrated pest management that can ensure continued and new access to markets
2. Advances in sustainable production through technological innovation
3. Valuing environmental goods and services provided on agricultural lands
4. Cooperative enhancement of environmental values on farms
5. Innovative ways to manage impacts of wildlife on agriculture
6. Public awareness of agriculture's positive contribution to the environment
7. More environmentally friendly farm practices
8. Potential for enhanced riparian areas
9. Farmers awareness of environmental goals and how they can contribute
10. Education and awareness about invasive plants

The benefits cannot be achieved by the industry without the support and involvement of industry organizations, private and public organizations, and regulatory agencies.

Principles

1. A financially viable and stable agricultural industry is a prerequisite for achieving environmental goals in the farming and ranching areas of the province.
2. Compliance with environmental laws and regulations and due diligence are the responsibility of farmers and ranchers.
3. Voluntary actions on the part of farmers and ranchers, over and above those required to comply with laws and regulations, are a desirable part of achieving environmental objectives.
4. The program must be structured in a way that encourages and supports on-farm stewardship activities.
5. Conserving and enhancing environmental values in the agricultural areas of British Columbia is a shared responsibility between the agriculture industry and the citizens of the province and Canada.
6. The program will contribute to co-operative and non-confrontational resolution of conflicts between agricultural and environmental objectives.
7. Effective partnerships between agriculture interests and environmental agencies need to be developed and fostered and are an important part of achieving the objectives and outcomes of the program.
8. The program is governed by the objectives and principles of the Canada – British Columbia Agriculture Policy Framework Agreement or its successor.

Strategic Objectives

1. To reduce or mitigate agricultural impacts on environmental values while contributing to the economic sustainability of the industry.
2. To reduce or mitigate impacts of wildlife on economic viability of agricultural operations while recognizing the intrinsic value of wildlife to British Columbians
3. To communicate the contribution agriculture makes in conserving and enhancing environmental values
4. To communicate the benefits to the public from good stewardship practices used by farmers and ranchers
5. To support adaptation of Ecological Goods and Services principles and programs initiated by the Federal and Provincial governments for the benefit of producers in British Columbia.

Program Management

Management Committee

The AEFWF will be managed by the Agriculture Environment Initiatives Management Committee (MC), comprised of industry representatives chosen by the BC Agriculture Council and ex-officio representatives from the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC (IAFBC), British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (MAL) and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC). The MC has the final authority on all strategic decisions including the approval of all projects subject to compliance with the terms of funding established by AFFF. The MC, through its annual plan, establishes program and investment priorities.

Program Coordination

Under guidance of the MC, the BCAC has the responsibility for day-to-day administration of the program. Duties include: developing of fund materials, handling public enquiries, coordinating the preparation of applications for presentation to the MC, contract management, program planning and reporting. A proactive approach may be taken in key priority areas identified by the AEI MC. MAL provides supporting resources to assist with project delivery primarily through staff liaisons assigned to projects.

Role of Supporting Agencies

In addition to the BCAC, the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, and the BC Ministry of Environment (MoE) who together founded the Agriculture Environment Partnership Committee, Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC, and many other agencies groups provide support to the program. The commodity sector associations also play a key role both implementation and priority setting. Provincial, federal and other agencies may provide additional technical review and feedback if needed by the MC. These agencies may also provide support and assistance with project delivery. Where appropriate, the MC may require co-operation with other agencies for joint project funding. Finally, these groups may provide support during the evaluation phase.

Application and Approval Process

Applications are expected to be submitted by farm organizations or other groups with strong linkages to the agricultural community. Applications from other groups or individuals are encouraged to have demonstrated support from farm organizations. This does not preclude the possibility that the MC may take the lead in initiating and approving projects seen to be necessary to meet any of the strategic priorities.

The MC will review and make decisions on all applications for funding. Decisions will be based on criteria in agreements between the British Columbia Agriculture Council and the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC, the federal and provincial governments and criteria established by the MC. Considerations include importance of the issue to the industry and the environment, amount of funding from other sources, and expected effectiveness of the proposal for dealing with agricultural/environmental issues.

Record of Decisions/Appeals

All decisions of the MC regarding application approval or rejection will be recorded along with members present and abstentions. Applicants not approved will have access to a process of consultation with the MC Chair or AEI Coordinator and reconsideration by the MC.

Monitoring

The MC will ensure that procedures are in place to ensure the accountability of successful applicants in the use of approved funds. This will include a requirement for periodic progress reports and may involve a compliance audit or review to ensure procedures for appropriate use of program funds are in place. Successful applicants

are advised that non-performance may result in withdrawal of support and return of previously advanced funds.

Performance Measurement Framework

The AEFW will strive to meet broadly stated related objectives and outcomes.

Objective

“To maintain viability and productivity of British Columbia farm and agri-food operations as they strive to integrate the changing environmental values of society and to adopt stewardship practices that are appropriate and responsible.”

Outcomes

“Outcomes will be measured primarily in terms of the levels of adoption of appropriate environmental stewardship practices, and the degree to which sensitive environmental issues are recognized and mitigated, while maintaining profitability of British Columbia farm and agri-food operations.”

The effectiveness of the Agriculture Environment and Wildlife Fund will be largely determined by the success and type of projects that are proposed and approved. The BCAC and the MC will manage the program proactively to ensure those objectives and outcomes are achieved.

The expected outcomes for AEFW closely mirror the broad outcomes expected for the AFFF environment component.

Table 1 below outlines those expected outcomes as they relate to the objectives of the AEFW program. Activities related to each of the objectives are identified in the right hand column.

1. As a first level of measuring outcomes, projects addressing or contributing to specific related activities under each objective or outcome will be tracked through a database established for the program.
2. More specific outcomes for the program, its objectives or for any major initiative may be determined through a detailed review of data collected from completed projects

Table 2 summarizes the administrative and delivery targets. Accountability and effectiveness of management processes are the primary objectives for this component.

The broad benefits expected from the implementation of the program include:

1. Enhanced rate of adaptation of technological innovation related to sustainable production practises.
2. Increased rate of implementation of on farm measures taken to protect environmental values.
3. Enhanced public image and support for agriculture.
4. Reduced level of conflict between agriculture and environmental interests.
5. Reduced economic impact of wildlife damage to agriculture
6. Continued economic development while maintaining the environmental health of the natural resources managed and used by agriculture
7. Enhanced ability of the British Columbia agri-food sector to meet the demands of a greener global market.

Table 1. Achieving Strategic Objectives

Strategic Objective	Related Results
1. To reduce or mitigate agricultural impacts on environmental values while contributing to the economic sustainability of the industry	a) Improving soil management b) Improving water quality c) Enhancing riparian areas d) Developing information to support program development e) Developing Information to support policy and regulatory changes f) Improving environmental values
2. To reduce or mitigate impacts of wildlife on economic viability of agricultural operations while recognizing the intrinsic value of wildlife to British Columbians	a) Reducing wildlife impacts b) Reducing complaints and conflicts c) Developing information to support program development d) Developing information to support policy and regulatory changes e) Improving wildlife habitat

Strategic Objective	Related Results
3. To communicate the contribution agriculture makes in conserving and enhancing environmental values	a) Increasing public support of agriculture's role in environmental protection and enhancement b) Increasing farmers' and ranchers' support of agriculture's role in environmental protection and enhancement
4. To evaluate impacts and outcomes related to activities undertaken with support of this program.	a) Evaluating project delivery b) Monitoring or evaluating Impacts on environmental and wildlife conflict objectives
5. To support adaptation of Ecological Goods and Services (EG&S) principles and programs initiated by the Federal and Provincial governments for the benefit of producers in British Columbia.	a) Demonstrating of EG&S principles b) Furthering understanding of EG&S

Table 2. Program Administration

Desired Outcomes	Indicators	Target
Efficient program administration	ratio of project funding to program delivery and project support	10%
Timely response to applications	time between contact from proponent to decision time between decision and communication to applicant	3 month maximum 2 weeks maximum
Projects within budget and on schedule	budget schedule	95% Applicant driven
Projects achieve approved results	deliverables in place	95%
Project partners matching program contribution	Cumulative financial records from completed projects	According to category

Activities

The AEFW is intended to further the environmental sustainability of the agri-food sector in British Columbia. This will be realized by providing funds to support a range of activities. The following section provides descriptions and examples of the types of activities the AEFW could support. Although comprehensive, the list of activities is not intended to be limiting. Other activities not discussed in this section could be funded. Cost sharing limits are summarized in Table 4.

Education and Awareness

Objectives:

1. To increase producer and public knowledge and understanding of issues and approaches related to agricultural and environmental sustainability.
2. To support producer involvement in participating in and establishing community-based processes that will build increased awareness and improve the understanding by agriculture and other community stakeholders of the importance and the ways of resolving agricultural and environmental issues.

Examples include:

1. Invasive plant management and control methods in a cooperative and environmentally sensitive manner
2. Preparation and presentation of educational information on good stewardship practices

Demonstration and Adoption of Stewardship Practices

Objectives:

1. To encourage the development, evaluation, transfer and adoption of practical management practices and technologies that sustain soil and water productivity over the long term, protect fisheries and wildlife resources and improve compatibility between agriculture and the environment.
2. To encourage farms and ranches in British Columbia to comply with environmental regulations and standards
3. To support objectives of the provincial Environmental Farm Plan program

4. To support development of programs related to recognition of the positive contribution to “ecological goods and services” provided by producers.
5. To provide supplemental funding for on-farm works not covered by the National Farm Stewardship Program where approved by the Management Committee and consistent with the Canada-BC Agriculture Policy Framework Agreement. The process for accessing the funds for these purposes would remain the same as for works currently covered by the NFSP.

Examples include:

1. Projects that evaluate and demonstrate stewardship practices.
2. Investigations to evaluate on-farm practices related to resource stewardship.
3. Investigate and import technologies that may have practical application in British Columbia.
4. To provide group members and area producers with access to equipment needed to demonstrate new approaches to resource conservation and environmental stewardship.
5. To assimilate information for the development of pilot projects related to stewardship initiatives such as agricultural plastics recycling, biofuel and bioenergy production and use options.

Reduction of Wildlife Impacts

Objectives:

1. to support planning activities aimed at increasing compatibility between agriculture and wildlife interests
2. to support delivery of prevention and mitigation programs that compliment ongoing regional or sectoral compensation programs and National Farm Stewardship Program funded on-farm works aimed at reducing wildlife damage
3. to encourage partnerships with wildlife oriented agencies and organizations in establishing longer term initiatives to address agriculture wildlife conflicts
4. to support demonstration and evaluation of innovative concepts related to wildlife loss reduction

5. to support delivery of wildlife damage compensation initiatives in cooperation with BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, BC Ministry of Environment, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and delivery groups.

The Management Committee will consider proposals to support implementation of compensation projects under the following criteria:

1. Projects are expected to encourage individuals to implement all reasonable prevention measures before being eligible for compensation.
2. Regional or provincial prevention or mitigation plans should be in place or in process.
3. Funds for projects must flow through the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands and are subject to meeting the requirements of the Agriculture Policy Framework Business Risk Management Agreement section or its successor.

The priorities are where the following conditions apply:

1. governments are targeting increased wildlife populations or eliminating options for mitigating the losses
2. mitigative measures are in place but not fully effective
3. compensating losses will not be a disincentive to implement effective preventative measures
4. Importance of the issue to the agriculture industry sector and lack of practical damage prevention measures
5. Technical merit and practicality as well as assurances that regulatory and safety concerns will be addressed
6. Available Agriculture Environment and Wildlife Fund resources and BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands funds to meet project requirements
7. An agriculturally oriented organization willing work with the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands and the BC Agriculture Council in the delivery of the project
8. Commitment by other agencies towards resolving the wildlife agriculture conflicts.

Examples include:

1. To assimilate information for the development of program proposals or pilot projects related to wildlife agriculture initiatives such as landowner

- enfranchisement, impact assessment, and integrated prevention and compensation options
2. Wild predator loss prevention related to livestock
 3. Area wide bird management to reduce noise pollution on-farm and prevent losses related to horticultural crops.

Research

Objective:

To support research projects that deal with clearly identified gaps and priorities in the understanding of environmentally sustainable production practices and agriculture/environment interactions.

Examples include:

1. economically and environmentally sound production practices
2. holistic ecosystems-based management practices
3. interactions between agriculture and wildlife
4. integrated pest and fertilizer management
5. technologies to support the three "R's" of reducing, reusing and recycling in the agri-food sector
6. criteria for assessing environmental sustainability of programs
7. the impacts of environmental problems on the agri-food sector.

Collaborative Area Planning

Objective1:

To support planning activities to increase compatibility between agriculture and other citizens and between agriculture and the environment.

Examples include:

1. Watershed plans, stream recovery plans, wildlife management plans, and other products of multi-interest planning processes provide strategic direction for achieving the parallel goals of environmental conservation and enhancement, agriculture growth and development and capability between agriculture and other land uses.

2. preparing for and attending planning sessions, information collection, analysis and reporting

Objective 2:

To support initiatives to recognize agricultural benefits identified in area based plans.

Examples include:

1. Regional Off-farm Water Management System Improvements: develop or rehabilitate channels and pumps for the benefit of both farmers and fisheries resource.
2. Off-farm Water Conservation: assist with area or regional needs to facilitate implementation of water conservation strategies.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Administration

Monitoring Objectives:

1. To collect physical and chemical data on soil and water parameters, air quality, fish and wildlife numbers and health, data on farm practices and other relevant information. The data and information would be used to better understand the impacts of agricultural practices on the environment.
2. To develop the necessary information and data upon which to base decisions to develop programs to resolve long-standing or emerging issues.

Examples include:

- Implementation of projects to monitor agricultural impacts on air, water, soil, fish and wildlife or its habitat

Administration and Evaluation Objectives:

1. Coordination of an effective and efficient application adjudication process
2. Establishment of a program operation that is open and accountable
3. Implementation of an evaluation process for the program
4. Operational support to the Management Committee

Funding Targets, Limits and Cost Sharing

Tables 3 and 4 below describe the funding allocations targets, limits and cost sharing for the Agriculture Environment and Wildlife Fund.

Table 3. Funding Allocation Targets

Program	Activities	AEWF
Education and Awareness	General Education and Awareness	\$100,000
Stewardship	Demonstration and Adoption of Stewardship Practices	\$650,000
Reduction of Wildlife Impacts	Development, Demonstration, Delivery of Wildlife Damage Reduction Measures	\$1,100,000
Research	Research	\$250,000
Collaborative Area Planning	Development and Implementation of Area Plans	\$50,000
Administration, Evaluation, and Monitoring	Administration, Evaluation, and Monitoring	\$350,000
Total		\$2,500,000

Table 4. Funding Limits and Cost Sharing

Activity	Limits and Cost Sharing	
	Environment	Wildlife
1. Education and Awareness	<p>100% up to \$10,000 and 50% over \$10,000 for groups proposing awareness or educational initiatives. Maximum \$20,000 per application for groups per year</p> <p>Up to 50% for technology transfer focused travel. Up to \$1,000 per individual applicant for technology transfer visits to support travel costs.</p>	
2. Demonstration and Adoption of Stewardship Practices	<p>Maximum of 80% from the program on projects up to \$50,000 per year and \$150,000 in total. To the extent that individual benefits can be identified, the maximum funding limits will be reduced accordingly.</p> <p>Up to 100% for Management Committee initiated program development projects related to a strategic priority at their discretion.</p>	
3. Reduction of Wildlife Impacts		<p>Up to 100% for Management Committee initiated projects related to a strategic priority at their discretion.</p>
4. Research	<p>Up to 90% of a project to a maximum of \$100,000</p>	
5. Collaborative Area Planning and Implementation	<p>Up to 100% of costs to a maximum of \$20,000 for each planning initiative per year to a maximum of \$60,000.</p> <p>Up to 10% of the entire project costs to a maximum of \$100,000 for implementing the agricultural portion of the project.</p>	
6. Administration, Evaluation and Monitoring	<p>Up to 25% of costs to a maximum of \$20,000 for monitoring project costs.</p> <p>Up to 100% of AEI Management Committee initiated projects and activities.</p>	

Communication

Communication about the Agriculture Environment and Wildlife Fund is targeted at the agriculture industry, relevant government agencies and other funding partners.

Objectives of the communication initiative are to:

1. Ensure awareness of availability of the Agriculture Environment and Wildlife Fund and its objectives to potential applicants
2. Inform targeted parties of approved projects and progress in meeting program objectives
3. Inform public of initiative and commitment of the agriculture industry in meeting environmental goals
4. Follow communications protocol developed by partner agencies

Successful applicants will be asked to take reasonable steps to identify the Agriculture Environment and Wildlife Fund and all sponsoring agencies in their activities and reporting.

Reporting

Annual Reports are completed and submitted by the Chair of the Agriculture Environment and Wildlife Fund Management Committee to the BC Agriculture Council, Investment Agriculture Foundation of British Columbia and the Provincial and Federal Ministers of Agriculture.

The report contains:

- Projects and initiatives funded
- Progress in achieving objectives of the fund
- Identification and rationale for variances to the Work Plan
- Financial status and financial statement

The reports are submitted within 90 days of the end of the calendar year.

Conflict of Interest

In cases where a Management Committee member either individually sponsors or is reasonably perceived to be a major or singular beneficiary of a project application, the member must excuse themselves from the evaluation discussion and decision. The onus is on members to identify situations in which they are in a potential conflict of interest to the Chair at the commencement of the meeting. Such instances shall be recorded in minutes of the meetings.

Successful applicants proposing to implement projects where they in turn will be adjudicating applications will be required to agree to the same guidelines.

Appendix

PROGRAM FLOW CHART

