



Agriculture and Irrigation

Ministry Business Plan

Agriculture and Irrigation

Business Plan 2024-27

Ministry Fact Sheet – Mandate and Structure

The Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (AGI) is growing, diversifying, and fostering innovation in Alberta's agricultural industries to strengthen the economy by building Alberta's competitiveness, attracting new investment, and expanding agricultural trade. The ministry has a variety of programs to support thriving rural communities and the long-term sustainable development of Alberta's agricultural sectors.

The ministry works to increase the competitiveness and resilience of Alberta's producers and value-added agriculture processors by supporting innovation, improvements in agricultural practices, and technology integration. Ministry programs are designed to encourage agricultural potential by improving capital availability and facilitating risk management, and to enable industry resiliency in the face of challenges such as evolving domestic and global markets, adverse weather and disease events, and regulatory changes affecting the trade of agricultural products. One such program is the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a five-year multilateral agreement in effect until 2027-28. Alberta is leveraging federal funding through this agreement to invest in strengthening competitiveness and innovation and boost the resiliency of agriculture, agri-food and agri-based products. Ministry programs and services address the significant impact of regulatory assurance on prosperity throughout the province through extensive collaboration for surveillance, inspections, risk assessments, emergency preparedness, and performance monitoring over the lifecycles of farmed animals, crops, dams, and other water infrastructure.

AGI recognizes that water availability is essential for growing and raising food that feeds the world, and for stable and job-creating agribusiness activities and investments. Through work with government partners and Alberta's irrigation districts, the ministry is moving forward with irrigation capacity expansion and irrigation rehabilitation, while addressing modernization priorities and water supply needs. AGI also undertakes a range of activities to operate and maintain provincially owned water management infrastructure, including drainage on agricultural lands to provide drought resilience, flood protection and water security for all users.

To enable predictable agricultural development and growth that brings value to Albertans, AGI leads and coordinates strategic agricultural and agriculture-related policy discussions. AGI establishes networks with other jurisdictions to improve market access, attract new investments, and create market opportunities to support the growth of Alberta's agriculture producers and value-added processors. The ministry is also addressing barriers to trade by cultivating export markets, and offering tailored investor services that generate economic growth along the entire value creation chain. Value-added processors are encouraged to realize benefits from the Agri-Processing Investment Tax Credit, access to unique incubation facilities, assistance with product development and help preparing to sell their products internationally.

AGI works with ministry partners to offer producers and value-added processors opportunities to better manage risks, and provide a buffer against the impacts of competitive market forces. These include promoting adoption of biosecurity measures to prepare for agricultural risks, and supporting agricultural industries through domestic and global disruptions. Alberta recognizes that the competitiveness of agriculture and food supply chains is dependent on an efficient and effective transportation system, and continues to explore approaches to reduce long-term costs of doing business for producers and agri-based businesses.

AGI is committed to promoting prosperity in rural Alberta by enabling entry into and success in agricultural sectors, and ensuring Alberta's rural communities have opportunities to participate in and benefit from the province's economic growth and prosperity. This includes exploring strategies with ministry partners to address labour demands, attracting a skilled workforce, and improving the competitiveness of Alberta's producers, thus enabling Albertans throughout the province to benefit from agricultural resiliency, innovation, and emerging opportunities for a diversified agricultural future.

AGI is responsible for the policies, legislation, regulations, programs and services that enable Alberta’s agriculture and agri-processing sectors to flourish and contribute to economic growth and Albertans’ wellbeing. This role is diverse, ranging from maintaining food safety and fostering agricultural stability, growth and diversification, to increasing investment and supporting prosperity in rural Alberta. AGI also delivers foundational programs to irrigation and agricultural societies that help create strong rural communities and resilient agriculture sectors. The ministry continues to build clarity, certainty and efficiency in Alberta’s agricultural regulatory systems. Additionally, AGI adapts policies and legislation to create agricultural opportunities amidst rapidly evolving producer challenges, and to encourage investors to meet market demand by leveraging Alberta’s competitive advantages.

A diverse provincial Crown corporation with several core business areas, Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC) works to grow and sustain agriculture in Alberta. AFSC provides farm and agribusiness loans, crop and livestock price insurance and income stabilization. To mitigate risks associated with crop production and commodity price fluctuations, AFSC carries out negotiated Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership programs and initiatives such as AgriStability and AgriRecovery, and continues to upgrade and advance improvements in service delivery.

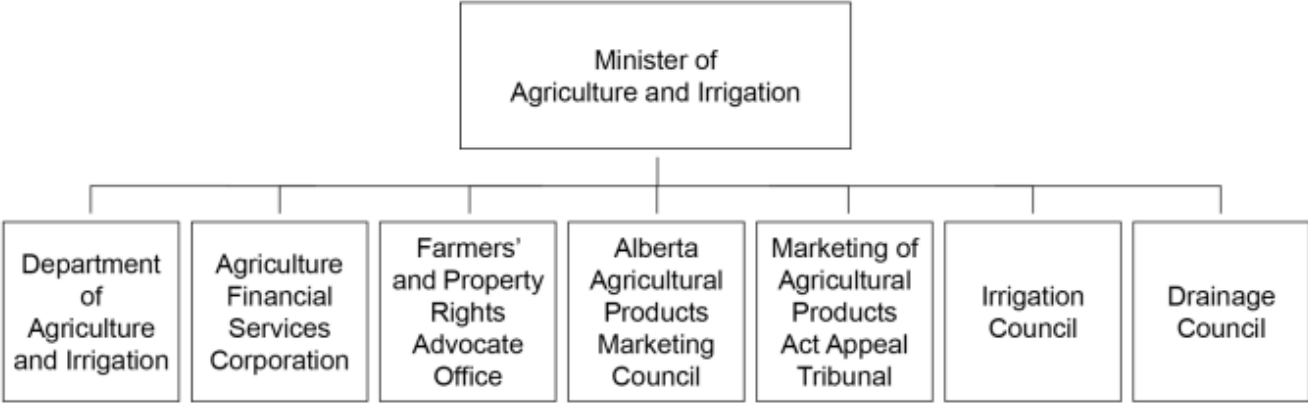
The Farmers’ and Property Rights Advocate provides supports for farmers and ranchers, including advocacy, energy, utility and surface rights and rural dispute resolution, and helps protect investments farmers make in their machinery. The organization listens to Albertans’ concerns regarding property rights and brings them before government.

The Alberta Agricultural Products Marketing Council is established by the *Marketing of Agricultural Products Act* to supervise and advise the Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation on the establishment, operation and management of Alberta’s 19 agricultural marketing boards and commissions.

The *Marketing of Agricultural Products Act* Appeal Tribunal has at least five members appointed to hear appeals of orders, directions or decisions made by Alberta’s 19 regulated marketing boards and commissions on board governance, leadership development, strategic and business planning, and regulatory and policy matters.

The Irrigation Council establishes policies and approves three-year plans and projects submitted by Alberta’s 11 irrigation districts to ensure accountability of the public’s ongoing cost-shared investment in a strong, efficient and sustainable irrigation industry. The Irrigation Council also acts as an appeals body and makes recommendations to the Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation for matters under the *Irrigation Districts Act*.

The Drainage Council is an adjudicative agency enabled by the *Drainage Districts Act*. The Council provides advice and recommendations to the Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation to ensure drainage districts are maintaining their regulatory obligations per the Act, and hears appeals regarding decisions of drainage district boards of trustees related to drainage rates and construction drainage damages.



A more detailed description of Agriculture and Irrigation and its programs and initiatives can be found at:
<https://www.alberta.ca/agriculture-and-irrigation>.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation remains committed to regulatory approaches and program delivery that reduce unnecessary government oversight and emphasizes outcomes, in order to improve access to government services, attract investment, support innovation and competitiveness, and grow Alberta businesses.

Ministry business plans should be considered in conjunction with all budget documents - including the Fiscal Plan, Government Strategic Plan, and Estimates - which work together to provide a complete overview of government's commitment to responsible fiscal management.

2024-27 Business Plan

Outcome 1

Alberta’s economy grows through investment in the agricultural sector

AGI is committed to improving competitiveness and the economic potential of agriculture and value-added sectors, such as irrigated agriculture and international and domestic business attraction and investment.

Key Objectives

- 1.1 Attract and increase investment and jobs to grow and diversify agricultural sectors.
- 1.2 Continue to provide market development and advocacy services to improve competitiveness, encourage new business practices, and promote Alberta’s agricultural industries.
- 1.3 Invest in the modernization and expansion of irrigation infrastructure to enable agricultural productivity.
- 1.4 Explore and implement capacity-building programs that advance skills development to enhance Alberta’s agricultural potential, industry processing capacity, and generate direct economic and social benefits in rural communities.

Initiatives Supporting Key Objectives

- In 2024-25, the ministry will allocate \$53.7 million to irrigation modernization and expansion to minimize the effects of adverse weather conditions, improve water utilization, and support producers to enhance productivity and improve yields.
- The Alberta Food Processors Association is receiving \$5 million in funding over six fiscal years until 2027 to roll out Made In Alberta-labeled products.
- Through \$3 million allocated to the Small Community Opportunity Program in 2024-25, the ministry builds rural and Indigenous capacity for entrepreneurship, skills development, and strengthen small business resilience throughout Alberta.

Performance Metrics

1.a Performance Measure: Annual total value of investments in the primary and agri-processing sectors facilitated through ministry investment initiatives and the corresponding jobs created

Targets for investment attraction provide a stable trend in expected results, while actual results can vary greatly year-to-year due to a number of economic and global factors. Increases to the targets for annual investment and job creation are due to the revised anticipated impact of current programs and services offered. In 2022-23, the ministry facilitated \$612.1 million in new investments that supported the creation of 1,134 jobs.

Targets: Annual Investment Enabled (\$ millions)	2024-25	\$639	2025-26	\$744	2026-27	\$766
Targets: Annual Jobs Created	2024-25	1,054	2025-26	1,064	2026-27	1,075

1.b Performance Indicator: Percentage of irrigated agriculture area using efficient irrigation systems within Alberta’s eleven irrigation districts

Irrigation efficiency increases the number of acres that can support agriculture and other uses with the same volume of water. Irrigation efficiency of on-farm water application systems benefits crop productivity and lowers producer costs. Results are compiled annually for the previous irrigation year. This measure was changed to an indicator to reflect irrigation districts’ roles and construction project factors. Two irrigation districts amalgamated for a total of 11 instead of 12 as published in the 2023-26 Business Plan.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Efficiently Irrigated Acres (%)	80%	80%	81%	83%	84%

1.c Performance Indicator: Value of Alberta’s primary agriculture commodities and value-added agriculture product exports (\$ in millions)

This indicator tracks the diversification of agricultural product exports that drive industry growth and contribute to provincial economic growth. Results current as of May 2023. Total may not add up due to rounding.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Primary Agriculture Commodities (\$ millions)	5,808	5,272	6,325	5,870	7,299
Value-Added Agriculture Products (\$ millions)	6,074	6,372	6,683	8,252	8,886
Total	11,881	11,644	13,007	14,122	16,185

1.d Performance Indicator: Annual primary producers and agribusiness investments (project value) enabled through AFSC lending (\$ in millions)

Total project dollars reflect AFSC’s economic impact by demonstrating the extent the ministry enables access to capital by addressing market gaps and requirements of Alberta’s agri-entrepreneurs to help grow a strong and diversified Alberta.

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Leveraged Investment (\$ millions)	\$478	\$596	\$772	\$634	\$594

Outcome 2

Agricultural productivity and resilience and rural quality of life are strengthened, diversified and enhanced

AGI builds agricultural and rural capacity through targeted programs that strengthen industry risk management and self-governance, and deliver water infrastructure safety and availability. The ministry also works to enhance preparedness for hazards and risks that may compromise the agricultural sector, and to increase resilience in the face of changing market demands and rural priorities.

Key Objectives

- 2.1 Manage government-owned and operated water infrastructure and allocate water resources in support of public safety and water security.
- 2.2 Support agricultural reliability and enable market access through crop and animal health programming, surveillance networks, diagnostic and laboratory services, and intergovernmental and cross-ministry efforts.
- 2.3 Offer programs and services to help producers plan risk management approaches, reduce production and investment risks, and lower barriers of entry into agriculture and value-added sectors through access to capital.
- 2.4 Improve access to government programs and services that empower rural communities to lay foundations for long-term success.

Initiatives Supporting Key Objectives

- In 2024-25, \$5.5 million is allocated for operating, inspecting and managing deficiencies in water infrastructure across Alberta, ensuring it remains functional and delivers water supply safely.

- In 2024-25, \$38.5 million is allocated to Results Driven Agriculture Research to develop high-quality, robust and adaptable crops and farmed animals, disseminate agricultural research and meet market demands.
- To sustain the benefits that agricultural societies provide to rural communities, \$2.5 million for Agricultural Societies Infrastructure Revitalization is allocated for modernization through repairs, renovations and energy efficiency upgrades to existing facilities.

Performance Metrics

2.a Performance Measure: Number of Extreme and Very High Consequence dam safety audit inspections and system improvements benefiting water supply and public safety

Risk-informed approaches to ensure infrastructure and public safety depend on dam safety regulatory oversight processes and audit inspection programs performed and managed through a centralized, purpose-built system. Dam safety audit inspections are completed for Extreme and Very High consequence dam infrastructure. Technical and process system changes enable regulatory and operational collaboration and efficiencies to benefit the province’s water supply management capabilities in each calendar year. This is a new metric.

Targets: Percentage of Completed Extreme and Very High Consequence Dam Safety Audits	2024	100%	2025	100%	2026	100%
Targets: Number of Completed Technical and Process Improvements to the Centralized System	2024	10	2025	12	2026	14

2.b Performance Indicator: Number of surveillance and monitoring activities completed for crop-limiting diseases and pests

Controlling diseases and pests lowers production risks, enhances yields, provides quality assurance and supports access to crop markets. This indicator tracks completed surveillance and monitoring activities that back market confidence in Alberta’s crop and forage production. This is a new metric.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Pest Surveillance and Monitoring Completed	16,047	18,113	16,612	16,609	16,234
Weed Surveillance and Monitoring Completed	39,061	57,614	52,417	47,930	75,731
Total	55,108	75,727	69,029	64,539	91,965

2.c Performance Indicator: Percentage of eligible seeded acres for major crop categories insured under Production Insurance

AFSC is uniquely positioned to address producers’ immediate and future needs to remain successful across a wide variety of growing and business conditions. This indicator demonstrates offsetting risks of agricultural production and signals future agricultural reliability. This metric was changed from a measure to an indicator due to program uptake factors such as upcoming growing conditions.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Annual Crops Insured	71%	73%	71%	77%	82%
Perennial Crops Insured	28%	29%	29%	30%	35%

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

(thousands of dollars)

	Comparable		2024-25 Estimate	2025-26 Target	2026-27 Target
	2023-24 Budget	2023-24 Forecast			
REVENUE					
Transfers of Assets or Liabilities from Related Parties	38,032	38,032	34,332	34,332	34,332
Transfers from Government of Canada	479,779	677,292	537,455	590,182	629,326
Investment Income	125,659	112,552	148,343	158,418	167,379
Premiums, Fees and Licences	630,030	709,567	712,423	784,424	841,860
Other Revenue	4,913	7,627	5,127	4,524	4,429
Ministry Total	1,278,413	1,545,070	1,437,680	1,571,880	1,677,326
Inter-Ministry Consolidation Adjustment	(38,594)	(38,594)	(35,044)	(34,894)	(34,894)
Consolidated Total	1,239,819	1,506,476	1,402,636	1,536,986	1,642,432
EXPENSE					
Ministry Support Services	11,808	11,808	12,240	12,466	12,621
Rural Programming and Agricultural Societies	21,479	21,479	21,891	18,233	18,262
Trade, Investment and Food Inspection	36,079	36,079	36,100	36,558	37,036
Primary Agriculture	116,845	85,453	151,485	149,853	165,568
Lending	32,306	33,774	31,187	34,102	36,765
Insurance	464,855	1,932,283	527,796	525,701	525,529
Agriculture Income Support	104,980	417,558	89,688	90,106	91,227
Water Management	48,966	54,180	65,049	65,234	62,978
Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership	58,497	58,497	60,548	65,349	62,749
Debt Servicing Costs	83,472	108,460	104,383	107,374	114,502
Ministry Total	979,287	2,759,571	1,100,367	1,104,976	1,127,237
Inter-Ministry Consolidation Adjustment	(87,332)	(114,600)	(107,043)	(110,034)	(117,162)
Consolidated Total	891,955	2,644,971	993,324	994,942	1,010,075
Net Operating Result	347,864	(1,138,495)	409,312	542,044	632,357
CAPITAL INVESTMENT					
Ministry Support Services	990	990	990	990	990
Trade, Investment and Food Inspection	1,028	2,693	3,040	1,266	1,028
Primary Agriculture	159	183	159	159	159
Lending	176	1,205	408	579	514
Insurance	3,965	4,260	3,708	4,020	1,580
Agriculture Income Support	108	762	250	355	315
Water Management	43,032	48,032	35,332	36,332	36,332
Ministry Total	49,458	58,125	43,887	43,701	40,918
Inter-Ministry Consolidation Adjustment	(38,032)	(38,032)	(34,332)	(34,332)	(34,332)
Consolidated Total	11,426	20,093	9,555	9,369	6,586