



## President's Report

The past year has been a very active and busy one for the board of Action for Agriculture. The Alberta advantage is certainly attracting more and more people to our province. The strong economy in this province that is attracting people and business is enviable, however, when we have no land use strategy in place it can have a very negative impact on our agriculture industry.

Action for Agriculture has been in contact with three newly formed organizations that are also wrestling with land use issues. The Alberta Association of Landowners for the Protection of Agricultural Land and President Ted Berger represents 2000 landowners. The Lacombe Partners in Agriculture represent 600 concerned producers, processors and agribusiness partners, and in the Red Deer area, the Red Deer Ratepayers Association. Action for Agriculture is already working with the Cosway Adjacent Landowners Association, the Top Soil group from Fort Saskatchewan and the P. A. L. organization from Lacombe.

What is at stake here is the survival of our basic resource base – land. Allan Musselman, a land and community planner from Pennsylvania who attended two land use meetings in Airdrie and Fort Saskatchewan made what I thought were two key observations. Firstly, “have you got urban sprawl, you’ve got it in spades”, and secondly, “as Canadians you are much too laid back in dealing with land use issues, in the U. S. we fight the civil war all over again, but in communities where there are leaders with commitment the wars are significantly

less”. What people don’t realize is that the very land they are sprawling on is the same land that supports our life. The Alberta government continues to push for value-added processing of agriculture products here in the province, however, this will not be sustainable if we do not develop some balanced and smart growth techniques similar to what is being done in the U. S.

The cost of sprawl in the U. S. is well documented in such areas around New York and Chicago where population growth has remained fairly static for 20 years but the land base has grown by 76% and 40% respectively. There seems to be a common misconception that increased residential development will increase the tax base and tax revenues for local governments, thereby providing increased revenues to cover the cost of improved services to area residents. According to the results of more than 60 studies conducted across the U. S. by the American Farmland Trust, it costs more to provide residential services than is generated in additional tax revenues. These studies found that on average it costs \$1.11 to serve residential developments for every dollar generated, compared to just \$0.31 to serve farm and forest lands and \$0.29 for commercial industrial developments. One study done in Montana found that \$1.47 was demanded in direct services as opposed to only \$0.25 demanded for agriculture.

Urban sprawl continues to spawn bylaws that negatively impact agriculture. Action for Agriculture is certainly encouraged by other

organizations, particularly the new ones previously identified, who are joining the debate to develop workable and sustainable land use policies. We have appreciated the excellent articles that have been published in the National Post, the Western Producer, and the Canadian Cattlemen this past year.

Although Action for Agriculture knows how the little Dutch boy felt with his finger in the dike and we know government moves very slowly, there is some progress being made. We are involved with the Ag Summit Land Use Core Action Team, which has just started the process of developing a new framework for land use planning in Alberta. Once again this year we have been involved with the Land Resource Partnership, who continue to make a positive contribution to the federal government’s proposed Species at Risk legislation that has surfaced again since the federal election.

Action for Agriculture has recently initiated dialogue with the City of Calgary through Alderman Barry Erskine and we are very pleased with the positive response we have received.

I am very appreciative of the support and hard work as well as the dedication shown by the board of directors who volunteer their time to addressing these critical issues.

We all look forward to seeing you at our annual meeting.

-- *Harvey Buckley*

## NOTICE

### Action for Agriculture Annual General Meeting

Thursday, February 1, 2001 – 7:00 pm  
Goldenrod Hall, 7 miles west of Airdrie

Guest Speaker: Barry Erskine, City of Calgary Alderman  
Will Your Farm be Next? Pavement vs Farmland

## 2000 Activities

*In keeping with our Objectives and Policies, the Board of Action for Agriculture has undertaken the following initiatives in 2000. As noted, many of these activities are ongoing and we remain members on the committees and participate as stakeholders.*

- Continue to meet with *Cosway Adjacent Land Owners Association* and spoke at general meeting regarding recreational trails proposed by Alberta TrailNet
- Presentation to the *Alberta Institute of Agrologists'* provincial convention
- Presentation to the Board of the *Alberta Association of Municipal Districts & Counties* asking for support with our initiatives for the preservation of agricultural lands and development of an Alberta-based conference
- Interview with the *National Post*
- Spoke on province wide radio program *Agri-Talk*
- Land use issue meeting with the M.D. of Big Horn, towns of Canmore, Banff and Cochrane
- Met with rep from *Friends of the Foothills* regarding fragmentation and land use issues
- Invited to participate in the Airdrie-Rocky View Inter-Municipal/Annexation Plans
- Met with M.D. of Rocky View manager concerning undivided interests
- Stakeholder on the *Rosebud River/Serviceberry Creek Watershed Project*
- Participated in pre-Ag Summit meetings, Airdrie, Fort Saskatchewan and Crossfield
- Presentation to Cochrane Town Council on urban sprawl
- Presentation addressing proposed Cochrane Area Structure Plan
- Met with *Southern Alberta Land Trust and Nature conservancy of Canada*
- Participated in *Ag Summit 2000*
- Assisted Mountain View landowners with public hearing
- Ongoing participation in the *Land Resource Partnership* making significant changes to the Species at Risk legislation
- Participated in Jeep burial with the *Alberta Association of Landowners for the Protection of Agricultural Land*
- Ongoing participation in the *Ag Summit Land Use Core Action Team* helping to establish consensus among a wide variety of stakeholders and developing a framework for land use planning in Alberta
- Met with the *Red Deer Ratepayers Assoc., the Lacombe County Partners in Agriculture*
- Met with City of Calgary Alderman Barry Erskine regarding the fracturing and loss of farmland and urban sprawl
- Made submissions to a number of public hearings in the M.D.'s of Big Horn & Rocky View

*Action for Agriculture  
Would like to thank  
Haukedal Petroleum Ltd.  
For their support.*

### Action for Agriculture BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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