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Development of the AFSE Sustainability Self-Assessment and Action Plan Online Tool

**ALBERTA FARM SUSTAINABILITY EXTENSION
WORKING GROUP**

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G R O U P E
AGĒCO

About AFSE

- ▶ Collaborative approach to sustainability by Alberta Barley, Alberta Canola, Alberta Pulse Growers and Alberta Wheat
- ▶ Working on behalf of our producer membership, we are committed to assessing and meeting areas of need for on-farm sustainability extension and education



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**ALBERTA PULSE
GROWERS**



Background

► What's happening

- AFSE is launching a new initiative to increase growers' readiness and familiarity with on-farm sustainable production practices and sustainable sourcing standards
- The project will provide a “one-stop-shop” for growers where they can learn about sustainability in the crops sector and assess their farm against internationally recognized certification programs
- Timeframe: May 2017-March 2018



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Background

- ▶ Why is this project being done?
 - Previous AFSE survey showed a lack of knowledge and familiarity with sustainability and sustainable sourcing among growers
 - There is a need to prepare crop growers to meet these new requirements and to provide them with tools and resources
 - There is also an opportunity for AFSE and partners to consolidate data at the provincial level about the level of readiness and the overall performance of the sector



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Background

- ▶ The tool will cover 3 sustainability programs:
 - ▶ International Sustainability and Carbon Certification PLUS (ISCC PLUS)
 - ▶ Sustainable Agriculture Initiative (SAI) Farmer Self-Assessment (FSA) 2.0
 - ▶ Unilever's Sustainable Agriculture Code (ULSAC)

- ✓ Internationally recognized
- ✓ Robust
- ✓ Compatible



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Background

- ▶ What will the benefits be:
 - Will help the entire industry assess their position toward the requirements of three internationally recognized sustainability programs
 - Will provide resources and an action plan to growers in order to address the gaps between program requirements and their current practices
 - Will streamline the self-assessment process and avoid duplication of effort
 - Will support the overall cropping sector's reporting effort
 - Will be useful to engage in discussion with stakeholders (who are thinking about including sustainability requirements in their sourcing process)



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About the online tool- Functionalities

Self-assessment questionnaire

Will enable individual growers to assess their farm against internationally recognized sustainability programs

Resource library and action planning module

Will support growers into bridging the potential gap between their current practices and the requirements of the sustainability programs

Data consolidation and analytics

To gather and generate valuable statistics for AFSE and its partners regarding on farm sustainable production practices and support program's management and reporting

Informational base on sustainability

To reinforce growers interests in and understanding of sustainable practices as well as the main drivers of sustainable sourcing

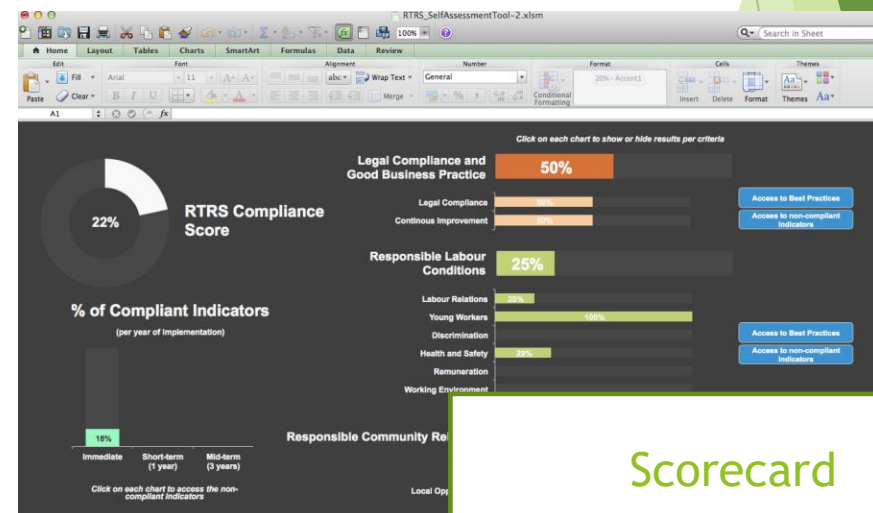
What will the end result look like?



Online platform

A screenshot of a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet titled 'RTRS_SelfAssessmentTool-2.xlsm'. The active sheet is 'Principle 1: Legal Compliance and Good Business Practices'. It contains a questionnaire with two questions. Question 1 asks about legal compliance services, with checkboxes for various options like 'Access to legal advisors' and 'Access to government resources'. Question 2 asks about record-keeping, with radio buttons for 'Yes', 'No', and 'NA'. Below the questions, there are text boxes for providing additional information.

Self assessment questionnaire



Scorecard

1

LEARN about best managements practices (BMPs) and **ASSESS** your performance

3

TAKE ACTION to improve your performance

LEARN & ASSESS

MEASURE & BENCHMARK

TAKE ACTION

2

MEASURE and BENCHMARK your environmental footprint

Dairy Farms +

BMPS LIBRARY

Hello Bruno!  FR

Self assessments



Learn & Assess

Measure & Benchmark

Take Action

WELCOME TO DAIRY FARMS +

The Canadian Dairy Production Sustainability Assessment Tool

Dairy Farms + is an innovative and interactive online tool developed to support Canadian dairy farmers in meeting their sustainability goals. Choose one of the following modules to get started!



Functions: overview

1

LEARN about best managements practices (BMPs) and **ASSESS** your performance

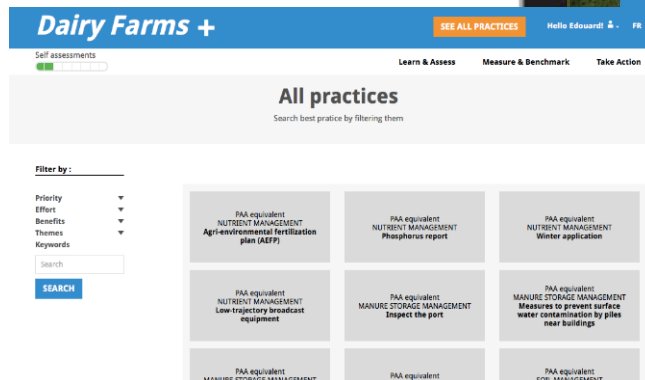


Use this section to learn about **best farm management practices (BMPs)** and their benefits with regards to these key sustainability topics:

- environmental stewardship (field operations and on-farm activities)
- farm management
- economic performance
- relations with local communities
- workers' well-being
- animal health and care
- PAA equivalent (QC)

Library of
110 BMPs

You can also use the **self-assessment questionnaire** to compare your performance to the sector's best practices and start developing **your own action plan**.



Functions: overview

Use this section to **customize your action plan** and **prioritize** your initiatives based on the tool's recommendations and your own preferences, goals and expected benefits.

3

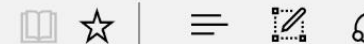
TAKE ACTION to improve your performance

Dairy Farms +				
Edouard Clement Ferme Demo EClement 2016				
Practices	Actions to undertake	Starting date	Expected completion date	Comments
Environmental stewardship : on-farm activities WASTE MANAGEMENT AND POLLUTION REDUCTION Storage of hazardous farm waste				
Environmental stewardship : on-farm activities WASTE MANAGEMENT AND POLLUTION REDUCTION Disposal of pesticide containers				
Environmental stewardship : on-farm activities WASTE MANAGEMENT AND POLLUTION REDUCTION Disposal of hazardous farm waste				
Environmental stewardship : on-farm activities WASTE MANAGEMENT AND POLLUTION REDUCTION Emergency plan and clean-up equipment				
Environmental stewardship : on-farm activities WASTE MANAGEMENT AND POLLUTION REDUCTION Dead animal disposal				
Environmental stewardship : on-farm activities WATER MANAGEMENT Wells and groundwater protection				
Environmental stewardship : on-farm activities WATER MANAGEMENT Sludge storage				



Example BMP

dairyfarmsplus.ca/learn-assess/8



SOIL MANAGEMENT



Soil is the basis of farming. It delivers water and nutrients to crops, physically supports plants, helps control pests, determines where rainfall goes after it hits the earth and protects the quality of drinking water, air and wildlife habitats. The goal of soil management is to protect the soil and enhance its performance so you can farm profitably and preserve the quality of the environment for decades to come.

Crop rotation

Soil compaction

Soil erosion

Organic matter

Tillage method

The greatest benefit to a good crop rotation is increased yields. A well-planned crop rotation will help with insect and disease control and aid in maintaining and improving soil structure and organic matter levels. Using a variety of crops can reduce weed pressures, spread the workload and protect against soil erosion.

The optimal rotation depends on factors including available moisture and nutrients, disease and weed levels, herbicide use records, equipment availability, commodity prices and ability and desire to accept risk. The *optimal* rotation can vary from field to field for the same farm and from year to year for the same field.

Potential benefits:

- Profitability
- Biodiversity
- Climate change
- Soil health
- Water quality

REFERENCES +

Implementing this practice could help reduce the risk of surface, ground and drinking water (from wells) contamination and ensure water quality.



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