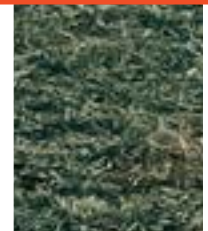
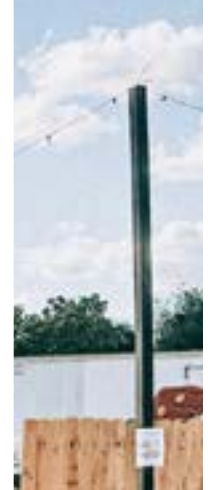


ACROSS

the fence



AUTUMN 2026
newsletter
albertaagsocieties.ca





TABLE OF CONTENTS

01-04

CEO MESSAGE

06-10

SUMMIT INFO

13-14

AG NEWS

17,19

UPCOMING EVENTS

22-23, 26-27

EMPOWERING MINDS
ARTICLES

32

FARM SAFETY DAY

36

EXCHANGE PROGRAM

40-41, 44

YOU MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

47

BOARD MEMBERS



CEO MESSAGE

As summer gives way to fall, there is always a noticeable change of pace across Alberta.

For many of our Agricultural Societies, another busy summer event season is drawing to a close. For our farmers and ranchers, however, fall brings a different kind of intensity as harvest gets underway.

Over the past several months, I have had the opportunity to see once again what Agricultural Societies do

**A SEASON OF
WORK,
RESILIENCE
AND
LOOKING
FORWARD**

best. Across the province, volunteers have organized fairs, rodeos, bench shows, community celebrations, agricultural events, markets, educational activities and countless other gatherings that bring people together

Behind every successful event are hours of planning, preparation and volunteer effort that most people will never see. To everyone who gave up evenings, weekends and summer days to make something happen in your community—thank you.

These events matter.

They create places for neighbours to gather. They give young people opportunities to participate and lead. They celebrate agriculture and rural traditions while creating room for new ideas. And, perhaps most importantly, they remind us that strong communities do not simply happen. They are built by people willing to contribute their time and energy to something larger than themselves.

A CHALLENGING HARVEST

As we celebrate the successes of summer, we also recognize that this has been a

CEO MESSAGE

TIM CARSON

challenging growing season in many parts of Alberta. Weather is always part of agriculture, but its impacts are never evenly distributed. Conditions that are favourable in one part of the province can be very different only a few hours down the road.

As harvest progresses, some producers will be pleased with what comes off the field, while others will be dealing with the consequences of difficult weather and conditions beyond their control.

Agricultural Societies understand this reality particularly well because agriculture is not simply something we promote—it is part of who we are.

This is a time to check in on our neighbours, support our agricultural community and remember that behind every crop, herd and farm business is a family making decisions in circumstances they cannot always control.

OPENING THE GATES TO ALBERTA

One of the highlights of our summer was another successful *Alberta Open Farm Days*.

Across Alberta, farms, ranches, producers and Agricultural Societies opened their gates and welcomed Albertans to experience agriculture firsthand. Open Farm Days continues to demonstrate something we have long believed: when people have an opportunity to meet the people who produce their food, walk onto a farm and ask questions, something important happens.

Agriculture becomes personal.

Open Farm Days is much more than a weekend event. It is agricultural education, rural tourism, local food, economic development and community connection all working together.

Its success is the result of an incredible collaborative effort. Our host farms and ranches, Agricultural Societies, volunteers, culinary participants, sponsors, government and tourism partners, marketing support and the AAAS team all contribute to making the weekend possible.

Most importantly, thank you to the producers who opened their gates. Sharing your farm, your family and your story with thousands of people takes considerable effort, but those conversations are helping Albertans better understand modern agriculture and the people behind it.

STRONG COMMUNITIES START WITH STRONG PEOPLE

The challenges facing rural communities are not always visible. Agricultural Societies understand that community resilience is about more than buildings, events and programs. Ultimately, it is about *people*—their ability to support one another, respond to challenges and continue contributing to their families, organizations and communities.

That is why *Empowering Minds* is such an important part of the work AAAS is undertaking. Empowering Minds helps build capacity within communities by giving people practical knowledge, tools and confidence to recognize when someone may be struggling, start conversations and connect people with appropriate support.

This matters to Agricultural Societies.

Our organizations depend upon volunteers, board members, agricultural producers, community leaders and families who are often carrying significant responsibilities. When we strengthen the capacity of those people, we strengthen the organizations they serve. When those organizations are stronger, our communities become more resilient and vibrant.

That connection is fundamental to how AAAS sees community development: *Strong people build strong organizations. Strong organizations build strong communities.*

The opportunity to participate in Empowering Minds is currently open, and I encourage Agricultural Societies to consider how the program could benefit their organization and their broader community.

We have set an ambitious goal: *by the end of 2027, we intend to support 200 Alberta communities through Empowering Minds.* That is more than a program target. It represents hundreds—and ultimately thousands—of Albertans who will be better equipped to support the people around them.

Agricultural Societies have always built community capacity. Empowering Minds gives us another way to do it.

FALL MEETINGS — OUR OPPORTUNITY TO LISTEN

With the summer season behind us, our attention now turns to the *AAAS Fall Meetings*. I strongly encourage every Agricultural Society to participate.

These meetings are not simply opportunities for AAAS to provide updates. They are an important part of how our Association listens to its members. They give us an opportunity to hear what is working, what is changing and where societies are experiencing challenges.

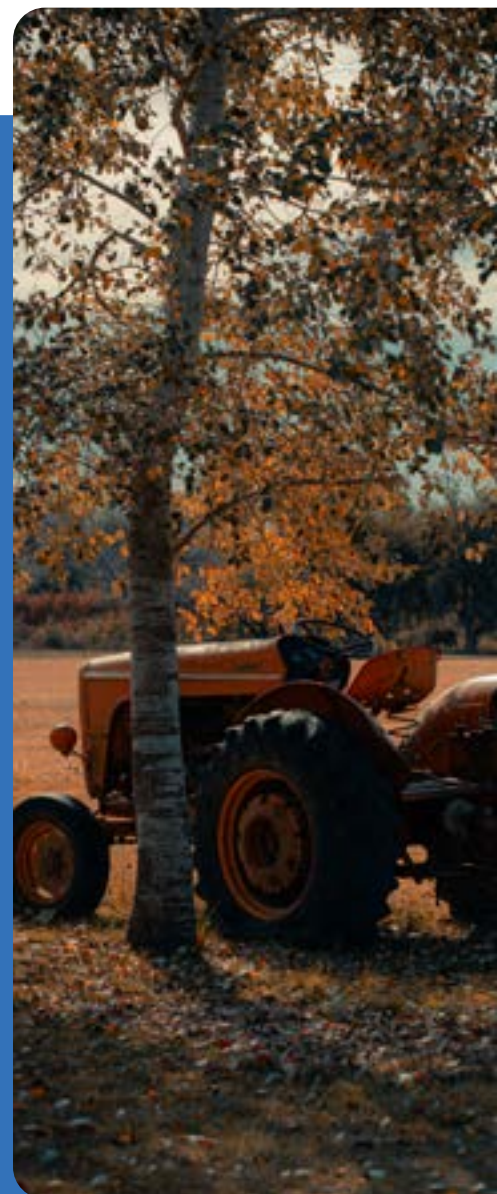
There is a great deal happening within AAAS and across our sector. Your participation helps ensure that the direction we take reflects the realities of Agricultural Societies throughout Alberta.

Fall is also *membership renewal season*. Membership in AAAS is about much more than paying an annual fee. It connects your society to a provincial network of organizations facing many of the same opportunities and challenges. It supports advocacy, education, governance resources, programs, communication and the collective voice of Alberta's Agricultural Societies.

Our strength as an Association ultimately comes from the strength and participation of our members.

FROM CONFERENCE TO SUMMIT

There is also something very special waiting for us this winter.



From February 5–7, 2027, we will gather for the first Agricultural Societies Summit, under the theme “Branching into Tomorrow.”

For many years, our annual conference has been an important place to learn,

reconnect and celebrate. Those things are not going away.

Agricultural Societies today are being asked to think about governance, infrastructure, volunteer capacity, succession, agriculture education, economic development, partnerships and

the changing needs of their communities. At the same time, the role of AAAS continues to expand as we advocate for the sector, develop programs and build new partnerships and opportunities.

The move from a conference to a Summit reflects that evolution.

A conference is somewhere we attend.

A Summit is somewhere we come together to consider where we are going.

The Agricultural Societies Summit will still include great speakers, education, networking and celebration, but our intention is for it to become something more: a place where the people who lead Agricultural Societies can exchange ideas, tackle common challenges and help shape the future of our movement.

The timing could not be more appropriate. In 2027, AAAS will celebrate its 80th anniversary.

For eight decades, generations of volunteers and community leaders have built this Association and the Agricultural Society network we have today. Our responsibility is not simply to celebrate what they built. It is to make sure it remains strong and relevant for the generations that follow us.

That is what “Branching into Tomorrow” means to me.

We are growing from strong roots.

SEE YOU THIS FALL

As harvest continues and another season of community events comes to an end, I hope everyone takes a moment to recognize what we have accomplished together.

Thank you to our Agricultural Society volunteers. Thank you to Alberta’s farmers and ranchers. Thank you to our partners and supporters. And thank you to the AAAS team who continue to take on new opportunities while supporting our members across this province.

I look forward to seeing many of you at our fall meetings and then welcoming you in February as we begin a new chapter together at the Agricultural Societies Summit.

There is much to be proud of—and even more ahead of us.

*Ordinary people change the world.
Agricultural Societies give
ordinary people the
opportunity to do
extraordinary things.*



**CEO
MESSAGE**
TIM CARSON

**BUT AAAS—
AND THE
ENVIRONMENT
IN WHICH
AGRICULTURAL
SOCIETIES
OPERATE—HAS
EVOLVED.**

AAAS AGRICULTURAL SOCIETIES SUMMIT



JOIN US FEBRUARY
5-7 FOR THE
AGRICULTURAL
SOCIETIES SUMMIT
AS WE BRANCH
INTO TOMORROW!

**CONNECT, LEARN
AND CELEBRATE
ALBERTA'S
AGRICULTURAL
SOCIETIES
AT THE 2027
AGRICULTURAL
SOCIETIES SUMMIT!**

The Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies is excited to welcome agricultural society members, volunteers, community leaders, industry partners and supporters to the 2027 Agricultural Societies Summit, taking place February 5-7 at the River Cree Resort & Hotel.

This year marks an exciting evolution for AAAS as we look beyond the traditional conference format and come together for a Summit focused on collaboration, connection and the future of agricultural societies. Under the theme "Branch-



**LEARN MORE
ABOUT THE
REGISTRATION,
SPEAKERS,
EXHIBITORS,
ACCOMMODA-
TIONS AND THE
FULL PROGRAM
ON THE AAAS
WEBSITE.**



ing into Tomorrow,” we’ll celebrate the strong roots of Alberta’s agricultural societies while exploring new ideas, opportunities and innovative ways to continue growing our communities.

With more than 500 people from across Alberta expected to attend, the Summit is an opportunity to learn from industry experts, connect with fellow volunteers and leaders, share ideas and bring new inspiration home to your agricultural society. From workshops and seminars to networking, the trade-show, awards and special events, there will be plenty of opportunities to get involved and make meaningful connections.

Whether you’re a long-time volunteer, a board member, a manager or new to the agricultural society community, there’s a place for you at the Summit. Come be part of the conversation and help shape what’s next for Alberta’s agricultural societies.



DELEGATE REGISTRATION OPENS OCTOBER 1st, 2026!

WONDERING ABOUT THE

price?



AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY MEMBER INDUSTRY PARTNER RATES

**Your Ag Society must be a member in good standing to get the Member Rate Full Convention*

Early Bird Rate \$630 (includes tax) – October 1st – December 15th, 2026

Full Convention Rate \$700 (includes tax) – December 16th 2026 to January 22nd, 2027

Daily Rate – \$425 (includes tax) –Registration closes January 22nd, 2027



EXCLUSIVE OFFER FOR SERVUS CREDIT UNION MEMBERS! DON'T MISS OUT ON THE SAVINGS!

Ag Societies that are Servus Members can enjoy \$50 off each delegate registration if you register between October 1 to December 15th, 2026. This offer can be combined with the early bird registration for additional delegate registration savings! (*Maximum is 100 delegate registrations*).

Contact your local Servus agricultural rep to receive the code.



AFSC NEXT GENERATION UNDER 40 DELEGATE SAVES \$100

AFSC is pleased to offer a special discount for AAAS Ag Society delegates who are under 40, a reduced rate of \$100 per registration. Maximum 2 delegates per Agricultural Society.

This is on a first come, first served basis. The \$100 refund will be sent to your Agricultural Society after the Summit.

***Important: When you register please specifically select the age range box for your 2 delegates. Maximum of 60 under 40 delegate rebates are available.**

POTENTIAL DELEGATE SAVINGS

- Early Bird registration Save \$70
- Servus Credit Union Save \$50 (If you qualify)
- AFSC Next Gen Under 40 Save \$100 (If you qualify)
- **SAVE UP TO \$220 PER DELEGATE REGISTRATION**

NEXT GENERATION UNDER 40 DELEGATES WILL BE INVITED TO AN AFSC RECEPTION ON THURSDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 4TH 7:30 TO 8:30 PM AT THE RIVER CREE RESORT.

TRADE SHOW

February 5th, 2027

APPLICATIONS OPEN OCTOBER 1ST, 2026

EVENT SCHEDULE



PRESENTED BY:

Thursday February 4th
Setup: 12:00pm-5pm

Friday February 5th
Setup: 7:00am-8:00am

AAAS Industry Partners Meeting
& Coffee Talk
8:00am-8:30am

**Presented by North American Midway & Entertainment*

Trade Show Opens
8:30am-3:00pm

Take Down (time sensitive)
3:00pm-4:00pm

TRADE SHOW EXHIBITOR PACKAGE

Includes:

- 2027 AAAS Industry Partner Membership
- One 10'x10' Booth
- One skirted table and two chairs
- 110V electrical outlet
- Two lunch tickets/boxes
- Booth draping in black (carpet not included)

PAYMENT

Full payment required by **November 15th**

SHOWCASE

February 5-6, 2027

APPLICATIONS OPEN OCTOBER 1ST, 2026

Showcase your talent in front of hundreds of Agricultural Society leaders and event organizers at the AAAS Summit! Performances will take place throughout the Summit, giving you the opportunity to share your music, entertainment, or unique talent with a community that is always looking for great performers for future events. It's your chance to gain exposure, build valuable connections, and get your name in front of organizations looking to book talent for their upcoming events and activities.

SHOWCASE PRICING

Acoustic/ Roving Performance (*member*)
\$100

Acoustic/ Roving Performance (*non-member*)
\$400

Mainstage (*member*)
\$100

Mainstage (*non-member*)
\$400

Video Showcase
\$75



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Doug Kryzanowski
Partnerships &
Member Services



p. 403.894.0525
e. doug@albertaagaocieties.ca
w. albertaagaocieties.ca

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Kryssie Thomson
Showcase
Coordinator



p. 250.730.2416
e. showcase@albertaagaocieties.ca
w. albertaagaocieties.ca

AWARDS & SCHOLARSHIPS



HONOUR ROLL NOMINATIONS

The Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies invites agricultural societies to nominate a member of their association for their outstanding contribution to the development and advancement of agricultural societies in Alberta.

Application Deadline October 30th, 2026 @ 4:00pm

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

The Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies have 7 Scholarship awards that will be given to outstanding post-secondary students continuing their education, who have volunteered their time and energy to their communities and agricultural societies.

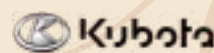
Application Deadline October 30th, 2026 @ 4:00pm



MARKETING AWARDS

The Marketing Awards Contest has six categories. It is held annually during the AAAS Convention. Winners will be presented with their awards during the Saturday Night-themed gala at the Convention.

Application Deadline October 30th, 2026 @ 4:00pm

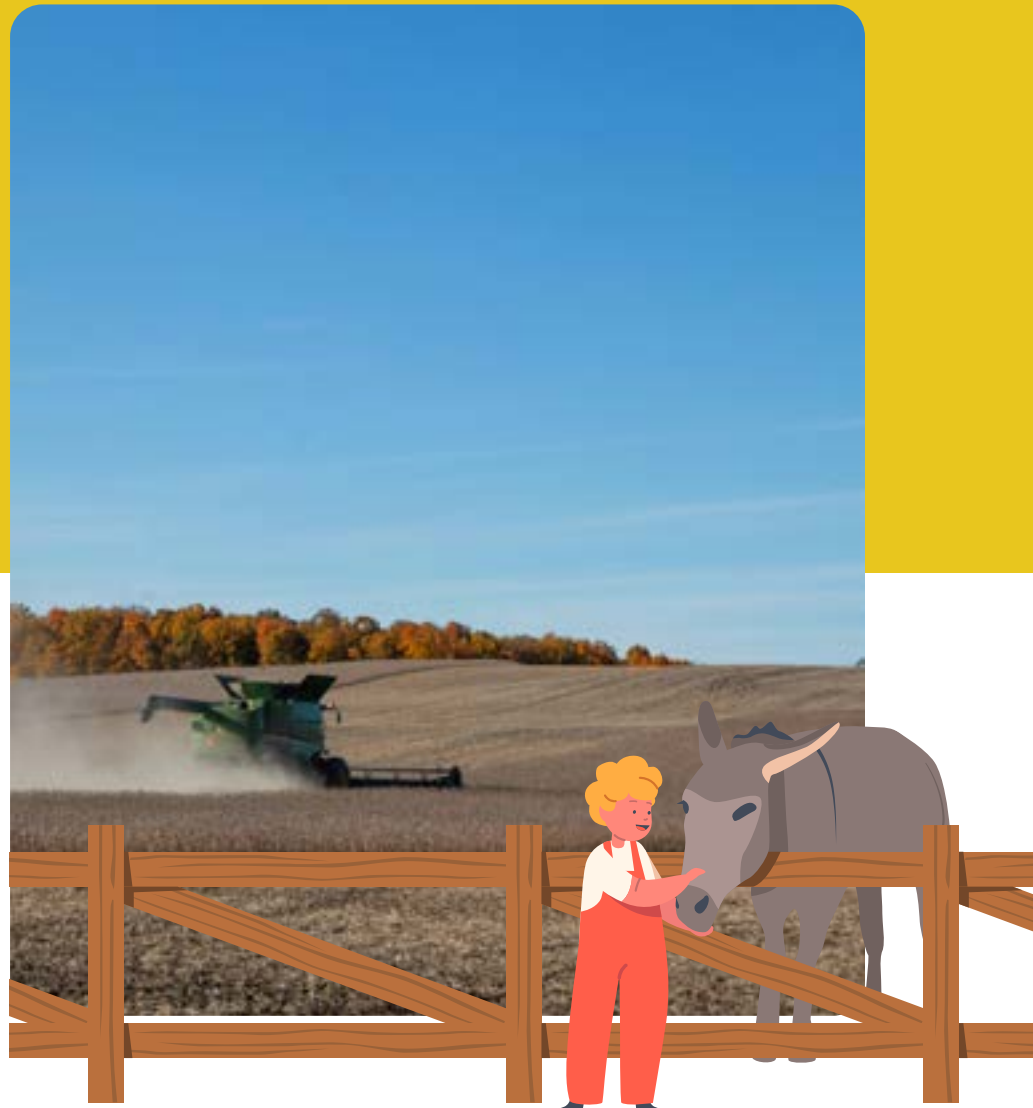




AGRICULTURAL NEWS

CATCH UP ON
ALL THINGS
AGRICULTURE
SINCE OUR LAST
NEWSLETTER IN
APRIL!

***FIND NEWS ON
LIVESTOCK, CROPS
AND MARKETS,
RESEARCH, FOOD
AND BEVERAGE
PRODUCTION, AND
PROGRAMS AND
EVENTS.***



SCOUT FOR BERTHA ARMYWORM

Fields in parts of southern and east-central Alberta are experiencing high bertha armyworm densities and localized outbreaks. Some of these fields are in areas where pheromone trap capture indicated low risk.

AGRICULTURAL MOISTURE SITUATION UPDATE

The Agricultural Moisture Situation Update is developed by the drought modelling team and published frequently as appropriate during the growing season and less frequently during winter months.

ALBERTA LEADS THE WAY IN POTATO ACREAGE

Statistics Canada reports potato farmers planted 395,176 acres of potatoes in 2026, down 0.5 per cent compared with 2025. In 2026, Alberta reported the largest seeded area at 86,000 acres, followed closely by Prince Edward Island and Manitoba.



MANAGING RESISTANT WEEDS

Herbicide resistance is a growing problem for grain farmers in north-central Alberta. Join Strathcona County and the Agricultural Service Board to learn practical, effective strategies for controlling difficult weeds and managing herbicide resistance on your farm.



ATTRACTING AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

The Government of Alberta invested \$2.5 million in Ag for Life's Agriculture Labour Task Force Grant Program to help producers and processors attract, hire and retain employees amid labour shortages and an aging workforce.







UPCOMING EVENTS

***CHECK OUT ALL OUR UPCOMING EVENTS
FOR THIS YEAR!***

AG SOCIETY DAYS

Ag Society Days is coming up on **September 21st** — a special day to celebrate the agricultural societies, volunteers, and communities that help bring people together across Alberta. From fairs and rodeos to local events and community traditions, ag societies play an important role in keeping rural communities strong. If your ag society is planning an event or celebration, let us know — we'd love to help share it!



FALL MEETINGS

Fall meeting season is just around the corner! Join AAAS CEO Tim at the upcoming fall meetings for a chance to connect with fellow Ag Society volunteers, share ideas, ask questions, and hear important updates from across the province. These meetings are a great opportunity to learn from one another and strengthen the work Ag Societies are doing in their communities.

Be sure to check our website for the upcoming fall meeting dates, locations, and details, and mark your calendar! We encourage all Ag Society members to take advantage of these opportunities to connect, ask questions, and help shape the future of agricultural societies across Alberta.



LOTS OF EXCITING AGRICULTURE EVENTS ARE COMING UP ACROSS ALBERTA

EMPOWERING MINDS

Empowering Minds is a rural mental health initiative supporting Alberta communities through connection, education, and early intervention. The program helps train local leaders to recognize when someone may be struggling and guide them toward support.

Read more on page 22!



AGRICULTURAL SOCIETIES SUMMIT

The 2027 Agricultural Societies Summit is a great opportunity to connect with Ag Society members from across Alberta, share ideas, learn from industry leaders, and celebrate the important work happening in our communities. Join us for a weekend focused on learning, connection, collaboration, and looking toward the future of Alberta's Agricultural Societies.

Find out more about the Summit, including registration and event details, on page 16!.



WHEN WE COME TOGETHER

IN RURAL COMMUNITIES, WE SHOW UP FOR ONE ANOTHER. AND WHEN ONE OF OUR OWN IS HURTING, WE COME TOGETHER TO HELP.

AN ARTICLE BY SARAH WEISS



What they don't tell you when you move to a rural community is just how much the people become your family. It's one of the most powerful, incredible things about rural living. We show up for each other. We know each other's kids, lend a hand when it's needed, and rally around our neighbours without thinking twice.

And when we lose a member of that family, it shakes us to our core. It isn't just one family or one circle of friends who feels it. In a community this small, we all do.

In early April 2026, our small community of Savanna in rural northern Alberta tragically lost a bright and wonderful young man — one of our own — to suicide.

The loss hit hard. Many of us were left trying to grapple with the immense sadness, questions and even guilt of the entire situation. But out of that grief came a feeling that something had to be done.

The mental health crisis in agriculture and rural communities is very real. The problem? We still don't discuss it enough. We're all too busy being busy. Being tough. Being strong. Getting the work done.

Sometimes "How are you?" gets asked without ever really asking, Are you okay?

In the days that followed, the Savanna Agricultural Society reached out to the

Empowering Minds initiative for support. The team immediately knew we needed to make this happen, and fast. The timing felt important. Ian Hill and members of the Savanna Agricultural Society came together and somehow pulled off an Empowering Minds event in just two months.

SOMETIMES "HOW ARE YOU?" GETS ASKED WITHOUT EVER REALLY ASKING, "ARE YOU OKAY?"

On June 18, 2026, in our little map-dot community, 75 people gathered for Empowering Minds. We learned how to better recognize when someone might be struggling, how to start some of

those hard conversations, and what to do next.

Because in a rural community, the first person someone turns to often isn't a mental-health professional. It might be a neighbour, a friend, a coach, a coworker or the person sitting beside them at the coffee shop. We need everyday people to know what to look for and feel comfortable enough to start that conversation.

When Ian asked if there was another demographic we felt he should present to, our answer was pretty immediate: the men.

The following morning, around 20 men gathered for the first-ever Empowering Minds men's breakfast held outside of a workplace setting. They weren't sent there by an employer. They were free and welcome to come on their own, have breakfast, talk and just be in a different, open space.

It also showed us that mental-health support doesn't always have to look like "mental-health programming." Sometimes it looks like breakfast, familiar faces, a cup of coffee and a room where it's okay to talk.

This isn't the end of Savanna's mental-health journey. If anything, it was the beginning. We have since started building a larger rural mental-health initiative and are continuing to look for ways to bring education, resources and support into our community.

We can't fix everything. But we can get better at recognizing when someone isn't okay, asking the question, and knowing what to do when they answer honestly.



EMPOWERING MINDS

IS TURNING AWARENESS INTO ACTION ACROSS RURAL ALBERTA

Something important is happening in rural Alberta.

Through the partnership between the Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies and Empowering Minds, communities are moving beyond talking about mental health and beginning to build the local capacity to care for one another in practical, lasting ways.

To date, 1,880 Albertans have been directly trained across nine communities, with thou-

sands more exposed to mental health, self-care, connection and suicide-prevention messaging through community-wide awareness campaigns.

What makes Empowering Minds different is that it is not a one-day event. Each participating community takes part in a 10-week activation process. It begins with six weeks of community awareness and engagement through social media, email, newsletters, newspaper articles, radio messaging, and grass-roots outreach. Local committees representing multiple community organizations are formed and

coached, and the 100 Cups of Coffee strategy helps connect the initiative with trusted local leaders and people of influence.

That work leads into an on-the-ground Empowering Minds Day, which can include between two and five events designed for different parts of the community, including youth, schools, first responders, businesses, agricultural producers,





13 COMMUNITY AWARDS STILL AVAILABLE

Thirteen communities. Thirteen opportunities to build stronger, more connected rural Alberta communities.

community leaders, and the general public.

Participants learn two essential things: how to better care for themselves and how to become a First Identifier. Someone who can recognize when another person may be struggling, know what to look and listen for, start a supportive conversation, and help connect that person to appropriate support.

The work does not end when the event is over. Participants receive four weeks of structured follow-up, while local committees continue to access tools and support designed to sustain the work.

And communities are already taking it further.

In Flagstaff County, a Community Connect initiative has emerged. In Edgerton, residents created a community game night to strengthen connection. In Savanna and Rycroft, men's groups and youth groups have begun in response to needs identified locally.

The response from participants has been powerful.

One participant described the experience as "phenomenal and life changing." Another said the program gives people "something they can actually

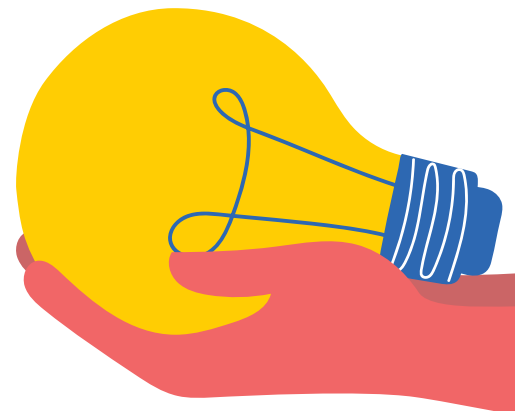
do." A parent simply said, "This is a night I will never forget."

These are signs that the model is working as intended: building communities where people are more likely to be known, needed, and connected.

And there is still room for more communities to be part of it.

AAAS currently has 13 Empowering Minds community awards still available for agricultural societies and rural communities across Alberta.

If your community is ready to strengthen mental health, build local leadership, reduce isolation and equip ordinary people to help before someone reaches a crisis, now is the time to apply. Please visit Empowering Minds for further program details and to complete the application.





BRING FARM SAFETY TO YOUR COMMUNITY



FARM SAFETY IS SOMETHING EVERY AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY CAN BENEFIT FROM—AND LEARNING ABOUT IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE BORING!

THE AAAS I'M OK SAFETY DAY BRINGS SAFETY EDUCATION TO LIFE THROUGH AN ENGAGING, INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCE!

Safety Day is a hands-on, community-based event that teaches children how to recognize hazards and avoid injury. The Safety Day format lets kids enjoy the atmosphere of a fun, child-focused event while learning real safety and health skills.

Combining the I'm Ok - Farm Safety Show and AAAS's library of interactive teaching displays allows each Safety Day to be tailored to the issues that matter most in your community. Every event is fully scalable — communities can offer as many stations as they have volunteers to staff. Utilizing our state of the art video wall we tie the day together, bringing the displays to life on the "big screen".



GOT ANY BIG **EVENTS** AROUND THE CORNER?

SHARE YOUR
UPCOMING AG
SOCIETY EVENTS
WITH US



AAAS-OAAS CONVENTION EXCHANGE PROGRAM



AAAS AND THE ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF AGRICULTURAL SOCIETIES (OAAS) HAVE PARTNERED TO OFFER A UNIQUE CONVENTION EXCHANGE PROGRAM FOR YOUNG PROFESSIONALS AGED 18–40.



WHAT IS THE EXCHANGE?

The Young Professionals Exchange Program offers up to ten (10) young professionals involved with agricultural societies in Alberta the opportunity to attend Ontario's annual agricultural convention. This initiative is designed to foster learning, share best practices, build networks, and strengthen collaboration between agricultural communities in Alberta and Ontario.

2026 OAAS CONVENTION DETAILS

When: February 18th–20th, 2027

Where: Sheraton Parkway Hotel, Toronto North, Ontario

What's Included:

- Registration to the OAAS convention
- Four nights' accommodation (shared with another delegate)
- All convention meals

Note: Transportation to the event and any meals outside the scheduled convention meals are not included. Selected participants are responsible for those costs. Alcohol not included. Transportation costs may be eligible under the leadership portion of the AAAS annual grant if covered by your home Ag Society.

BUILD YOUR LEADERSHIP SKILLS AT BCL

Alberta young professionals are invited to attend the Building Community Leaders (BCL) Workshop, taking place the Wednesday and Thursday before the convention.

BCL offers practical leadership and governance training designed for agricultural societies and rural organizations. Registration, accommodations, and select meals are covered through program funding, making this a great opportunity to grow your skills, connect with other leaders, and bring new ideas back to your Ag Society.

YOU MAKE *THE* DIFFERENCE



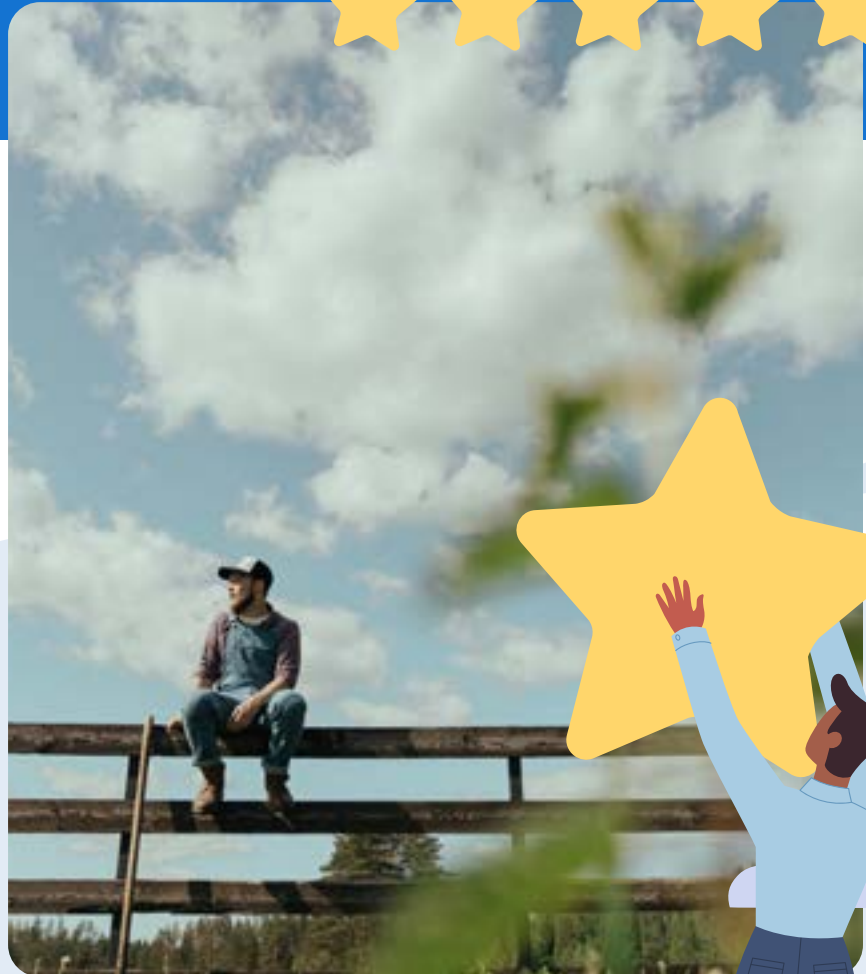
SPRING 2027 ALBERTA TOUR.

12 host spots available
at no cost to
participants

The You Make THE Difference National Initiative is returning to Alberta in spring 2027, with 12 host-community spots available. Agricultural societies and other volunteer-led organizations are invited to bring this practical leadership and community-building program to the people who keep their communities moving forward.

Sponsored by Front Door+ and delivered in Alberta through the Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies (AAAS), the program is available at no cost to participants. It welcomes agricultural society board members, fair organizers, volunteers, and leaders from local volunteer organizations.

Behind every fair, exhibition, and community gathering are people who give their time, energy, and determination. Many face the same pressures: recruiting volunteers, raising revenue, preparing the next generation of leaders, and keeping committed people from burning out. You Make THE Difference helps them address those challenges while recognizing the essential role they play in community life.



With a reach extending to 753 agricultural societies across Canada, the initiative brings people together around a shared belief: the people closest to the problem are best suited to solve it. Its purpose is to equip those people with the knowledge, tools, and relationships to turn local commitment into lasting community impact.

Participant feedback speaks to the value of that approach. Following an Ontario session, one attendee wrote:



"Great opportunity to see fair friends and learn more about how we are part of the civic infrastructure and how we can build on our traditions and still be here for the next generation!"

Others highlighted renewed clarity, ideas for engaging volunteers and supporters, and a better understanding of how to recognize and address burnout. One participant's recommendation was direct:

"What a great evening. If you get the chance to participate in a session, be sure to attend! You won't be disappointed!"

The Alberta tour will bring that same focus to local communities. Led by Ian Hill, founder of You Make THE

Difference, each stop features an interactive, approximately 3.5-hour workshop addressing the everyday realities of volunteer leadership. Participants can

expect practical strategies to:

- Recruit and retain volunteers by creating meaningful opportunities for people to contribute.
- Strengthen fundraising and revenue development to support their organization's future.
- Improve board alignment through clearer priorities and shared direction.
- Prepare for the generational hand-off by engaging and developing emerging leaders.
- Address burnout and help sustain the people carrying the workload.

The learning continues through 30 days of online follow-up support, with guides, templates, and resources

to help participants apply what they learn. Access to the You Make THE Difference mobile app also connects participating leaders with training and peers across Canada, creating opportunities to exchange ideas and learn from one another.

For host communities, the tour offers an opportunity to bring neighboring agricultural societies and volunteer organizations together around common challenges and shared possibilities.

With 12 host spots available for Alberta's spring 2027 tour, interested agricultural societies are encouraged to contact AAAS to discuss hosting and next steps. Participation is free, thanks to FrontDoor+.

The future of rural communities depends on the people willing to lead. You Make THE Difference exists to equip, support, and celebrate them.

YMTD IS COMING TO LLOYD



Lloydminster, Saskatchewan, has been selected as a stop on the You Make THE Difference Tour, a national initiative dedicated to empowering communities and strengthening fairs, exhibitions, and rural organizations across North America. This exciting opportunity comes through a grant awarded by the Saskatchewan Association of Agricultural Societies and Exhibitions (SAASE), recognizing the important role Lloydminster and

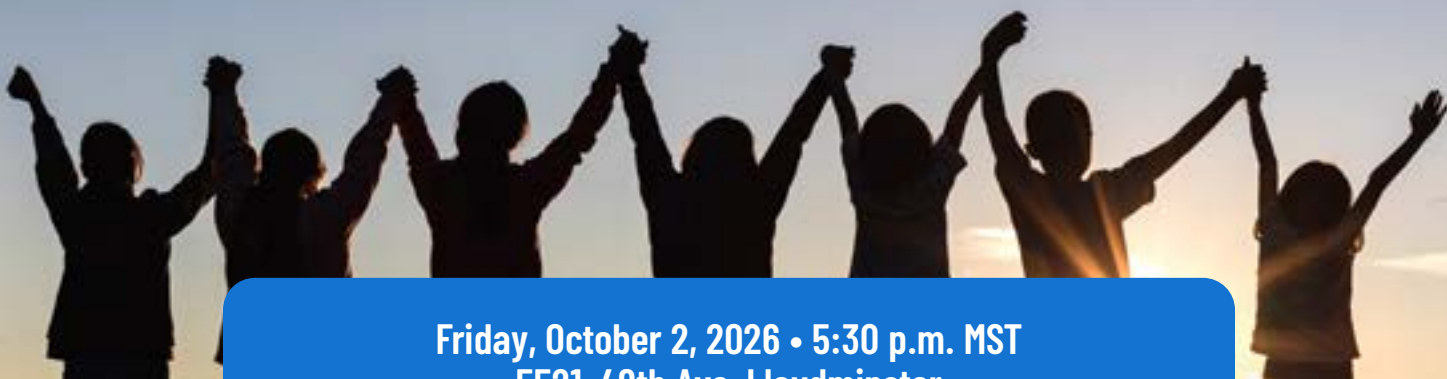


its community organizations play in keeping rural Canada strong and connected.

The event will be led by Ian Hill, founder of You Make THE Difference, a leading rural advocate and award-winning social innovator. Ian has worked with more than 1,700 municipalities and hundreds of communities across North America, sharing practical strategies to help rural communities build stronger futures.

The You Make THE Difference session is designed for fair boards, agricultural society members, vol-

unteers, community leaders, and anyone who wants to see their community thrive. Attendees will explore practical tools and ideas around volunteer recruitment, sponsorship, governance, leadership, and long-term community building—with strategies that can be put into action right away.



Friday, October 2, 2026 • 5:30 p.m. MST
5521-49th Ave, Lloydminster

This is more than just a workshop; it is an opportunity to connect with others who are passionate about their communities, learn from a national rural leader, and discover new ways to build a stronger and more engaged community for the future.

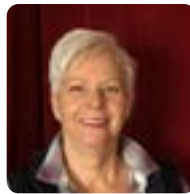
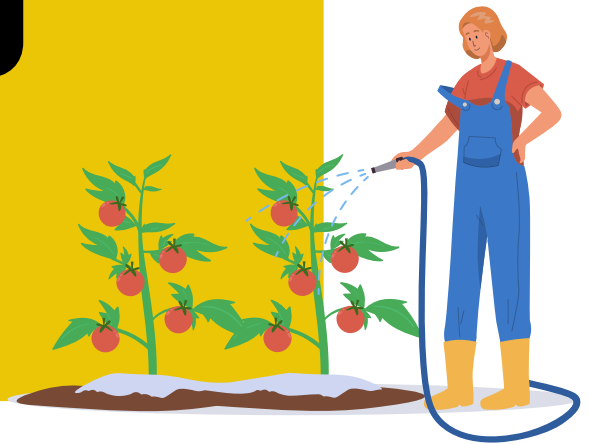
The free event will take place on Friday, October 2, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. MST, at 5521-49th Ave in Lloydminster. Admission is free, and everyone is welcome to attend.

For more information, visit saase.ca and learn more about this exciting opportunity to be part of a national movement supporting rural communities.

Because here in Lloydminster, you make THE difference!



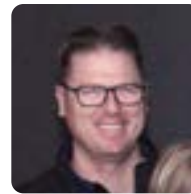
2026 BOARD MEMBERS



PETRA
PRESIDENT



FRED
*1st VICE
PRESIDENT*



RICK
*2nd VICE
PRESIDENT*



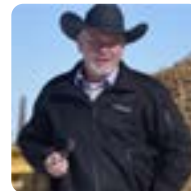
NATAHSA
TREASURER



SHAN
REGION 2



LINDA
REGION 3



SEBASTIEN
REGION 4



AUDREY
REGION 6

WANT TO BE A PART OF THE BOARD?

Want to be a part of our board? As per the bylaws, a Board of Directors, consisting of nine persons elected by regional members, and one person by Industry Partners, shall administer the affairs of the Association.

The Board of Directors is the legal authority for the Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies. As a member of the Board, a Director acts in a position of trust for the membership and is responsible for the effective governance of the society. *Contact our office for more information on how to become apart of our team.*

AUTUMN 2026

newsletter

albertaagsocieties.ca



CONTACT

Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies
J.G. O'Donoghue Bldg.,
7000-113 Street,
Edmonton, AB
T6H5T6

780.427.2174
info@albertaagsocieties.ca