

## Government of Alberta Release: Seeking Albertans' input on agriculture research

The government is holding engagement sessions and launching an online survey to gather feedback about the future of agriculture research in Alberta.

"We are working with farmers to determine their research priorities. This is an opportunity to transform how we do research and attract investment from the private sector. I see world-leading agricultural research happening here, either by leveraging work happening in existing facilities or building brand new ones."

*Devin Dreeshen, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry*

There are six public engagement sessions throughout the province. The government will be seeking input on:

- what farmer-led research means to Albertans
- farmer-led research priorities
- governance models for delivering farmer-led research

The online survey is open until Jan. 31.

### Related information

- [Farmer-led research engagement](#)
- [Online survey](#)

## Alberta Beef Producers Key Messages re: Alberta Agriculture and Forestry "Farmer-led" Research Consultations

- In 2018, agriculture, forestry and fishing contributed \$5.9 billion to Alberta's economy, and agri-food exports contributed \$11.6 billion. These sectors are well positioned to drive economic growth in Alberta with the capacity to improve production and further capitalize on export market opportunities, assuming that adequate research and development resourcing continues to spur innovation.
- Reaching the Government of Canada's ambitious target to grow agri-trade food exports to \$75 billion annually by 2025 will require the provinces with the largest agricultural capacity to step forward. With collaborative industry and government support for ongoing, strategic research and adoption of innovation, the agriculture industry can sustainably increase its production of competitively priced, consistently high-quality, safe, nutrient-dense products, while growing exports.
- Provincial investments in crop and livestock research have seen a 50 percent reduction in recent years from approximately \$25 million (ALMA, ACIDF, and Alberta Innovates Bio-Solutions) per year to just over \$12 million in 2018. **These significant declines in provincial research program funding, combined with recent reductions in extension capacity, have severely curtailed agriculture's ability to realize its full growth potential.** In addition, we cannot always rely on research investments from the federal government to be consistent with Alberta's needs.
- Stable government funding at appropriate levels is critical to advance research, development, and extension activities in Alberta. Industry's ability to fund research projects and programs is limited by budgetary constraints, and requires partnership with other organizations, particularly government, in order to adequately ensure measurable progress towards improved competitiveness, profitability, and sustainability within all agricultural sectors.

- Critical capacity (personnel, infrastructure) needs to be maintained in order to have the necessary resources to undertake research, development, and extension initiatives which specifically target Alberta's unique environment. Current capacity within Agriculture and Forestry plays an important role in these activities. **Transitioning some or all of this capacity to other institutions, with the proven ability to conduct high-quality research that withstands peer-review, would need to occur under careful and deliberate consideration, including adequate resourcing through the transition period and beyond.**
- Non-industry funding and research capacity allows for the dissemination of data and information that is perceived as unbiased, which is extraordinarily valuable to maintain and enhance public confidence.
- At the request of the Minister, Alberta's agricultural marketing boards and commissions collaborated on a white paper which proposed direction in the areas of policy, funding, and capacity.
- With comprehensive input from producers and other key stakeholders, agricultural sectors have developed research and extension priorities (e.g. Canadian Beef Research and Technology Transfer Strategy) with clearly defined outcomes. Any government research policy or priorities should be developed in consultation with the grassroots producers who serve on the marketing boards and commissions to ensure alignment with industry-developed strategies.
- A producer-led research funding model with representation from livestock, poultry, and cropping sectors, and at arm's length from government, would ensure that research priorities continue to be relevant and suitable to address producer needs, provide funding allocation transparency, and allow for improved flexibility for projects that span multiple fiscal years.