



Growing Forward

The Canada–British Columbia
Environmental Farm Plan Program
2009 - 2013

"Funding Provided by *Growing Forward*, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative"



What is Environmental Farm Planning?

Environmental farm planning is a no charge, confidential, voluntary process available to producers to identify both environmental strengths and potential risks on their farms. As appropriate, it includes a prioritized action plan to reduce the risks.



A consistent, national but flexible approach to Environmental Farm Plans

Under the Agriculture Policy Framework (2003-2008) Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada developed a national approach on how Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) programs would be developed and implemented across Canada. This approach has been maintained with added provincial flexibility under the Growing Forward Agreement.

A national approach to EFP programs will bolster Canada's reputation as a grower and supplier of safe, high-quality foods that are produced in an environmentally responsible manner. While the approach is national, its flexibility takes into account regional, geographical, and climatic differences.

Why do we need Environmental Farm Planning?

Consumers increasingly base their buying decisions on a desire to support environmental sustainability. Producers have shown they are admirable stewards of Canada's agri-environmental resources—they apply many good environmental practices that increase their profitability and benefit the environment.

Working together, governments and industry are looking to accelerate efforts to reduce agricultural risks and provide benefits to Canada's water, soil, air, and biodiversity resources. Environmental farm planning is the foundation of that approach.

The Canada–BC Environmental Farm Plan Program

The *Growing Forward* Canada–BC Environmental Farm Plan Program will complement and enhance the current environmental stewardship practices of producers. Led by the province's agriculture and agri-food industry, this initiative will encourage producers from all parts of the province to adopt Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs) that enhance agricultural sustainability and contribute to a cleaner, healthier environment.

Who will deliver the program?

The BC Agricultural Research & Development Corporation (ARDCorp) will deliver the program on behalf of the British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (BC MAL) and in co-operation with AAFC, and other partner agencies.

EFP Program Planning Advisors, with assistance from ARDCorp, BC MAL, AAFC and other agency partners, will provide producers with technical support to help them prepare their Environmental Farm Plans.



Principles and benefits

ARDCorp, in co-operation with BC MAL and AAFC, is committed to making sure that the EFP process in British Columbia:

- is driven by producers;
- encourages voluntary participation;
- assures EFP confidentiality; and
- encourages producers to implement their EFP action plans by providing funding that is directed to support on-farm actions to reduce agri-environmental risks.

By adhering to these principles, the EFP Program in British Columbia strives to:

- improve the sustainability of the province's agricultural industry;
- recognize producer efforts to manage their land in an environmentally sustainable manner;
- improve awareness;
- enhance marketing opportunities;
- improve the response to environmental incidents through contingency planning;
- demonstrate on-farm due diligence;
- reduce the need for additional environmental regulation and
- improve relationships with environmental agencies.

The "Planning Advisor" role

Through one-on-one meetings with producers, EFP Program Planning Advisors (PAs) help to identify strengths and concerns, suggest appropriate corrective measures, and assist to prioritize any action items. PAs will be responsible for developing management plans, approving environmental farm plans, and helping producers access incentive funding.

How does the program work?

Producers can participate in the program by:

- contacting a local Planning Advisor
- conducting a risk assessment of their farm or ranch, alone or with a Planning Advisor's assistance;
- developing a plan to mitigate any identified risks; and
- having a trained and recognized PA review and approve the plan.

Performing a risk assessment using the planning workbook

By conducting a risk assessment, producers will establish the current level of environmental health-related risks to various activities on their farm or ranch. This is accomplished using a specifically designed planning workbook, which the PA will provide. The results of the assessment will identify areas of concern on the farm or ranch that the producer may need to address to reduce environmental risks.

Developing an action plan

With a completed planning workbook, and with the help of Planning Advisor, the producer will develop an action plan to decide on the next steps required to manage the identified risks, and to determine the priority of the action items. The PA will be available to help establish priorities, develop potential on-farm solutions, and approve the finalized environmental farm plan.



What financial incentives are available?

The producer may be eligible to apply for cost-sharing incentives under the Growing Forward Beneficial Management Practice Program to address environmental risks that have been identified in the completed farm plan. Your planning advisor can help determine this.

Possible categories are:

- nutrient management improvements
- riparian protection
- grazing strategies
- irrigation planning
- integrated pest management
- shelterbelt development
- manure treatment
- farmyard runoff control
- wintering site management
- product and waste management
- CO₂, N₂O and CH₄ emission reduction

Who can apply?

To apply for incentive funding under the Beneficial Management Program, producers must have:

- √ an approved and valid EFP
- √ a signed statement of completion
- √ the farm operation must have been in existence on or before January 1, 2004
- √ the farm property has "Farm Classification" for the current year
- √ the farm has a valid Business (GST) number.



Implementing the plan

When all the high priority action items have been achieved the plan is considered implemented.

A certificate and gate sign may be obtained with the assistance of your planning advisor.



Further Information

For Planning Advisor contact information, BMP Funding applications and more information on the Growing Forward Canada-BC Environmental Farm Plan Program, please contact:

B.C. Agricultural Research & Development Corporation (ARDCorp)

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