



Lesser Slave River

MD Garners Federal and Provincial Support Following Agricultural Disaster Declaration

Correspondence from Ag Minister outlines present and emerging supports for affected producers.

MD of Lesser Slave River No.124, Alberta, Wednesday, September 24, 2025 – MD Council has gained traction in its lobbying efforts with the provincial and federal governments following the MD's declaration of a Local State of Agricultural Disaster on September 2, 2025.

Since early September, Council has been in communication with provincial and federal decision-makers, detailing the severe conditions affecting fields, pastures, and livestock feed. Throughout these efforts, Council has pushed for key supports, including tax incentives and payment deferrals.

In a recent letter to MD Reeve Murray Kerik, Alberta Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation RJ Sigurdson outlined the proactive steps his ministry has taken to support area producers and alleviate financial pressures.

“We continue to monitor moisture and crop conditions for the 2025 growing season,” Minister Sigurdson shared. “We are maintaining regular communication with producers, agricultural organizations, and commodity groups to stay informed of the latest concerns.”

Key Supports for Producers

Livestock Tax Deferral Program: Minister Sigurdson successfully advocated for the expedited release of the federal government's preliminary list of prescribed regions for the 2025 [Livestock Tax Deferral provision](#). Released August 18, 2025, this list designates a number of Alberta localities as prescribed regions, which in turn helps producers reduce their tax obligations.

The MD is not included on the [preliminary list](#) of prescribed regions; however the final list is anticipated for release this December. Council is working to ensure all relevant agencies and ministries are aware of the critical state of agricultural conditions in the Lesser Slave River region.

Low Yield Allowance Adjustment: In a collaborative effort with the federal government and Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC), the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation has adjusted the low yield allowance for the 2025 program year. This change enables farmers to salvage crops for livestock feed, which helps reduce feed-related costs. Producers can find detailed information at [afsc.ca](#).

“I commend Minister Sigurdson for giving this critical matter the attention it deserves,” stated Reeve Murray Kerik. “We are encouraged by the early, substantive results his ministry has garnered from the federal government and regional agricultural organizations.”

Enhanced AgriStability Compensation: To further assist producers, federal, provincial, and territorial (FPT) Ministers of Agriculture approved temporary enhancements to the [AgriStability program](#) for the 2025 program year. These enhancements, in response to trade uncertainty and production losses, include an increase in the compensation rate from 80 to 90 per cent and an increase in the maximum payment limit from \$3 million to \$6 million.

Key Supports for Producers (cont.)

Advance Payments Program (APP): As a result of Minister Sigurdson’s advocacy, the federal government has kept the interest-free limit at \$250,000 under the APP for the 2025 program year. Furthermore, on September 5, 2025, the federal government temporarily doubled the interest-free portion for canola advances, raising the limit to \$500,000 for the remainder of the 2025 and 2026 program years. These changes are in response to ongoing trade uncertainty affecting canola producers, who represent 41 per cent of APP users.

“I know this season may bring significant challenges,” added Minister Sigurdson. “My team continues to monitor the situation, with the focus on supporting producers as needed.”

About the Local State of Agricultural Disaster

On September 2, 2025, MD Council declared a Local State of Agricultural Disaster due to prolonged drought conditions that resulted in significant reductions to crop yields and quality, as well as scarce sources of livestock feed.

The 2025 growing season was severely impacted by a lack of precipitation throughout the spring and summer. This has led to widespread grasshopper infestations and a lack of moisture during critical growth stages for crops. The southern portion of the municipality, where most area producers operate, has been particularly affected.

Due to these conditions, there is little to no hay, silage, green feed, or pasture available for the cow/calf sector. As remaining feed supplies become increasingly scarce and costly, many producers are considering herd dispersals, which is a difficult decision, especially for smaller farms with limited herd numbers.

Further updates on this evolving matter, including information and resources for managing farming operations during the Local State of Agricultural Disaster, will be shared via the [MD website](#) and [social media](#) channels.

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