

AGENDA
AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARD MEETING
MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF PINCHER CREEK
November 13, 2025
1:30 pm

A. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR/VICE CHAIR

B. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

C. MINUTES

a) Draft Agricultural Service Board Meeting Minutes – September 22, 2025

D. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

E. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a) Agricultural and Environmental Service Board Strategic and Operational Plan 2025-2029

- Still in draft
- ASB would like to see more opportunities for workshops for ranchers in the area
- Mark Zoratti stated that the speaker for the workshops could be hosted in August for a cost of \$3,500. Ag Fieldman will review the budget to determine if funds are available for this year. Mark will talk to the speaker to discuss location and possible cohosting with Fort Macleod

b) Trade Fair type Workshop

- Trade fair-type Fall program to showcase all the programs that can assist the Agricultural community, to take place in December.
- AES Fieldman working on the event and will email board information as it becomes available.

c) Bear Safety Workshop

- Took Place October 3, 2025, well attended

d) Wildlife Predation Identification Training

- ASB Member will bring information

e) Policy C-AES-001 License of Occupation

- Moved into new Traffic Bylaw by Council
- Currently had first reading
- Going back to Council in December

g) MD Deadstock Bin Update

- Bins removed until calving season
- New locations still to be determined
- Signage installed?

F. AES DEPARTMENTAL REPORT AND CALL LOG

a) Agricultural Fieldman Reports – October, November and December 2025

G. WEED NOTICES

H. CORRESPONDENCE

1. For Action

2. For Information

- a) The Do More Agriculture Foundation Newsletters
 - October
 - November 7
- b) Strychnine Use in Alberta
 - Letter from Shadow Minister for Agriculture and Agri-Food, John Barlow, dated October 30, 2025

I NEW BUSINESS

- a) Cattle Drive Signs – Request from residents for AES to purchase and sell at cost
- b) Dams discussion - how do we want to handle the municipal reservoirs in 2026?

J. NEXT MEETING – Discussion for 2026 ASB Dates

K. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting Minutes of the
Agricultural Service Board – Municipal District of Pincher Creek No. 9
September 22, 2025

Present: Chair Anna Welsch, Councillor Tony Bruder, and Member Mark Zoratti

Also Present: Agricultural Fieldman Shane Poulsen, Executive Assistant Jessica McClelland, and two members of the public.

Chair Anna Welsch opened the meeting at 1:30 pm.

A. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Mark Zoratti 25/025

Moved that agenda for September 22, 2025 be approved as presented.

Carried

B. DELEGATION

C. MINUTES

Councillor Tony Bruder 25/026

Moved that the minutes of July 2, 2025, be approved as presented.

Carried

D. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

a) Agricultural and Environmental Service Board Strategic and Operational Plan 2025-2029

- Will be amended as discussed and brought back to a future ASB meeting for approval.
- ASB would like to see more opportunities for workshops for ranchers in the area. Mark Zoratti stated that the speaker for the workshops could be hosted in August for a cost of \$3,500. Ag Fieldman will review the budget to determine if funds are available for this year. Mark will talk to the speaker to discuss location and possible cohosting with Fort MacLeod.

b) Trade Fair Event

- Would like to see the option of a trade fair-type Fall program to showcase all the programs that can assist the Agricultural community, to take place in December.
- AES Fieldman working on the event and will email board information as it becomes available.

c) Bear Safety Workshop

- Scheduled for October 3, 2025

d) Wildlife Predation Identification Training

- ASB Member will bring information

- e) Policy C-AES-001 License of Occupation
 - Being moved into new Traffic Bylaw by Council
 - Currently had first reading
- g) MD Deadstock Bin Update
 - Bins removed until calving season
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 - Signage installed?

E. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

F. 2025 AES DEPARTMENT REPORT

Councillor Tony Bruder

25/027

Moved to accept for information the departmental reports from the Agricultural Fieldman for August and September 2025.

Carried

G. WEED NOTICE

ASB Fieldman stated that no weed notices have been issued as crews have been busy spraying.

H. CORRESPONDENCE

1. For Action

2. For Information

Mark Zoratti

25/028

Moved that the following be received as information:

- a) Alberta Farm Fresh Producers Association
 - September 2025 Newsletter
- b) Ag for Life
 - 2025 Mid-Year Impact Report
- c) The Do More Agricultural Foundation
 - September 2025 Newsletter

Carried

I. NEW BUSINESS

- a) 2025 South Region Agricultural Service Board Conference Agenda
- b) Social Media Update – Cattle and large equipment

J. CLOSED SESSION

K. NEXT MEETING –

Councillor Tony Bruder

25/029

Moved to reschedule the next ASB meeting to November 13, 2025 at 1:30 pm.

Carried

L. ADJOURNMENT

Mark Zoratti

25/030

Moved to adjourn the meeting, the time being 2:58 pm.

Carried

ASB Chairperson

ASB Secretary

AES, October, 2025

- October 1 – 31, we've been Roadside spraying in Divisions 1 & 3 with Tordon 22K (Canada Thistle [CT], Brush & Perennial Sowthistle [PS] control)
- October 1 – 14, spot spraying crew has worked on, Blueweed (BW) regrowth, Hoary Cress (HC), fall spraying on watercourses for Common Mullein (CM) and BW regrowth, Spotted Knapweed (SKW) germination and regrowth, CT and Leafy Spurge (LS) patches around Reservoir. Bulk of work was around Reservoir for CT
- October 1 – 31, rentals busy until the cows come home
- October 1 – 31, mapping & records, billing as we finish up with contract spraying
- October 1, benefits meeting
- October 2, AES shop inspection
- October 3, parts ordering, safety documentation (Bistrainer)
- October 7, spot spraying (gravelpits)
- October 8, finish up Alberta Parks contract work in Castle
- October 9, COR Interviews, Capital budget meeting
- October 10, formal and field hazard assessments review, safety binder review and compilation, mapping verification
- October 13, Thanksgiving Day STAT
- October 14, AES Safety Meeting, fire extinguisher, shop & first aid kit inspections
- October 15, JHSC meeting
- October 16, Capital Budget meeting
- October 16 – 31, Downy Brome/Blueweed spraying with Esplanade/Roundup mix
- October 17 – 25, dam releases and monitoring for winter (weather related)
- October 17, last day for summer staff (just Jesson and I left)
- October 20 – 24, Jesson vacation
- October 20, Senior management meeting
- October 21, formal hazard assessments
- October 22, reporting, mapping, billing
- October 23, refreshing job descriptions
- October 24, day off
- October 27, Cridland Dam audit
- October 28, winterize and park all but one spot spray trucks for season
- October 29, equipment and parts ordering for next year, shop and yard organization and cleaning for winter
- October 30, Admin Safety meeting
- October 31, Boo

Sincerely,

Shane Poulsen,
Agricultural Services Manager

AES, November, 2025

- November 3, billing, records, spraying
- November 3 – 14, looks like weather still good for spraying. Running out of spray budget and inventory this year!
- November 3 – 14, dams when necessary
- November 4, PW Safety Meeting
- November 5, Leadership Training
- November 6, ASB Agenda
- November 7, Day Off
- November 10,
- November 11, STAT (Remembrance Day)
- November 12, rentals, shop, airport
- November 13, ASB Meeting
- November 14, bookings for next month, memberships review
- November 17,
- November 17, 18, soil erosion inspections
- November 18, Budget, billing, reporting
- November 19, Joint Health and Safety
- November 20,
- November 21, safety equipment, lists, records and filing
- November 24, reporting, Weed Review Committee Webinar
- November 25, 2025 Strategic Plan review (for 2025 funding)
- November 26, work on 2025 – 2029 Provincial Grant Funding Application (due January 30, 20205)
- November 27, SWIM meeting
- November 28, day off

Sincerely,

Shane Poulsen,
Agricultural Fieldman

AES, December, 2025

- December 1 – 5, Alberta Association of Agricultural Fieldmen (AAAF) In Service Training (IST) in Edmonton
- December 8, ALUS year end meeting, general office (catch up from absence)
- December 9, general office and shop, budget and billing, inventory
- December 10, weed contracts meeting, JHSC meeting, mapping, 2026 planning, set up with Admin and PW for vacation time taken
- December 11, EFP and grant workshop (4 – 8)
- December 12, general office and shop work, other prep for Christmas/New Year absence
- December 15 – 31, combination of vacation days taken, Christmas STAT's and Christmas Shutdown
- **Jan 19 – 21, 2026** – Provincial ASB Conference, Delta Hotel Conference Centre, South Edmonton, Alberta

Sincerely,

Shane Poulsen,
Agricultural Fieldman



The Do More Agriculture Foundation team recently met in person for the first time. Though we usually work remotely across different regions, we came together for a full day of energizing discussions and activities. A highlight was our visit to Wanuskewin in Saskatoon — a place of gathering and learning — to deepen our understanding and ongoing commitment to truth and reconciliation, and to supporting Indigenous communities.

From left: Lucia Stephen, Operations and Outreach Manager; Michaela Braaten, Community Engagement Manager; Merle Massie, Executive Director; Kaitlyn Kitzan, Partnership Manager.

Announcements

Talk It Out Tag Begins!

October is International Mental Health Awareness Month, and in honour of this month's theme, we're proud to once again partner with BASF Agricultural Solutions Canada Inc. to bring back **#TalkItOutTag**. Now in its second year, this initiative helps break the stigma around mental health in agriculture by sparking meaningful conversations across our communities.

Throughout October, we'll be using **#TalkItOut conversation cards** ([physical](#) and [digital](#)) to encourage open, authentic discussions — and we invite you to

do the same. Stay tuned to our [Instagram channel and stories](#) to see the campaign kick off.

Want to learn more about how a simple deck of cards can reduce stigma and foster genuine conversations among farmers and ag professionals? Check out [this feature by Real Agriculture](#), where our Executive Director, Merle Massie, and BASF Canada Agricultural Solutions Vice President, Leta LaRush, share the story behind the campaign.



Looking to take part?

- Join the waitlist to purchase your own [Talk It Out card deck](#) to keep conversations going in your community (we'll ship once the Canada Post strike ends!) or check out the [digital cards](#).
- Prefer a more private way to connect? Explore [AgTalk](#), an anonymous, peer-to-peer platform created for farmers and those in the agriculture industry.
- Consider supporting mental health awareness with a [donation](#) to The Do More Agriculture Foundation.

Together, we can keep the conversation going and strengthen support across agriculture.



Honoured Recognition - 2025 Champions of Mental Health

The Do More Agriculture Foundation has been named a **2025 Champion of Mental Health – Community Organization** by the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH).

On October 6 in Ottawa, our Executive Director, Dr. Merle Massie, will accept this award on behalf of farmers, families, and communities who are helping to change the conversation on mental health in agriculture. [Learn more.](#)



RBC Canadian Women
Entrepreneur Awards

Presented by:
**WOMEN OF
INFLUENCE+**

Meet the 2025 Finalists



Lesley Kelly named as a Finalist for the 2025 RBC Canadian Women Entrepreneur Awards!

We're thrilled to share that Board Member and organizational co-founder, Lesley Kelly of *High Heels and Canola Fields*, has been named a finalist in the National Social Change category for the 2025 RBC Canadian Women Entrepreneur Awards, led by Women of Influence+.

This award recognizes women who are redefining leadership and shaping the future of business in Canada — and Lesley's work is an inspiring example of exactly that.

Learn more about the awards [here](#) and read Lesley's interview [here](#).

Join Do More Ag at the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association Conference!

We're excited to share that The Do More Agriculture Foundation will be presenting at the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association Online Conference, running October 6-9.

On October 7th, our Operations and Outreach Manager, Lucia Stephen, will be providing a 30 minute presentation on AgTalk and its role in fostering peer connection and supporting mental health in agriculture. [See the full agenda here](#) and make sure to register for the conference soon, it's free!



Deep Rooted at Canada's Outdoor Farm Show

In partnership with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) and Scotiabank, we were thrilled to host a screening of [*Deep Rooted*](#) at Canada's Outdoor Farm Show, followed by a thoughtful panel discussion with director Kyle McDonnell, featured farmer Darryl Boersma, and Katelyn Caughell from Agriculture Wellness Ontario. Together with guests including OFA President Drew Spoelstra, we discussed farming's joys and challenges, the stigma surrounding mental health, and strategies for both community and individual support.

Thank you to our partners and everyone who joined us — stay tuned for more screenings to come!

Reminders

Join our New Community of Practice for Mental Health in Agriculture

Does your organization work at the connection point between mental health and agriculture? The Do More Agriculture Foundation hosts a monthly Community of Practice (CoP) for Mental Health in Agriculture—a collaborative online space to share learning, connect, and coordinate efforts to better support farmers, farm families, and rural residents.

Interested in getting involved? [Learn more](#) to join an upcoming session.

Got a Story to Share?

We're looking for voices from the field! If you're involved in a community initiative that supports mental health in rural or agricultural communities, we'd love to hear from you. Your story might inspire other communities to do more for mental health. **Share your story or nominate an initiative by reaching out to us at outreach@domore.ag.**



**TALK ASK LISTEN:
LUNCH & LEARN**

October 9 | Virtual

12:00 Noon CST / 1:00pm EST

Join us for a 1 hour Talk Ask Listen mini-workshop by The Do More Agriculture Foundation. Presented by Executive Director, Dr. Merle Massie.

EVENT HOSTED BY:

**The
Do More
Agriculture
Foundation**

Upcoming Webinars

October 9 - Join us for a free "Lunch & Learn" version of our **Talk Ask Listen** workshop, The Do More Agriculture Foundation's flagship mental health literacy program. In just one hour, you'll increase your knowledge, build comfort in having conversations about mental health, and learn how to take action to support yourself and others in agriculture. Join us from 12-1pm CST / 2-3pm EST. [Register here](#).

November 4 - Seasons of Change: Cultivating Connection Through Change and Loss is the first free session of a new four-part guided online series with grief specialist Tracy Young. Together, we'll create space for connection, reflection, and learning to help navigate the grief that comes

with life's transitions. Join us from 6–7:30 PM CST / 7–8:30 PM EST.

[Register here.](#)

Upcoming Community Mental Health Workshop Events:

[Bring mental health training to your community or workplace.](#) Curious how our Community Fund works? [Watch our info session](#) and [read the handbook](#) to learn about the process, eligibility and impact.

We have an upcoming free in-person [In The Know](#) session taking place **October 21st** in Southeast Saskatchewan (Bengough area). [See full details and register here.](#)

We also have an upcoming free in-person [Talk Ask Listen](#) session taking place **October 23rd** in Castor, Alberta. [See full details and register here.](#)

[Stay connected](#) as more communities finalize plans for Mental Health workshops across the country! The Community Fund is made available through the generous support of Farm Credit Canada.



Join the 2025 AgCulture Training Sessions!

The Do More Agriculture Foundation, in collaboration with facilitator Bonnie Taylor, MSW, RSW, is offering upcoming [AgCulture training sessions](#). These virtual workshops are designed for mental health professionals who are interested in deepening their understanding of

agriculture in Canada and gaining practical insights rooted in lived experience and professional expertise.

What to expect:

- A deeper understanding of agricultural culture and stressors
- Tools to build trust and connection with clients in ag communities
- Practical strategies to strengthen your therapeutic practice with rural and ag-based populations
- Real stories and insights from farmers and rural mental health advocates

Offered monthly | Live online four-hour session | Free, sponsored by Farm Credit Canada

[Register now](#) for our **next sessions:** [October 6](#), [November 4](#), [December 4](#)

This training will equip you with the context, language, and tools to enhance your ability to support rural clients—deepening the impact of your practice in ways that resonate with agricultural communities.

IN THE NEWS

We were pleased to be featured in *The Review's* recent article on the pressures facing Ontario farmers during this time of trade turbulence. The article highlights the financial and personal stresses that farmers are navigating, and points to the critical role of mental health resources in times of uncertainty.

At The Do More Agriculture Foundation, we see how these economic and structural challenges ripple into mental health. Through initiatives like [AgTalk](#) we're supporting farmers in turning worry into connection, resilience, and action. [Read the full article.](#)

Help us grow the conversation

Know someone who cares about mental health in agriculture? Forward this newsletter to a friend, colleague, or community group. They can subscribe anytime at domore.ag and stay connected and champion mental health in agriculture.

And don't forget to follow us on social media for stories, updates, and tools to support mental well-being across ag communities. Just click the icons below to

join us.

YOUR IMPACT MATTERS.

With your support, The Do More Agriculture Foundation is driving meaningful change in agricultural communities by promoting awareness, acceptance, and tangible action for mental health. By building connections and creating spaces of support, we're making a real difference in the lives of those who need it most.

Together, we are shaping a stronger, healthier future for Canadian agriculture.

Thank you for standing with us to Do More for mental health.

Donate Now



Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

Disclaimer:

The Do More Agriculture Foundation is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.

If you are in crisis, please call the national farmer crisis line at **1-866-FARMS01 (1-866-327-6701)** or the national call/text line **988**.

November E-News | The Do More Agriculture Foundation

From The Do More Agriculture Foundation <hello@domore.ag>

Date Wed 2025-11-05 17:27

To Jessica McClelland <AdminExecAsst@mdpinchercreek.ab.ca>



Announcements

Hay Are We Okay - Check Out Our New Podcast!

When communities show up for each other, everyone thrives. *Hay Are We Okay?* is a new podcast by The Do More Agriculture Foundation showcasing community-led initiatives that support mental health in farming and rural communities. Each episode moves beyond awareness to inspiration and action,

sharing stories of people coming together to cultivate connection, care, and well-being across agriculture. What can you do in your community to make a difference? More and more people are stepping up to answer, “Hay Are We Okay?” See [our first three episodes](#) and tune in from your preferred platform! Many thanks to our sponsor: [AGCO Agriculture Foundation](#).

#TalkItOutTag: Thank You For Joining the Conversation!

A huge thank you to everyone who participated in **#TalkItOutTag** throughout October in honour of World Mental Health Month, and a special thanks to our campaign partner [BASF Agricultural Solutions Canada](#).

People from across the country shared videos using questions from our **Talk It Out Card Deck** ([physical](#) and [digital](#))— reaching more than **40,000 views** and sparking powerful conversations about mental health in agriculture. These personal reflections highlighted the importance of speaking up, supporting one another, and breaking the stigma around mental health.

You can see many of the shared videos on our [Instagram](#) or by searching **#TalkItOutTag**. Let’s keep the momentum going — and strengthen mental health in agriculture together.

Looking for a meaningful gift? Get your [Talk It Out Card Deck](#) this holiday season and help keep the conversation going!



On October 6th in Ottawa, our Executive Director, Dr. Merle Massie, accepted the 2025 Champion of Mental Health Award from the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) — a meaningful recognition of the farmers, families, and communities driving change in how we talk about mental health in

agriculture. We are honoured and inspired to keep doing more for mental health in agriculture, together.

Giving Tuesday - coming soon!

This year, Giving Tuesday falls on **December 2**, and we hope you'll consider supporting The Do More Agriculture Foundation in your year-end giving. Your donation helps us deliver mental health training, expand access to support, and ensure no one in agriculture struggles alone. Stay tuned for more details later this month — and if you'd like to get a head start, you can donate anytime at www.domore.ag/donate.

New Blog Post - Get Curious

Our new blog post from Merle Massie, Executive Director of The Do More Agriculture Foundation explores a simple yet powerful way to support mental health: curiosity. Taking time to learn about mental health conditions is a gift, to yourself, and to those around you who may be facing a particular struggle. By choosing curiosity, we can build deeper connection, empathy, and support for those facing mental health challenges in agriculture. [Read it here](#). It was also recently featured in the latest edition of [Women in Ag Magazine](#).



Thunderstruck Ag Equipment joins Behind Every Bolt

We're proud to officially launch Behind Every Bolt, our new fundraising campaign to support farm mental health across Canada.

Our first partner: [Thunderstruck Ag Equipment](#)

For every Razors Edge sold in Canada this November and December, Thunderstruck will donate \$100 to The Do More Agriculture Foundation.

Behind Every Bolt invites agricultural businesses of every size — from farms to dealerships to manufacturers — to create their own fundraising challenges in support of The Do More Agriculture Foundation. Together, we champion a culture of care in Canadian agricultural communities.

Thank you to Thunderstruck for leading the way. [Learn more about the campaign and see how your business can get involved.](#)



Start your day off right — or surprise a fellow farmer, friend, or office-mate — with our **Talk It Out mug**. Featuring a soft matte finish and our signature logo, this 15oz mug is perfect for those early mornings and meaningful coffee chats. [Order yours here.](#)

Reminders

Join our New Community of Practice for Mental Health in Agriculture

Does your organization work at the connection point between mental health and agriculture? The Do More Agriculture Foundation hosts a monthly Community of Practice (CoP) for Mental Health in Agriculture—a collaborative online space to share learning, connect, and coordinate efforts to better support farmers, farm families, and rural residents.

Interested in getting involved? [Learn more](#) to join an upcoming session.

Got a Story to Share?

We're looking for voices from the field! If you're involved in a community initiative that supports mental health in rural or agricultural communities, we'd love to hear from you. Your story might inspire other communities to do more

for mental health. **Share your story or nominate an initiative by reaching out to us at outreach@domore.ag.**



Join us for *Seasons of Change* on December 9 — click the image for more details and to register.

Upcoming Webinars

November 18 - Field of Mind: Supporting Men's Mental Well-Being -

TOPIC: Men's Sheds in Canada - Join us for a fireside chat exploring Men's Sheds in Canada — and how being shoulder to shoulder helps strengthen men's mental health and connection. Featured speakers: Punch Jackson, Chairman, Alberta Men's Shed Association & Brian Sawyer, Operations Manager for Men's Shed Canada. See full details and [register here](#).*

December 9 - Seasons of Change: Cultivating Connection Through

Change and Loss is the second free session of a new four-part guided online series with grief specialist Tracy Young. This session focuses on: **Connecting with Loss, Change, and Grief** - explore different types of loss and grief, and how to connect, grow, and journey with change and life transitions. Together, we'll create space for connection, reflection, and learning to help navigate the grief that comes with life's transitions. See full

details and [register here](#).*

January 8 - Finding Harmony in Farm Transition panel discussion. This fireside chat aims to shed light on this often-overlooked aspect of farm transitions. Moderated by Dr. Merle Massie with panelists TBD - [register here](#) & more info coming soon!**

January 13 - Seasons of Change: Cultivating Connection Through Change and Loss is the third free session of a new four-part guided online series with grief specialist Tracy Young. This session focuses on: **Embracing the Seasons of Loss, Change, and Grief** - explore turning points, outcomes, next steps, and how to find the *good* in loss, change, and grief. Together, we'll create space for connection, reflection, and learning to help navigate the grief that comes with life's transitions. See full details and [register here](#).*

February 10– Seasons of Change: Cultivating Connection Through Change and Loss is the fourth free session of a new four-part guided online series with grief specialist Tracy Young. This session focuses on: **Living Well with Loss, Change, and Grief** - explore the purpose, resources, tools, and how to cultivate, nurture, and move with the loss, change, and grief that impacts our lives. Together, we'll create space for connection, reflection, and learning to help navigate the grief that comes with life's transitions. [See full details and register here](#).*

*These sessions are generously sponsored by [Farm Credit Canada](#).

**This session is generously sponsored by [Agriculture Financial Services Corporation](#).

Upcoming Community Mental Health Workshop Events:

[Bring mental health training to your community or workplace](#). **Curious how our Community Fund works?** [Watch our info session](#) and [read the handbook](#) to learn about the process, eligibility and impact.

Check out [our Events page](#) and register for one of the upcoming events in your area!

[Stay connected](#) as more communities finalize plans for Mental Health

workshops across the country! The Community Fund is made available through the generous support of Farm Credit Canada.

Speaking Engagements

Our Executive Director, **Dr. Merle Massie**, will be speaking at several upcoming events across Canada this November, sharing insights on mental health, community, and resilience in agriculture:

Nov 8 – [Farmfair International \(4-H Program\)](#)

Edmonton, AB

Nov 13 – [Women in Agriculture Conference](#)

Lac La Biche, AB

Nov 24 – [Agribition Next Gen Ag](#)

Regina, SK

If you'll be attending any of these events, be sure to stop by and say hello!



Join the final AgCulture Training Session of the year!

The Do More Agriculture Foundation, in collaboration with facilitator **Bonnie Taylor, MSW, RSW**, offers [AgCulture training sessions](#). These virtual workshops are designed for mental health professionals who are interested in deepening their understanding of agriculture in Canada and gaining practical insights rooted in lived experience and professional

expertise.

What to expect:

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Offered monthly | Live online four-hour session | Free, sponsored by Farm Credit Canada

[Register now](#) for our **final session of the year:** [December 4](#)

This training will equip you with the context, language, and tools to enhance your ability to support rural clients—deepening the impact of your practice in ways that resonate with agricultural communities.

RECENT FEATURES

Talking Mental Health and Community in Agriculture

In the latest **LeadHer Lounge** session, hosted by the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC), panelists from across Canada explored how community networks, peer programs, and rural initiatives are transforming mental health support in agriculture.

Our Executive Director, **Dr. Merle Massie**, joined **Avery Dixon** (Agricultural Wellness Ontario) and **Yvonne Rempel** (Primary Care Alberta) to discuss the power of connection, learning, and shared experience in strengthening mental health across the ag sector. [Watch the video.](#)

AgTalk Featured in Landscape Ontario

We're excited to share that AgTalk was recently featured in *Landscape Trades*, the official publication of the Landscape Ontario Horticultural Trades Association and a national publication for those working in the landscape and horticulture professions. The feature explores how AgTalk supports mental health and connection across Canada's horticultural and agricultural sectors. Our Executive Director, Dr. Merle Massie, also joined the *Landscape Ontario Podcast* to discuss how AgTalk can benefit growers and industry professionals.

[Read the feature](#) - [Listen to the podcast](#) - [Watch on YouTube](#).

Community Workshop Spotlights Mental Health in Agriculture

We're proud to see our recent **In the Know** workshop at the Bengough Public Library in Saskatchewan featured in *Discover Weyburn*. The article highlights how this rural-based initiative is opening dialogue around mental health in farm communities—showing the power of local spaces to support connection, learning, and resilience in agriculture. [Read here](#).

Help us grow the conversation

Know someone who cares about mental health in agriculture? Forward this newsletter to a friend, colleague, or community group. They can subscribe anytime at domore.ag and stay connected and champion mental health in agriculture.

And don't forget to follow us on social media for stories, updates, and tools to support mental well-being across ag communities. Just click the icons below to join us.

YOUR IMPACT MATTERS.

With your support, The Do More Agriculture Foundation is driving meaningful change in agricultural communities by promoting awareness, acceptance, and tangible action for mental health. By building connections and creating spaces of support, we're making a real difference in the lives of those who need it most.

Together, we are shaping a stronger, healthier future for Canadian agriculture.

Thank you for standing with us to Do More for mental health.

Donate Now



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Honourable Heath MacDonald
 Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food
 House of Commons
 Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

October 30th, 2025

Dear Minister MacDonald,

I write to you today in my capacity as Shadow Minister for Agriculture on behalf of our Conservative caucus and, more importantly, on behalf of the thousands of producers, ranchers and farmers across Canada whose livelihoods are under threat by the infestation of Richardson's Ground Squirrel (the "gopher").

As I stated in my previous letter, for months I have heard from producers in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba the available tools for control are simply not working. The burrowing, feeding and trampling behaviour of these animals is causing serious and escalating damage. According to Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation (SCIC), 123,000 acres were affected by gopher-related damage in 2024 alone, resulting in \$10.6 million in payouts under federal-provincial insurance programs. Reports from Lacombe County indicate between 25% to 50% of pasturelands is experiencing moderate to significant damage.

Minister, in Foothills County alone it is estimated nearly of the 830,000 acres of farmland in the municipality roughly 15,000 acres were lost this past summer because of these pests. That equates to a loss of around \$3 million from county producers.

I have spoken to dozens of producers and the stories are heartbreaking. Damaged irrigation lines, injured cattle and many stories of seeding a field, losing it to gopher damage, only to seed it again and once again gopher infestation destroys the field. No roots, no crops, no income and eventually less commodities for food production.

When we look at the regulatory picture, we see a mismatch between the urgency on the ground and the pace of federal action. On October 23rd at the Agriculture Committee you stated your commitment to work with the provinces and producers and you said you would support approval of urgent requests for strychnine use.

On October 2nd the Province of Alberta applied to the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) for emergency use of strychnine, and yet weeks later they have still received no decision. The Province of Saskatchewan has now co-signed onto the Alberta application asking for access as well.



Producers need clarity and they need effective tools now. There is broad municipal consensus gopher damage will continue to escalate if no effective solution is restored or introduced. You saw the damage this summer during your tour in Alberta and the impact could be worse next year as the gopher population continues to grow.

Farmers are planning for spring 2026: seed purchases, rotation decisions, pest management, fencing, equipment. Delaying a decision on an emergency use application undermines their ability to plan and respond. In addition, the provinces need ample time to access supply of strychnine in time for the spring thaw for application in the fields.

Minister MacDonald, this is not about ideology. This is about food security, economic viability and delivering for Canadian producers who are counting on your leadership. When you gave your word in committee, farmers heard it. Now they are asking you to deliver.

I look forward to your prompt response.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John Barlow". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "J" and "B".

John Barlow

Member of Parliament for Foothills
Shadow Minister for Agriculture and Agri-Food