Farming North of 58°

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MARA

Mackenzie Applied Research Association

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COVID-19: Help for agriculture industry as Farm Credit Canada receives $ 5 Billion increase

Government help is on the way for the agriculture industry through challenging times brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Farm Credit Canada (FCC) has received an enhancement to its capital base that will allow for an additional $5 billion in lending capacity, Marie-Claude Bibeau, minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada announced today.

Minister Bibeau's announcement follows Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's announcement earlier on Tuesday outlining more details on the Government of Canada's plan to support the economy during the COVID-19 pandemic. In that announcement, the government made a solid commitment to the agriculture and food industry to ensure producers, agribusinesses and food processors continue to have access to necessary capital at this challenging time.

"Farmers and producers work hard to put food on tables across our country, and they should not have to worry about being able to afford their loan payments or having enough money to support their own families," the Prime Minister said. "We are taking action now to give them more flexibility to meet the challenges ahead."

"Like many Canadians, I am truly grateful for our farmers and food business owners and employees, who continue working hard so we all have quality food on our grocery store shelves and kitchen tables. Their continued work is essential to our plan to manage COVID-19," Minister Bibeau said. "The measures announced today will provide farmers and food producers across the country with important financial flexibility they will need during these challenging times."

"If you are a producer concerned about having the cash flow required to plant your crop, or you are a food processor feeling the impact of a lost sale due to the financial downturn, FCC is here to support you in these uncertain economic times," said Michael Hoffort, FCC president and CEO. "It's in times like these that we are reminded how important Canadian producers and food processors are to our nation and to feeding the world."

Hoffort adds that FCC will use its resources to find solutions that offer the best chance for recovery going forward so the industry emerges stronger. Initially, the focus will be on assisting the industry in addressing cash flow challenges so that businesses can remain focused on business-critical functions rather than worrying about how to access funds to keep operating through this difficult time.

"Supporting the industry will also take strong collaboration between banks, credit unions, FCC and other financial institutions," said Hoffort. "FCC has served as a strong and stable industry presence for more than 60 years, and this current situation is no different. We will be working in partnership with other financial

providers to offer the solutions needed by the agriculture and food industry to take on the challenges ahead."

As part of its ongoing support efforts, FCC also is asking existing customers who have cash flow or other financial concerns to contact the organization to discuss alternatives, such as loan payment deferrals and products available to assist with cash flow needs.

"Each business' financial situation is unique, so there may be a combination of options considered," Hoffort said. "The bottom line is that FCC is being supported by our shareholder to play a bigger role in supporting the success of the Canadian agriculture and food industry across Canada. The sooner we can discuss potential challenges, the more options we have."

Customers facing financial pressure are encouraged to contact their FCC relationship manager or the FCC Customer Service Centre at 1-888-332-3301 to discuss their individual situation and options.

Source: https://www.fcc-fac.ca/en/about-fcc/media-newsroom/news-releases/2020/lending-capacity-increases-to-alleviate-industry-financial-pressure.html

Environmental Farm Plan

The Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) is a process that helps identify environmental risks and strengths associated with farm operations and the development of plans to reduce the risks and build on the strengths. The entire EFP process is voluntary and simple. It is a self-assessment and self-planning program. EFP is an ARECA-Alberta Agriculture and Canadian Agricultural Partnership.Here are some frequently asked questions.

Q: What are the benefits of EFP?
A: Completion of an Environmental Farm Plan shows our commitment to land and environmental stewardship. Our farming operations impact nature and nature impacts our farming operations. EFP helps identify each of the weaknesses and how they can be fixed, in addition to building on the identified strengths. *Think of EFP as getting your entire farm operation and homestead "certified"*. EFP is also tied to some funding programs. For example, if a producer wants to access government grants under Alberta's Growing Forward 2 On-Farm Stewardship program, EFP is mandatory. More and more agricultural and environmental business opportunities are being linked to the EFP. A farmer who completes an EFP will receive a letter or certificate of Completion to use with grant applications. Some producers may also receive a road sign indicating they have successfully completed an EFP.

Q: The government will know about my Farm operation
A: Actually, that is not the case. With the exception of your name and contact information which is sent to Alberta Agriculture for your completion certificate/letter, no other information is shared with the government. Any information you provide, from your farm's location to your operations never gets to the government. All the EFP technicians are also legally bound not to share producer's information with anyone or any agency unless the producer specifically authorizes so.

Q: EFP is expensive
A: EFP is actually free. The only cost to you is the time used to complete the plan and the cost associated with the actual implementation. And since the whole EFP process is voluntary, you only need to implement the action plan when you have the resources. Canadian agricultural Partnership may help you fund some of those projects, in a cost-share agreement.

Q: EFP is time consuming
A: The length of time required to complete the EFP depends on the location, nature and type of one's farm enterprise. For example, an organic cereal producer with one farm may spend less time than a conventional farmer growing the same crop. This is because the organic producer may skip all the sections related to pesticides, herbicides, fertilizer use and transport while the

conventional producer may need to complete those sections. In simple terms, not all sections need to be completed by every producer. For example, if you have no water source or water body on your farm, you skip the chapters on water quality and usage

Q: The EFP binder is too big to carry or complete

A: the EFP is available online. The online version is faster and much easier because all the calculations are automatically done for you and sections not applicable to your farm operations don't even show up. It also comes with videos and hints that make it easy to understand and complete. All you need to use the online EFP is a valid email address and internet connectivity. The online version can even be completed on a mobile device.

Q: What is involved in the EFP?

A: To complete an EFP, whether the print or online
version, contact an EFP Technician who will set you up for your choice. You may complete the applicable sections and submit it to the technician who will review it. The technician will issue you a letter or certificate of completion, if the plan is acceptable. The technician will guide you throughout the completion process to answer your questions. The second phase of the EFP is the implementation component, which can be a short or long term action plan. Since the EFP process is voluntary, your technician will not monitor whether you have completed the documented action plan or not. You the producer, will take complete ownership of the entire process and monitor the plans in a self-assessment system. However, your technician will be available to help, if requested

Q: Great, I am interested, how do I start the process?

A: If you are a producer or Mackenzie County resident, you can contact the Mackenzie Applied Research Association (MARA) to guide you through the process. MARA has the trained technicians to guide you through the EFP process. **MARA can be reached on 780 927 3776**
Visit our website www.mackenzieresearch.ca for more information about services we provide

Herbicide Resistance

Canada ranks behind only the U.S. and Australia for herbicide-resistant weed biotypes, a problem that has been growing in scope and severity over the past three decades.

Increasing glyphosate resistance is particularly troubling, especially in kochia, which has been cutting a swath through the southern Prairies for nearly a decade.

“Some of the most difficult ones are glyphosate-resistant weeds,” said federal research scientist Charles Geddes. “In Western Canada, kochia is quickly becoming a very problematic weed.”

Kochia is considered to be fully resistant to Group 2 herbicides, and over 50 per cent of kochia populations in southern Alberta are also resistant to glyphosate (a Group 9 herbicide). Group 4 — or dicamba — resistance was also found in 18 per cent of kochia populations in 2017.

Alberta farmers are now also starting to see more triple-resistant kochia (resistant to Group 2, Group 4, and Group 9 herbicides). In 2017, 10 per cent of kochia populations were triple resistant, and that number has likely risen in the two years since then. (The next kochia survey in Alberta is scheduled for 2020.)

“Chemicals are easy to use and they provide very good weed control, so it’s always tempting to rely on herbicides as the only management tool against weeds,” said Geddes.

“But we’re at the point now where that’s just not a sustainable way to manage a farming operation.”

And farmers have the most to lose if they can’t get ahead of herbicide-resistant weeds in their fields, said Geddes.

“Weeds ultimately end up resulting in yield loss, and the fact that certain herbicides aren’t managing certain weeds effectively creates an opportunity for those weeds to persist in the environment and cause yield loss in subsequent crops,” he said.

Controlling weeds becomes more expensive — or even impossible, in some cases — when these herbicides are lost, he added.

“In the United States, certain glyphosate-resistant weeds — which they call super-weeds — have caused some growers to actually have to revert back to hand-weeding their field. You can imagine how expensive that would be,” said Geddes.

"So farmers are facing greater input costs as far as a weed control program and reduced efficiency overall because of the time it takes to implement some of these weed management tools."

Weed management

Farmers can reduce their risk of finding herbicide-resistant weeds in their field by focusing on diversity — employing a varied crop rotation, rotating herbicide modes of action, and using "a diverse tool box of different weed management tools and techniques."

"We know that diversity in a weed control system helps prevent any development of herbicide resistance in the weed population, so we need to be including non-chemical weed management tools in the program as well," said Geddes.

That starts with promoting a crop that will successfully compete against weeds. Increasing seeding rates and reducing row spacing is one way to boost the crop's ability to compete. Including different crop life cycles — like winter annuals — is another.

"Using tools that reduce weed seed production can limit the number of individual plants from that population," said Geddes.

These non-chemical weed management tools may be less convenient than herbicides — limiting their widespread adoption thus far — but there is a limit to the number of chemical control options out there, he said.

Canada's agriculture industry has been pushing different weed control strategies for as long as weeds have been overcoming their resistance, and now it's up to farmers to put those strategies to good use in their own fields.

"Herbicide resistance is a serious issue, and I think that the industry is taking it seriously. There is a collective effort going on to address it," said Geddes.

"But the big thing now is the adoption of some of these best management practices."

For more information about managing resistant weeds, visit www.weedscience.org.

Sources:
https://www.albertafarmexpress.ca/crops/in-the-weeds-canadian-farmers-cant-stay-ahead-of-herbicide-resistance/

Upcoming Events

For more information or to register:
info@pcbfa.ca | peacecountrybeef.ca | 780 835 6799 ext 3

Register Now

What to consider when looking at cover crops

April 8, 2020 at 1:00pm

By Sponsored by Mix It Up, Bayer Crop Science.

Speaker: Anne Verhallen, Soil Management Specialist, OMAFRA

Topics:

- Why consider seeding cover crops?
- What we've learned from past experiences;
- Cover crop tips for success.

Register today to secure your spot.

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NORTHERN AG UPDATES 2020

APRIL 21ST-FORT VERMILION COMMUNITY COMPLEX

FEATURING: SPEAKER FROM CIGI - "END USE QUALITY OF CANADIAN WHEAT FROM A CUSTOMER PERSPECTIVE", SYEDA KHURRAM- FARM CASH ADVANCE, AB WHEAT

OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH STAFF/DIRECTORS OF GRAIN COMMISSIONS, CHECKOFFS, AG SAFE AB; FARM SAFETY PLANNING & GRAIN BIN SAFETY

TO REGISTER: CALL MARA AT 780 927 3776

REGISTRATION FEE - $20/PERSON

INCLUDES LUNCH

PROUDLY SPONSORED BY

Alberta Barley

ALBERTA PULSE GROWERS

JOHN DEERE

PRAIRIECOAST

Alberta Wheat

ALBERTA CANOLA PRODUCERS

Annual Field Day at the Research Farm in Fort Vermilion

Date: June 24, 2020

Acknowledgement

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