



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

# **Agricultural Service Board 2019 Conference celebrates and supports Alberta's ag industry**

***ASBs are excited for recent successes and are making preparations for next year's 75<sup>th</sup>-anniversary.***

*(Alberta, February 4, 2019)* On January 22-23, the Agricultural Service Board (ASB) held its Annual Conference, attracting approximately 500 delegates from across Alberta to meet and discuss issues impacting agriculture in Alberta. Agricultural Service Boards (ASBs) are unique to Alberta. Their primary goal is to ensure Alberta's agricultural industry is sustainable and viable through legislation regarding designated weeds and pests and by promoting soil conservation and animal health.

### **HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2019 ASB CONFERENCE**

ASBs learned the day before the conference that the Government of Alberta would announce a pilot project for agricultural plastics recycling. After more than 10 years of advocating for an agricultural plastics recycling program through resolutions and work done with the various working groups and committees, Alberta's ASBs were excited to see the effectiveness of the resolution process with this announcement.

The 2019 conference also included a keynote address from Darby Allen, former fire chief of Fort McMurray, who talked about his experience during the Fort McMurray wildfires and how it affected him. With increasing concern and awareness around mental health for agricultural producers, delegates received information on managing stress through humour and heard from a panel of producers and industry experts about strategies and resources producers can access to help them with their mental health.

Other highlights from the conference included cattle market trends, farm economics, agricultural education for elementary and high school students, farm diversification, soil health, verification of sustainable beef production programs, and world trade and its impacts on agricultural production.

One of the main reasons for the ASB Conference is the resolutions process, which allows delegates to highlight agricultural issues in their jurisdictions and bring them to the attention of the government. Agricultural concerns brought to the Provincial ASB Conference must have been voted on and passed by local ASB boards, as well as at the regional ASB level. From there, the issues are presented at the Provincial ASB Conference, if it passed there will be sent to the provincial government for a response.

Delegates passed eight resolutions to be forwarded to the government for response:

- Loss of 2% strychnine
- Wildlife Predator Compensation Program Enhancement
- Deadstock Removal
- Carbon Credits for Permanent Pasture and Forested Lands
- Multi-stakeholder Committee to Work at Reducing the Use of Freshwater by the Oil and Gas Industry in Alberta

- STEP Program Agricultural Eligibility
- Access to Agriculture-Specific Mental Health Resources
- No Royalties on Farm Saved Seed

## LOOKING FORWARD TO 2020: 75 YEARS OF ASB SERVICE

Next January, the Provincial ASB Conference scheduled for Banff, AB, will celebrate the ASB's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Titled "Agriculture, Innovation & Pioneers," the 2020 Conference will not only look to the future of the board and arising agricultural issues, but will also take time to reflect over the ASB's unique and rich 75-year history.

"We have seen so many changes to the agricultural industry and the issues that the Agricultural Service Boards have faced over the years," explained Elden Kozak, Alberta Association of Agricultural Fieldmen (AAAF) President. "The 2020 Provincial ASB Conference will celebrate that rich history – which is truly unique to Alberta - and will look at where the industry and ASBs are headed in 2020 and beyond."

The 2020 Provincial ASB Conference will include a mix of ASB and Alberta history and new technologies from autonomous vehicles to drones to communication. More details about the conference will be shared in fall 2019.

## HISTORY OF ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARD

In 1944, several municipalities met with the Department of Agriculture to discuss shared concerns over weed control and conservation issues. By 1945, the Agricultural Service Board Act became law in Alberta. Since then, Alberta's Agricultural Service Boards (ASBs) have expanded from the original weed control focus, and are responsible for implementing and enforcing legislative requirements under the *Agricultural Service Board Act*, the *Weed Control Act (WCA)*, the *Agricultural Pests Act (APA)*, the *Soil Conservation Act (SCA)*. ASBs also assist with the control of animal disease under the *Animal Health Act (AHA)*, and in delivering environmental extension programming to their communities.

In 2020, the ASB will celebrate 75 years of continuous service to producers in Alberta and the promotion of sustainability within the agriculture industry and in rural communities through the province.

If you would like to learn more about the Provincial Agricultural Service Board Conference or the ASB history, please contact:



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