



AFA in Action

September/October 2019: In This Issue

- **Prairie farm groups release results of Seed Royalty Survey**
- **Focus groups help inform new remote sensing platform**
- **Mark your calendars – AFA 2020 AGM is January 21 & 22, in Nisku, Alberta**
- **Alberta Ag-Plastic. *Recycle It!* pilot program is here**
- **Current advocacy issues AFA is focused on**
- **AFA Membership Renewal**
- **AFA in the News**
- **CFA Happenings: updates on national agricultural policy**
- **Stay current on the issues by following AFA on social media**

Prairie farm groups release results of seed royalty survey: *Producers have conclusive views about trailing and end-point royalties*

Recent proposals on seed royalties have generated a great deal of interest and discussion amongst our members and Canadian farmers as a whole. In 2018, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency launched consultations on the future of crop breeding in Canada.

A series of public meetings were held across the country where federal officials sought feedback on new models to collect royalties on saved seed. These included a trailing contract royalty where producers would sign a contract stipulating a royalty is paid on farm-saved seed, and an End Point Royalty in which a royalty is paid on grain deliveries. The consultations were put on hold in the spring of 2019. Consultations are expected to resume later this year.

AFA, the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS), and the Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP) of Manitoba have been working together to keep the discussion going. In July, the three farm organizations launched the 'Producer Survey on Seed Royalties'.

The purpose of the survey was to:

- * Gauge awareness of the consultations and the two models that have been presented,
 - * Measure satisfaction with how varieties are currently developed and funded,
- * Gather opinions on the two options presented and determine if there is support for investigating other options, and
- * Seek input on the principles that should guide changes to how plant breeding is funded.

The survey was open from July 15th to October 15th and received 1,136 responses.

Today, along with APAS and KAP, we are pleased to share the survey results with our members and Canadian producers. **Our findings can be found in our press release [here](#).**

“We’d like to thank each and every producer who took the time to complete the survey and ensure their point of view was voiced,” said AFA president Lynn Jacobson. “These results show that producers are not satisfied with either model currently in consideration and we feel that means further consultation is absolutely imperative.”

Focus groups help inform new remote sensing platform

This summer, AFA was pleased to conduct two focus groups with members to discuss a new remote sensing data toolbox and platform we're developing with our partner, Aquanty Inc.

Currently, there is a wide array of remote sensing data that is openly available and provides useful information on field and regional scale conditions pertaining to soil moisture levels and crop health. Additionally, there are commercially available, subscription- or fee-based remote sensing and drone-based data products which can further add to the wealth of information available to producers.

However, one of the challenges producers face when trying to utilize this vast array of data relates to access, since specialized software and data-management expertise is often required to efficiently process and use the raw data. Instead of accessing the raw data themselves, producers can subscribe to data feeds from big-data or agri-tech service providers, often on a per-acre basis. This provides a interface to what is essentially open or freely available data, but can come with a large price tag.

As an alternative to the per-acre subscription service, AFA and Aquanty have been working on developing a new user-friendly, affordable platform called “AgSat” that makes this free data accessible and useable for producers within their operations. This AFA/Aquanty platform will give producers a low-cost option for accessing remote sensing data for their farms including:

- * Leaf Area Index
- * Normalized Difference Vegetation Index
 - * Soil moisture
 - * Soil temperature
 - * Snow pack
- * Amalgamated 14-day forecasts

“We’re really excited to provide a reasonably priced tool that producers can access and easily use,” noted president Lynn Jacobson. “We look forward to the feedback we will gain as we head into the beta test phase of development and hope that our members will take the opportunity to play around in the platform and give us their thoughts.”

Stay tuned for further information about this project in the coming months. If you are interested in beta testing within the AgSat platform, we would love to hear your feedback.

Please contact our office at 403-789-9151 to sign up for this exciting new opportunity.

**Mark your calendars for our AFA AGM 2020:
January 21 & 22, 2020 in Nisku, Alberta**

Save the date for AFA's 2020 Annual General Meeting on January 21 & 22 in Nisku, Alberta. This year's AGM format will be slightly different than in the past. The first day will be conducted in a conference style, focusing on speakers who will bring perspectives and knowledge about sustainability, innovation and other pertinent topics for producers. Day Two will be a half day devoted strictly to AGM business.

"We are excited to try this new format out, keeping our conference day separate from our AGM business," said president Lynn Jacobson. "We're working on bringing together an excellent roster of speakers that will be of interest to all producers."

Watch for further information and an AGM schedule in November!

Alberta Ag-Plastic. *Recycle It!* pilot program is here!

Cleanfarms, under a contract with the Alberta Plastic Recycling Group – which AFA is pleased to be a part of – is operating a three-year pilot program to collect agricultural grain bags and twine for recycling which is now in Phase Two. To date, 20 pilot collection sites covering all major regions of the province have been selected for the first year of the pilot. Cleanfarms is presently working with these sites and collections are rolling out in October 2019. Pilot sites have different degrees of experience with these materials and start dates may vary by location. For program details or to find a collection site near you, visit the CleanFarms website [here](#).

Note: Alberta producers can apply for 50% funding towards the purchase of a grain bag roller or a compactor under the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) program. See CAP information [here](#).

Current advocacy issues AFA is focusing on

AFA has expressed our support of the provincial government's recent plan to crack down on protesters who trespass on farms and agricultural land, and encouraging the creation of better training for RCMP officers who attend these types of calls. The government is looking at setting trespassing fines up to \$10,000 for a first-time offence and up to \$25,000 for subsequent offences, with a possible six months in jail. Fines for organizations would be up to \$200,000.

There could also be changes to health and safety rules so that farmers could recover costs if protests put the health of animals or humans at risk. Protesters who created such health risks could be fined between \$15,000 and \$30,000 and face up to a year in jail.

The announcement comes after an animal rights group, calling itself 'Liberation Lockdown,' held a protest at Jumbo Valley Turkey Farm on September 1. Approximately 90 members of the group locked themselves inside a number of barns on the property, claiming they were attempting to 'expose the reality' of conditions on Canadian turkey farms.

AFA continues to support mandatory WCB for farm operators, the inclusion of agriculture in employment standards and the application of OH&S to all agricultural operations. We continue to support common sense safety protocols for farm operators and employers and see value in strong funding and support for farm safety education programming.

With the release of the Seed Royalty Survey results, we have agreed to continue working with our Saskatchewan and Manitoba counterparts to ensure that producers views are heard and the new Minister of Agriculture (when announced), understands our concerns and desire for more consultation.

With the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General wrapping up its rural crime townhalls across Alberta, AFA has expressed support of rural local crime watch associations who have long requested the province bring back the front licence plate to allow for easier identification of vehicles alleged to be conducting criminal activity. In addition, we are encouraging the government to look at changing current Petty Trespass legislation to allow for the owner of the vehicle (truck or an ATV as examples) to be charged in addition to a person (driver).

AFA 2019-2020 Membership Renewal

Don't forget to renew your AFA membership today for 2019-2020! Producer members get great deals on insurance, discounts on vehicles, savings at Mark's Work Wearhouse and more! For information and to check out our AFA member benefits, click [here](#).



AFA in the News

The latest coverage on AFA in the news media.

We discuss the issues of importance to Alberta's farmers, ranchers and agribusiness.

Alberta AG minister says he got the message on workplace safety laws

September 24, 2019 via Alberta Farmer Express

With consultations done, new farm workplace safety legislation is expected to be introduced this fall and passed by end of the year. AFA's Director Humphrey Banack explains what AFA is hoping for.

More [here](#).

Last push for online producer survey on seed royalties

September 6, 2019 via AFA News Release

General farm organizations in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta are encouraging Western Canadian grain farmers to take part in the Seed Royalty Survey. They have until October 15th to share their views on proposed changes to seed royalty structures for cereal crops at seedroyaltysurvey.com. More [here](#).

Alberta's UCP government considering private insurance for farms

September 4, 2019 via Canadian Occupational Safety

AFA Director Humphrey Banack sees room for improvement on some parts of the current farm safety legislation, but says OHS legislation and WCB coverage are needed to entice people to work in agriculture where it's often difficult to find workers. More [here](#).

Rainy, cool summer puts damper on crops in central, northern Alberta

August 23, 2019 via CBC News

It's been a challenging year for agriculture in many parts of the province. AFA's Humphrey Banack, a producer near Camrose, talks about the 'year of uncertainty' that has farmers worried about lower yields. More [here](#).

Change is coming in the seed royalty debate, and it could cost farmers

August 2, 2019 via Manitoba Co-operator

Lynn Jacobson, AFA President, says farmer awareness on the proposed changes to seed royalties is next to nil and it has to rise. He believes whatever model does come forward, producer input into the process is needed. More [here](#).

Farmers are encouraged to provide input about farm safety legislation

July 29, 2019 via Farms.com

AFA Director Humphrey Banack encourages farm employers to educate themselves on private and public insurance options. He says one way is to attend Minister Devin Dreeshen's consultation tour taking place July 25 through Sept. 19. More [here](#).

Farm groups launch online producer survey on seed royalties

July 15, 2019 via AFA News Release

Canadian producers are being asked to share their views on proposed changes to seed royalty structures for cereal crops in a new online survey that launches today. More [here](#).

Farmer consultations under way as government begins reviewing Bill 6

July 8, 2019 via The Calgary Herald

Farmer consultations on the Alberta farm and ranch safety legislation are planned for this summer. Humphrey Banack, AFA Director, says farm worker protection is important in an industry with the kind of potential dangers that farming has. More [here](#).

Farm groups in Western Canada gather together to discuss plant breeding programs and varietal development

July 4, 2019 via Western Producer

Under existing models currently being considered by the federal government, Lynn Jacobson, AFA President, says proposed royalty options need reviewing and producers need a voice in the process. More [here](#).

Rainy June has some crops rated in good or excellent condition

July 3, 2019 via CBC News

Humphrey Banack, AFA Director, says recent precipitation has been welcome in parts of the province, but spotty precipitation in southern Alberta is affecting crops and pastures. It might already be too late for some older forage fields to recover. More [here](#).



CFA Happenings

Items of interest from the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA) newsletters are included in our AFA in Action to keep you informed on the national discussions on agricultural policy.

**CFA extends deadline to October 25th
for the Brigid Rivoire Award for Champions of Agricultural Mental Health**

The Brigid Rivoire Award for Champions of Agricultural Mental Health annually recognizes a specific initiative that has made outstanding contributions in raising awareness, addressing stigma, and supporting mental health for farmers in their local community. This annual award includes a \$2,000 donation to a mental health initiative of the recipient's choice, along with an invitation to attend the Canadian Federation of Agriculture's (CFA) Annual General Meeting in February with all expenses paid. Learn more about this award on the [CFA website](#).

AgGrowth Coalition releases open letter in support of BRM Review

The AgGrowth Coalition, comprised of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, Canadian Canola Growers Association, Grain Growers of Canada, Grain Farmers of Ontario, the National Sheep Network, and the Canadian Horticultural Council, recently released an open letter to the leaders of Canada's political parties. The letter outlined a three-step plan to help improve Canada's Business Risk Management programs. Read the letter [here](#).

CFA provides submission on Food Labelling Modernization consultation

On June 22, 2019, the Government of Canada published proposed changes to labeling requirements in the Food and Drug Regulations (FDR) and the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations (SFCR) in the Canada Gazette, Part I. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has launched a 75-day public consultation on proposed amendments to the FDR and the SFCR under the Food Labelling Modernization (FLM) initiative. CFA made a submission for this consultation in early July, click [here](#) to read the submission.

Help spread the word: *Producing Prosperity in Canada* Resources

The *Producing Prosperity in Canada* campaign focuses on three key benefits that Canadian agriculture brings to Canada, specifically: economic growth, food security and environmental stewardship. The goal of the campaign is to identify Canadian agriculture as a sector that can benefit all of Canada. Strategic investments in the economic engine that is Canadian agriculture can reverberate through other industries to help Canada prosper as a whole. Use the resources on our website to help build awareness and spread the word about *Producing Prosperity in Canada*: <https://producingprosperitycanada.ca/>

Follow AFA on social for latest updates!

Want news and updates in between AFA newsletters? A great place to get information on our current and ongoing activities - and those that are happening in Canadian agriculture - is through AFA's [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) channels, or the [AFA blog](#).
Join in the conversation there!