



# FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions



## **Is AAAS Government?**

*No, AAAS is a not-for-profit, non-governmental, provincial organization incorporated under the Societies Act and governed by a volunteer Board of Directors elected by our membership.*

## **Are there a lot of new Agricultural Societies that have been formed in Alberta in recent years?**

*No, there has only been 1 new Ag Society incorporated in Alberta since 1990 (Berry Creek Ag Society in Pollockville). In fact there have been 4 that have officially dissolved since 2012. There are currently 291 Agricultural Societies in AB.*

## **Why do some areas have so many Agricultural Societies so close together?**

*Agricultural Societies were formed where communities already existed. In the early 70's there was a push to increase recreational infrastructure in rural communities, and Agricultural Societies were chosen as a method to accomplish this due to their unique legislation and mandate.*

## **Why don't all communities have an Agricultural Society?**

*The application process to become an Agricultural Society required a significant connection to agricultural producers. Some communities were unable to meet these criteria when the majority of Agricultural Societies were formed in the 70's and 80's. Today the challenge is both the connection to agricultural producers, and the minimum distance from an existing Agricultural Society requirement (in the Act) for new Agricultural Societies to be formed.*

## **Are all approved Alberta Agricultural Societies incorporated?**

*Yes – under the Agricultural Societies Act (this is different than other non-profits which are typically incorporated under the Societies Act)*

## **How are Ag Societies regulated?**

*Agricultural Societies in Alberta are incorporated under the Agricultural Societies Act. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Economic Development is responsible for administering the Ag Society program and ensuring Ag Societies follow the legislation. Agricultural Societies are also required to have bylaws for the organization that have been approved by both their membership and the Ministry of Agriculture.*

## **Are Ag Societies charitable organizations that can issue charitable receipts?**

*No, in order to issue charitable receipts, your organization must have applied to Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and be approved for registration as a charity. This is a separate process and reporting body in addition to when you were incorporated as a not-profit organization under the Alberta Agricultural Societies Act. Many AB Ag Societies have taken the extra steps and have been approved to have charitable status as well and as a result they are allowed to issue charitable tax receipts on qualified donations.*

## **If we dissolve as an Ag Society can we re-form again when we want to?**

*No. It is very difficult to become an Agricultural Society now and there would need to be no other Agricultural Societies within a 80km radius of your community to even be eligible to apply (in accordance to the new changes brought forward in Bill 14 Agricultural Societies Amendment Act) All Agricultural Societies currently incorporated are grandfathered from that requirement but if you dissolve then the distance requirement would apply to you.*

**Are there a lot of Ag Societies in the Province with little to no activity?**

*No. Agricultural Societies have minimum criteria levels to meet in order to remain in good standing. Each Agricultural Society has a unique role in their community*

**Are Ag Societies less relevant and/or dying in communities?**

*Agricultural Societies and other community organizations (non-profits) in general struggle with remaining relevant and recognized for their contributions in their community. As the organizations evolve, the engagement varies with volunteers and relationships.*

**Are the Major (Calgary) & the Regionals (Camrose, Grande Prairie, Olds, Lethbridge, Lloydminster, Medicine Hat, Red Deer) part of the Ag Society Grants that we receive?**

*No. There are 3 separate programs running to support the entire Ag Society portfolio which is managed by the Ministry of Agriculture. Each level has different funding and reporting requirements and has no impact or bearing on the funding of the other levels.*

**Does an Ag Society have to support 4-H in order to get their grants?**

*No it is not a mandatory requirement. Agricultural Societies are required to hold or host at least 1 agricultural activity per year in order to receive their funding. Many Ag Societies have chosen to support 4-H due to their connection to agriculture and youth development.*

**Why has our grant dollars we get from the Ag Society program decreased in the past several years?** *The total grant dollars available to Primary Agricultural Societies has not changed in more than a decade (both the Regionals and Majors have been subject to decreases in their funding). Due to the continued increase in the total amount of eligible expenses being claimed by primary Ag Societies the pro-rated percentages that you receive have either decreased or remained static as a result. (There have been occasional times when a certain category has additional funds to allocate then a typical year but this is based on either 1 time funding the program received or if some Ag Societies are not in good standing and don't receive their base funding)*

**Is an Ag Society only allowed to do events, activities and run facilities that are Ag related?**

*No. The mandate or objective of an Agricultural Society is included in the Act which highlights the 2 key areas Ag Societies can focus in...."to promote agriculture" and "enhance the quality of life for person living in the community" The Ag Society provides facilities, events and services based on the needs in their community.*

**Why are Ag Societies important to a community?**

*Due to the Act that Agricultural Societies are incorporated under, and the objectives/mandate they are given, Agricultural Societies fill a unique role in their own community. By providing programs, events and facilities they impact social and economic growth in their areas. The ability to enable people to come together to pursue their own passions is vital to healthy, productive communities.*

**What are challenges other Ag Societies are dealing with?**

*Some of the challenges we see Agricultural Societies dealing with are maintaining relevance in their community, lack of volunteers, financial stability, and direction.*

