

2016 Agriculture Census Overview *“On Canadian farms, while older hands till larger fields, only one in 12 farms have a succession plan.”*

2016 marked the 22nd Census of Agriculture since Confederation and as always, the census paints a sweeping picture of the agricultural sector. It tracks changes in crops and livestock, as well as the evolution of farming practices and mechanization, from the power of horses to horsepower. It states that Canadian farmers have continually taken advantage of technological advances to more efficiently deliver a wider variety of agricultural products to Canadians and the world and provides the farming industry with valuable information.

Following are some key findings from the 2016 census.

- Almost 1/3 of farm production by value is exported, accounting for 4.6% of all exports.
- Primary agriculture accounts for 1.5% Canada's gross domestic product.
- Agricultural operations in Canada employed 280,315 people in 2015.
- Although urbanization reduced cropland available in some areas, a net increase in cropland (93.4 million total acres in 2016) is attributable to a shift in land use.
- The number of farms fell 6 per cent, to 193,000 from 2011.
- The average farm rose in size, to 820 acres from 779 in 2011.
- For the first time since 1991, the proportion of farmers under the age of 35 rose marginally
- The average age of the farmer rose slightly, to 55.



However one of the most concerning statistics is that just one in 12 farms reported having a formal succession plan laying out how the operation will be transferred to the next generation of farmers.

Sound planning is critical to an effective business succession. While you should be discussing this important aspect with your family and advisors it is worthy to note that succession planning is not that onerous.

Farmers were, and are, the lifeblood of Rural Electrification Associations and West Wetaskiwin REA recognizes the critical contributions of those members to our REA. WW REA, in partnership with an appropriate financial institution, is considering hosting a succession planning information session in early 2019 if there is enough interest from members. The session would provide general details about the process.

If you would be interested in attending a succession planning session, please contact the REA by December 15, 2018 (see below for details). If enough members indicate they would attend, we will organize a meeting and provide details in early January 2019.

Phone and leave a message (780-335-9378) or email westwet@telus.net and provide your name, along your contact information (phone and email) so we can communicate with you if, and when, we organize a session.

For power troubles or service requests, contact: FortisAlberta (the distribution system operator for West Wetaskiwin REA): Toll-free: 1-855-333-9473 or 780-310-9473

For REA inquiries contact:
West Wetaskiwin REA
R.R. #1 Station Main,
Wetaskiwin, Alberta T9A 1W8
Phone: 780-335-9378 (WEST)
E-mail: westwet@telus.net
www.westwetaskiwinrea.com

For billing or account inquiries contact:
Battle River Power Coop
Box 1420
Camrose, Alberta T4V 1X3
Toll-free: 1-877-428-3972
E-mail: brpc@brpower.coop
www.brpower.coop

Government of Alberta Grant Program Supports Health and Safety on Farms

On December 1, 2018 the Occupational Health and Safety Code (OH&S Code) will apply to farms and ranches that employ waged, non-family workers. This means Alberta farm and ranch workers will have similar health and safety protections as workers in other industries and other parts of Canada.

To assist agricultural producers, a new farm and ranch safety grant launched October 15 to help eligible agriculture employers comply with new occupational health and safety requirements.

The grant will help offset some of the costs employers may incur in complying with the new regulations. Up to \$6 million is available through the program during the next three years.

For more information on OH&S Code Requirements for Farms and Ranches contact the following:

Website: <https://www.alberta.ca/farm-and-ranch-ohs.aspx>

OH&S Contact Centre:
Toll-free: 1-866-415-8690

Farm Health and Safety Producer Grant Program Overview

Applications open Oct. 15, 2018 and the program runs until March 2021.

Farms and ranches with waged, non-family workers and a WCB account may apply for the grant.

The grant covers up to 50 per cent of eligible safety expenses to a maximum of \$5,000 per year or \$10,000 over the life of the program per eligible applicant.

Expenses going back to Jan. 1, 2018 are eligible under the program.

Eligible expenses (with receipts) include things like:

- First aid kits, fire extinguishers and warning signage.
- Respirators, eye and hearing protection.
- Health and safety programs, courses, education and training.
- Seatbelt installation, warning lights and auger guards to improve equipment safety.
- Education, training and consultant fees.

For grant information and forms, go to: www.agriculture.alberta.ca/farmhsggrant

Regulated Rate Option



The Regulated Rate Option (RRO) may increase or decrease from month to month as it is priced on the open market and subject to many factors relating to supply and demand. It is not a 'regulated' rate, rather is a default rate. If you do not have a contract with an electricity retailer, then you are on the RRO. For October, 2018 RRO is priced at \$0.05966 per kWh, reflected on your enclosed orange bill. For November 2018, the Battle River Power Coop monthly rate as calculated under the RRO regulation is \$0.06800; the billing rate charged to WWREA members is \$0.06800.

It is very important to note that your electrical distribution system provider will always be the West Wetaskiwin REA, regardless of who supplies your electricity. Members will not be disadvantaged in any way based on their retailer choice.

For a list of energy retailers, contact the Utilities Consumer Advocate: 310-4-UCA (310-4822) or www.ucahelps.alberta.ca. If you do not have a contract with an electricity retailer, then you are on the default Regulated Rate Option (RRO). The RRO rate is listed on www.westwetaskiwinrea.com

Information on West Wetaskiwin's Code of Conduct Regulation Compliance Plan can be found on our website: www.westwetaskiwinrea.com