



RURAL ROOTS

WELCOME TO THE 2025 WINTER EDITION OF RURAL ROOTS

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»»» Upcoming Extension Events in your Community

- Virtual Working Well Workshop: Sampling, testing and treating water from your well, November 5th, 2025, online from 6:30pm until 8pm. [Register for Workshop 3: Sampling, testing and treating water from your well](#)
- Lunch & Learn: Funding Opportunities for Farmers, November 19th, 2025 at the Flatbush Community Complex from 11am until 1pm. Register by calling the Flatbush office at 780.681.3929

»»» ASB MEMBERS

Division 1 Councilor, Sandra Melzer
Division 2 Councilor, Thomas Snowden
Member-at-Large, Damond Stadnyk
Member-at-Large, Cache Schiller
Member-at-Large, Jessica Mittelstadt

Visit our webpage



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ASB SEASONAL SUMMARY

➤➤➤ 2025 Municipal Weed Inspection Program

Looking back on the 2025 season, two seasonal weed inspectors were hired to conduct weed and pest inspections throughout the municipality. These inspectors conducted 546 inspections within the MD, which is 9,003 acres inspected during the 2025 season. Roughly there was ~80% rate of controlling/destroying regulated weeds in the MD. These inspectors would focus on identifying invasive species and ensuring compliance with the Alberta Weed Control Act and Agricultural Pests Act. Once the inspections were completed, the landowners were contacted, which allowed inspectors to work collaboratively with them to develop a tailored weed or pest management plan.

The management plan may have included recommendations for mechanical, biological, or chemical control methods, depending on the severity of the infestation and the species involved. Inspectors also provided guidance on integrated pest management strategies to minimize the long-term impact on the land while promoting environmental sustainability.

Landowners were encouraged to take proactive measures and seek support from the municipality and local agricultural organizations. Educational materials are available to assist landowners in understanding their responsibilities and the benefits of managing invasive species effectively. This initiative aims to protect both agricultural productivity and natural ecosystems throughout the municipality

➤➤➤ Weed of Concern from 2025

During the 2025 season there was an influx of Orange Hawkweed infestations in both private and municipal ditches. Staff worked diligently to stay on top mechanical methods including hand pulling and mowing the plants. Locations will be continuously monitored in the 2026 season to ensure that the invasive plant infestation does not return or spread.

Early detection is the best chance for successfully eradicating this invasive weed because if infestations are left untreated Orange Hawkweed can form thick dense mats of rosettes that outcompete native plants.

Identifying Characteristics: The flower head is composed of an orange-red ray flowers with notched square edged petals. Small bristly hairs grow on the stem of the plant. Leaves are mostly basal with bristly hair, as well. This plant is a perennial forb which reproduces by seed and stolons (strawberry like runners). For more information and images visit www.abinvasive.ca.

2025 AT A GLANCE

546 Weed Inspections Conducted

9,003 Acres Inspected

0 Weeds Notices Issued

53 Clubroot Surveys Conducted

900 Roadside Kilometers Mowed

1 Wild Boar Sighting



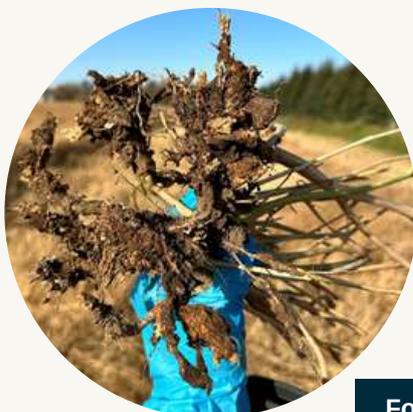


➤➤➤ Clubroot Inspections

Clubroot is a soil-borne disease caused by the pathogen *Plasmodiophora brassicae*. This can affect the roots of plants in the cabbage family which includes canola. When the clubroot pathogen infects host plants, the root tissue (galls) swells, decreasing the plant's capacity to absorb water and nutrients from the soil which leads to a reduction in crop yield. Yield loss is influenced by the amount of soil-borne pathogens, the resistance level of crop varieties, and prevailing environmental conditions.

In 2025, Agricultural Service staff inspected 53 canola fields for Clubroot. This systematic survey adheres to the guidelines in the Alberta *Agricultural Pest Act*, with the primary objective of identifying and addressing symptoms related to pests and crop diseases. The Municipal District of Lesser Slave River No.124 embraces the Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR) approach to pest management. This strategic approach emphasizes proactive scouting for potential pests and diseases, working collaboratively with affected landowners on control measures.

In the case of Clubroot in canola, effective control measures include optimizing crop rotations, minimizing soil movement, engaging in self-scouting practices, and diligently cleaning equipment to prevent the inadvertent transfer of soil between fields.



For more information or advice contact the Agricultural Fieldman

✉ Kierstin.Dubitz@mdlsr.ca

☎ 780-681-3929

➤➤➤ 2025 Bertha Armyworm Monitoring



In the Canadian Prairies, the Bertha Armyworm (*Mamestra configurata*), a noctuid moth native to North America, poses a serious threat to canola and other broad-leaved crops. Early summer is when adult moths emerge and lay their eggs. These develop into larvae that harm plants by feeding on leaves, stems, and pods which can cause significant yield loss for producers. Mature larvae are about 4 cm long, with a light brown head and a wide, yellowish-orange stripe on the sides. However, some can be velvety black with white lines on their back.

On behalf of the Provincial Government, the MDs Agricultural Services sets and monitors crop pest insect population within the MD. In 2025 the MD set traps at three locations for Bertha Armyworm Moths. These traps are typically up from mid-June until August each year. These traps assist in understanding insect populations and range of Bertha Armyworms in our area. The data is then used to create forecast maps and control recommendations to aid at risk areas.

From June 21st until August 2nd the number of moths recorded were extremely low in the MD. There was only a total of 52 moths collected in the MD. According to the risk level indicator for moth damage in crops, levels from 0-300 moths have a low risk level. Indicating infestations are unlikely to be widespread, however producers can still inspect their fields for insect damage.



Adult Bertha Armyworm moth: Photo credit: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

For more information or to see annual insect forecast maps visit the [Alberta Insect Pest Monitoring Network](#).





➤➤➤ Roadside Vegetation Management

The Roadside Vegetation Management Program employs an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach by combining chemical applications with mowing activities. The Municipal District's roadside spray program follows a three-year rotation, with everything north of the Athabasca River with the exception of the East Fawcett area. In 2026, chemical applications will focus on the Smith/Hondo & East Fawcett area.

In tandem, the roadside mowing program utilizes two large mowers positioned on the north and south sides of the municipality. Throughout the summer season, all accessible roads receive a full right-of-way mow. Each road is given an initial shoulder pass, followed by a secondary pass through the ditches—from the road's edge to the fence lines. In 2025, 900 kilometers of roadside ditches were cut.

Combining herbicide use with mowing is a highly effective strategy for controlling invasive and noxious weeds, helping to manage unwanted roadside vegetation while promoting environmental stewardship.

➤➤➤ Wild Boar (*Sus scrofa*)

Wild boar in Alberta are considered an invasive species. Under Alberta's *Agricultural Pests Act*, wild boar at-large are officially designated as an agricultural pest. This means that landowners are legally required to control or destroy wild boar and prevent them from becoming established on their land.

Hunting wild boar has proven ineffective and can actually make the problem worse. These animals are highly intelligent and adapt quickly to threats. When only a few members of a group (called a sounder) are hunted, the remaining boar learn to avoid hunters by changing their behavior—such as becoming more nocturnal, dispersing into smaller groups, and altering their movement patterns. These survival tactics are passed down to future generations, making them even more difficult to control. The only truly effective method of eliminating wild boar at-large is to remove the entire sounder at once. Wild boar at-large in Alberta pose a significant threat to the domestic hog and beef industries due to their ability to carry and transmit diseases. These animals are known to host up to 39 different pathogens, many of which can infect livestock, wildlife, and humans.

Signs of wild boar include; digging/rooting, wallowing sites, trampled crops, tracks, and hair.

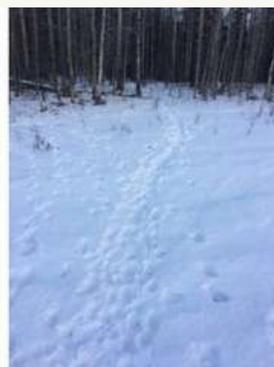
For more information on Wild Boar or to report a sighting call your Agricultural Fieldman at 780.805.6320 or visit squealonpigs.com.



Tracks large, rounder shape than deer, pronounced splayed dew claw from wild boar



Large sounder tracks west of capture site



Wild boar tracks



Rooting in a pasture

Photos from <https://abinvasives.ca/squeal-on-pigs/>



AG NEWS



>>> AgrilInvest 2025 Reminder

New requirements for specific farming businesses have been introduced by the most recent AgrilInvest program revisions. You must finish an appropriate agri-environmental risk assessment in order to continue taking part in the program if the average Allowable Net Sales (ANS) for your farm over the previous three years have been \$1 million or greater.

While this change may seem overwhelming, it's an opportunity to enhance your farm's efficiency, competitiveness, and sustainability.

AgrilInvest standards are not the only thing fulfilled by completing an Environmental Farm Plan through Alberta EFP. It's a chance to raise the long-term viability, effectiveness, and worth of your farm. You're taking proactive measures to safeguard your property, build your company, and support a sustainable agricultural future by taking part in the program.

Steps to Get Started:

1. Visit the Alberta EFP website to register your farm.
[EFP Program](#) | [Alberta Environmental Farm Plan](#)
2. Fill in basic information and you'll receive a confirmation email to activate your account.
3. Access your account to start your EFP WebBook.
4. Once you activate your account you will be assigned an EFP Technician in your area.
5. You can complete the EFP on your own or reach out with your technician if you have any questions or would like to sit down to have a one-on-one meeting to start.

Feel free to contact the MD of Lesser Slave River's Flatbush office for more information at 780.681.3929.

>>> 2025 Livestock Deferral Tax

The Municipal District of Lesser Slave River No. 124 is included in the list of prescribed regions for the 2025 Livestock Tax Deferral Program. Federal initiative designed to support Canadian livestock producers who are forced to sell part or all of their breeding herd due to adverse conditions like drought, flooding, or excess moisture. You can find more information about the 2025 Livestock Tax Deferral Program, on the official [Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada website](#) or by calling your local Agricultural Financial Services Corporation office.



AGRICULTURE RESOURCES

Keep up to date with the most recent information by checking out the below links!

Report

- [Alberta Crop Reports](#)
- [Alberta Moisture Situation Updates](#)

Resources

- [Alberta Beef Producers](#)
- [Alberta Cattlemen's Penning & Sorting Association](#)
- [Alberta Canola Producers Commission](#)
- [Alberta Chicken Producers](#)
- [Alberta Elk Commission](#)
- [Alberta Food Processor Association](#)
- [Alberta Lamb Producers](#)
- [Alberta Pork Producers](#)
- [Canada Water Portal](#)
- [Bison Producers of Alberta](#)
- [Canadian Cattlemen's Association](#)
- [Prairie Pest Monitoring Network](#)
- [Beef Cattle Research Council](#)

Markets

- [Weekly livestock market review](#)
- [Weekly crop market review](#)

>>> Wildlife Damage Compensation Program 2025

The Wildlife Damage Compensation Program (WDCP), administered by Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC), offers financial support to Alberta producers who experience crop damage caused by wildlife. This program is part of the Canada-Alberta Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership and is fully funded by federal and provincial governments.

What's Covered:

- **Eligible Damage:** Compensation is available for damage to unharvested crops, stacked hay and greenfeed, silage, and haylage stored in pits or tubes.
- **No Insurance Required:** Producers do not need to hold AFSC insurance to qualify, but must have an insurable interest in the affected crop. Note: cash rent landlords are not eligible.
- **Location Requirement:** Crops must be located in Alberta and have sustained damage within the province.

For more information check out [Wildlife Damage Compensation Program Information 2025 website](#) or call your local AFSC branch.



TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

IF YOU ARE
STRUGGLING, YOU
ARE NOT ALONE;
HELP IS AVAILABLE



Mental Health Help Line
1.877.303.2642

Crisis Services Help Line
1.883.303.2642

Family Violence Info Line
1.780.310.1818

Addiction Help Line
1.866.332.2322

Kids Help Phone
1.800.668.6868

Counselling Alberta
1.833.827.4230

Emergency
911

Alberta Health Link
811

Talk Suicide Canada
988

Supporting Farmer Mental Health: Spotlight on AgKnow

Farmers and ranchers across Alberta face unique mental health challenges, from financial pressures and isolation to the complexities of farm succession. [AgKnow](#) is stepping up to meet these needs with a province-wide initiative tailored specifically for agricultural communities.

Through [free counselling services](#), a [therapist referral network](#), and [anonymous self-check-in tools](#), AgKnow is helping producers access support that understands the realities of farm life. Their research shows elevated rates of stress, anxiety, and depression among Alberta farmers, and their focus is to reduce stigma, foster resilience, and make mental wellness a natural part of rural living. With strong partnerships and community outreach, AgKnow is building a healthier future for Alberta's agricultural sector—one conversation at a time.



Boxelder Bug (*Boisea trivittatus*): Seasonal Nuisance

Boxelder bug, also called maple bugs, are common in Alberta. They feed on seeds and leaves but don't harm trees, bite, or spread disease. When crushed, they release a strong odor.

Populations rise after hot, dry summers and warm springs. While harmless, they can be a nuisance when gathering around windows and doors. In fall, they seek warm spots indoors to overwinter. They don't hibernate but may reappear on sunny winter days. Their presence is temporary and best managed by sealing entry points.

Quick Control Tip: Mix 1–2 tablespoons of dish soap with 1 quart of water in a spray bottle. Spray bugs directly or drop them into a bucket of soapy water.

Adult boxelder bugs

- Measure about half an inch long
- Have dark bodies with reddish-orange markings
- Display three distinct stripes just behind the head
- Their wings rest flat and cross over each other, forming an X shape

Young boxelder bugs (nymphs)

- Hatch at just 1/16 of an inch long
- Are bright red when newly hatched
- Gradually develop black markings as they grow



Photo credit: Steven Katovich, Bugwood.org





➤➤➤ Continued Risk of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)

The Office of the Chief Provincial Veterinarian (OCPV) reported nine cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) which have been confirmed to date in 2025. One case was in a small flock in May, and eight new cases were recently confirmed between September 8th and October 16th. The first occurred in May in a small flock near Leduc. In September, two commercial flocks and three small flocks east and southeast of Edmonton, as well as south of Lethbridge, were affected. In October, two more cases emerged—one west of Edmonton and another near Lethbridge.

2025 Wild bird HPAI detections to date: two wild geese tested positive for HPAI in late July, followed by a wild duck in August, indicating that the virus continues to circulate and may be present anywhere that migratory waterfowl live/congregate.

Considering these recent detections, the possibility of a resurgence of domestic poultry cases in conjunction with fall migration is a concern. If you suspect your flock may have HPAI contact your flock veterinarian or the OCPV at 780.427.3448.

What to do as a small flock poultry keeper?

The best defense to HPAI (and all poultry diseases) is taking a proactive approach to protecting your flock. From small backyard poultry up to larger flock operations the best way to minimize disease infection to your birds is by increasing basic biosecurity.

This can include but not limited to:

- Being aware of your flock's environment and health is a critical part of protecting them from HPAI.
- Ensure feed and water sources for your flock are not accessible to wild birds/animals.
- Be mindful of letting visitors near your flock who also keep poultry near you or in areas where HPAI has been detected.
- Always clean your shoes and clothing if you have visited another poultry operation, even if it is a backyard set up.
- Try to have dedicated clothing and footwear to use when going into your coop.
- Try minimizing free ranging your flock in the fall, if possible, keep them inside during migration periods.
- Maintain effective biosecurity between your birds and other susceptible species such as swine, dairy cattle, and domestic cats with outdoor access.
- Updating and/or registering your land location in Alberta's Premises Identification (PID) Program.

Did you know?



The Avian Influenza virus viruses can survive in bird droppings for over 3 months and can be transmitted via contaminated clothing, footwear, equipment, not just direct contact with infected birds.

Useful Links:

[Status of ongoing influenza cases in Alberta](#)
[Avian influenza in Wild Birds](#)



➤➤➤ Premise Identification (PID) Program

According to Alberta's Premises Identification Regulation, if you own poultry or livestock that is kept at a premise (not a commingling site, i.e. stables), you need to have a PID number linked to the location. For a complete listing of the species that require a PID number please see Schedule A, Part 7 of the PID Application or the Alberta *Premises Identification Regulation*.

Among the many applications of the PID System include preparing for, managing, and stopping the development of animal diseases. Notifying animal owners of an upcoming emergency that can impact their pets, like a fire or flood, is another use for it. You may take a significant step to safeguard your animals as well as those of other farmers in Alberta and Canada by filling out a PID Application and maintaining your information current.



For more information on the PID Program including regulations, contact the Alberta Ag-Info Centre toll-free at 310.FARM (3276), a local Agriculture Field Office, or visit Agriculture Premises Alberta.

➤➤➤ Got Plastic Baler Twine?

Cleanfarms is celebrating their fifteenth anniversary this year. For fifteen years Cleanfarms has worked with the agricultural industry across the country. They promote sustainability by offering programs to keep ag plastic waste out of Canadian landfills and the environment.

The MD of Lesser Slave River has two Cleanfarms drop off disposal sites for plastic baler twine. Located at the transfer sites in Smith and Flatbush for producers to drop off their twine at.

Remember twine must be as debris free as possible this includes ice, hay/straw, and dirt.

Only plastic bale twine will be taken, this does not include net wrap, nylon rope, feed/seed bags, bale/silage wrap, and unrolled grain bags.

Check out Cleanfarms.ca for information on recycling programs and tutorial videos. You can also call the MD main office for transfer site hours.



Recycle Used Baler Twine

Preparing twine for recycling

Pick up, free, twine collection bags from pilot collection sites and select County/MD offices.

1. Shake to remove debris, snow or ice.
2. Place loose twine in a collection bag.
Plastic twine only. Bags of twine mixed with netting, sisal twine, or other materials will be rejected.
3. Return to an **Alberta Ag Plastic. Recycle It!** pilot collection site. Call ahead for unloading assistance.

Find recycling details and a collection site near you:

- For more about **Alberta Ag Plastic. Recycle It!** – go to AlbertaAgPlastics.ca or scan the QR code.
- To see what other ag materials Cleanfarms recycles, go to Cleanfarms.ca



Cleanfarms.ca
info@cleanfarms.ca @cleanfarms



Alberta The pilot project is led by the multi-stakeholder Agricultural Plastics Recycling Group. Funds were granted by the Government of Alberta and are administered by Alberta Seed Producers.



PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES & WATERSHED RESILIENCY FUNDING WITH LSWC



The Lesser Slave Watershed Council (LSWC) is proud to offer funding and support for landowners through our Watershed Resiliency Program. This initiative helps landowners in the MD of Lesser Slave River and Big Lakes County implement projects that not only improve their operations or property value, but also strengthen the health and resilience of our watershed.

Since 2016, with support from the Provincial Watershed Restoration and Resiliency Grant and our municipal partners, the LSWC has invested \$246,500 in 23 landowner stewardship projects across the watershed. Together, these projects represent a combined value of \$830,600 and have enhanced over 850 acres of wetlands and riparian areas.



CAPSule, all season watering system set up to gravity feed, no electricity or pumps required!



Portable solar watering systems can be moved throughout the grazing season where they are needed.

»»» What Does “Water Resiliency” Mean?

A resilient watershed has healthy wetlands and riparian areas that naturally provide habitat, maintain water quality, and help buffer the effects of floods and droughts.

On the farm, this can include practical, impactful projects such as:

- Fencing along rivers, creeks, and wetlands, with off-stream watering systems to reduce livestock impacts.
- Revegetating riparian zones with native grasses, trees, and shrubs to prevent erosion and provide wildlife habitat.
- Removing old crossings or structures that block water flow (excluding beaver dams).
- Installing small-scale livestock and equipment crossings to reduce erosion and sedimentation.
- Stabilizing eroding banks using natural solutions like willow staking and bioengineering.
- Installing beaver pond levelers to help manage localized flooding.

»»» Getting Started

If you have a project idea, reach out to the LSWC team to discuss whether it's a fit for the program. Our staff can help you:

- Identify suppliers and materials
- Navigate Water Act requirements
- Develop your project plan, budget, and maps
- Complete your landowner project agreement

Once approved, you can begin implementing your project — and your grant funds are released once the work is completed.

Funding is allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, pending grant availability. The LSWC typically cost-shares 50–75% of eligible project costs. Staff will visit your project to collect before-and-after photos and conduct annual follow-ups to track watershed improvements over time.

Ready to Make a Difference?
 Reach out today to discuss your project idea!
 Email: info@lswc.ca
 Call us 780.523.9800
 Check out our webpage: www.lswc.ca



YARD PREP FOR WINTER



Enhancing Fire Safety

- Clear debris near buildings: Remove brush, leaves, and other flammable materials from around farm buildings and structures to create a safe buffer.
- Create firebreaks: Disking the area around parked equipment can create a firebreak to help prevent fires from spreading.
- Maintain equipment: Keep machinery, especially combines and their engines and exhaust areas, clean to prevent fuel or oil buildup that can accelerate fire.
- Store fuel safely: Refuel equipment outdoors, away from open flames and buildings.
- Store flammable materials: Move flammable items like bedding and hay away from heat sources and ensure they are not stored near electrical equipment.
- Inspect electrical systems: Check electrical equipment and wiring, ensuring wires are properly enclosed to protect them from moisture and animals.
- Have fire extinguishers readily available: Make sure portable fire extinguishers are accessible, maintained, and regularly inspected in buildings, particularly near equipment and flammable storage areas.

Promoting Insect Overwintering

- Leave some debris: Allow leaf litter and plant debris to remain on garden beds as mulch, providing shelter for overwintering insects.
- Postpone deadheading: Don't fully clear dead annuals and perennials; leave the stems and seedheads to provide cover for insects and food for birds.
- Create habitat: If space allows, create a fire-safe brush pile to provide shelter for ground-dwelling and mid-story species.
- Leave bare soil: Avoid disturbing areas of bare, sunny soil where wild bees might overwinter in small nests.

Lesser Slave Lake Regional Waste Management Facility

Landfill and Transfer Station Hours

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
LOCATIONS							
Lesser Slave Lake Regional Landfill AB-2, Slave Lake 780.369.2590	CLOSED	11am to 6pm	11am to 6pm	11am to 6pm	11am to 6pm	9am to 5pm	CLOSED
Athabasca Regional Landfill 56km North West on Hwy 2 from Athabasca 780.675.1117	CLOSED	9am to 5pm	CLOSED	9am to 5pm	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED
Flatbush Transfer Station 20041 Twp Rd 660, Flatbush 780.849.4888	CLOSED	9:30am to 5:30pm	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	9:30am to 5:30pm	CLOSED
Marten Beach Transfer Station 754058 Northshore Dr, Marten Beach 780.849.4888	CLOSED	CLOSED	10am to 6pm	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	9am to 5pm
Smith Transfer Station 1099 9 St, Smith 780.849.4888	CLOSED	CLOSED	9:30am to 5:30pm	CLOSED	CLOSED	9:30am to 5:30pm	9:30am to 5:30pm

YOU MUST SHOW UP AT LEAST 15-30 MINUTES BEFORE POSTED CLOSING TIME, 30 MINUTES FOR A LARGE LOAD. COMMERCIAL LOADS MUST BE OFF-SITE 1 HOUR BEFORE CLOSING. LANDFILLS AND TRANSFER STATIONS ARE CLOSED ON STATUTORY HOLIDAYS.



VETERINARY SERVICES INC.

How the Program Works

Veterinary Services Incorporated (VSI) works to ensure rural communities have access to essential veterinary care by supporting the recruitment and retention of veterinary professionals. Through subsidized programs, this program helps offset the cost of specific veterinary procedures for livestock producers, promoting animal health and best management practices.

Any producer of livestock within MD boundaries can participate in the V.S.I. program must enter into a VSI by entering into an agreement with the MD.

See [Policy AG-63-04 "Veterinary Services INC Partnership Program"](#), and [Schedule "A" 60/40-Effective Jan 1, 2025](#) for specific details. Or call the MD of Lesser Slave River's Flatbush office for more information at 780.681.3929.

Services Covered by VSI

Service	VSI Code	Max Fee	VSI Pays	Client Pays
Clinic outpatient fee*	9	\$46.40	\$27.84	\$18.56
Epidural**	1	\$35.80	\$21.48	\$14.32
Intramuscular or subcutaneous injections	3	\$6.50	\$3.90	\$2.60
Intravenous injections	4	\$13.00	7.80	5.20
Stall fees (calves - per 24 hr.)	10	\$33.40	20.04	13.36
Stall fees (older animals - per day)	11	\$50.80	30.48	20.32
Oral drug administration	5	\$36.10	21.66	14.44
Subconjunctival injection	7	\$13.00	7.80	5.20



Proof of Ownership Required

Please remember to include proof of ownership of all land and livestock cited in your application.

WINTER HERD TIPS



As Canadian winters bring snow, freezing rain, and biting winds, beef producers must take proactive steps to ensure their cattle remain healthy and productive. The [Beef Cattle Research Council \(BCRC\)](#), offers six practical strategies to help manage cattle through the cold season:

Shelter from the Elements : Where natural shelter is lacking, producers should build windbreaks. A good rule of thumb is one foot of fence per cow, designed based on herd size and wind direction.

Ensure Reliable Water Access : Daily water intake is vital for cattle health and performance. Cold weather can reduce water availability, which in turn limits feed intake and energy levels. Choose water systems suited to your herd size, geography, and infrastructure.

Monitor and Maintain Body Condition : Cattle with poor body condition are more vulnerable to cold stress. Aim for a Body Condition Score (BCS) of at least 3.0 before winter. Group cattle by condition and feed accordingly to meet their energy needs, especially during late gestation.

Boost Dietary Energy : Cold temperatures increase cattle's energy requirements. Add grain or pellets to their diet—about 1 lb for every 5°C below -20°C. Introduce changes gradually to avoid digestive issues.

Provide Ample Bedding : Bedding keeps the animal warmer than the cold ground or snow, which is very important to keep animals from getting frostbite (including frozen ovaries or teats), hypothermia, and death. Keep bedding areas clean and dry, especially for calves, and prepare warming areas and colostrum supplies ahead of extreme cold snaps.

Stay Weather-Aware and Observe Cattle : Rapid weather changes can disrupt water access and shelter effectiveness. Watch for signs of cold stress, especially in vulnerable groups like calves and thin cows, and have contingency plans ready.



WINTER SAFETY



Ice Safety & Winter Activities

Many of our favorite outdoor activities in the winter take place near or on the ice. Ice usually appears on our lakes in mid to late fall and can remain well into the spring. It is important to keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Make sure the ice is over 10cm (4in) in thickness before you walk
- Never drive on ice less than 30cm (12in) thick
- If driving, have the windows down on your vehicle, seatbelts off, and do not drive fast.
- Pack and dress accordingly for the weather.

Resources:

My Wild Alberta : Ice Safety Tips | AEP - Environment and Parks (mywildalberta.ca)

Alberta Sportfishing Regulations : [Alberta Sportfishing Regulations](#)

Alberta Realm : [Hunting and Fishing Licenses - AlbertaRELM](#)

Winter Emergency Kit

Don't put off gathering items you may need during severe winter weather until a winter storm hits. By then, it may be too late to drive to the nearest store to stock up. You should make sure you have everything you need on hand to comfortably handle a range of conditions when they do become severe. These circumstances can include frigid temperatures, a blackout, or being snowed in and unable to drive. It is always better to be over-prepared than unprepared.

Consider these items for your winter emergency kit:

- Windshield scraper
- Shovel
- Booster cables
- Tow rope
- Emergency reflectors
- Distress flag
- Battery-powered or crank flashlights/lamps (with extra batteries)
- Battery-powered or crank radio (with extra batteries)
- Waterproof matches and candles
- Handwarmers
- First aid kit
- Extra water (4L per person per day)
- Snack food Non-perishable food with high protein
- Necessary medications
- Survival blanket
- Extra clothing and winter boots
- Pen and paper
- Pocket knife
- Duct tape
- Cell phone
- Extra charging cables and batteries
- Multi-tool and work gloves
- Personal Supplies and Medication
- Over-the-counter medications and prescription
- Pet/Livestock food and supplies
- Plastic wrap, aluminum foil, re-sealable bags
- Garbage and recycle bags
- Hand sanitizer and wipes



You can find more information about preparedness through alberta.ca, or by contacting your community's Director of Emergency Management.



KIDS KORNER

Winter Word Search



Pine Cone Bird Feeder

Try this fun winter craft with your kids!

Ingredients: peanut butter or vegetable shortening, bird seed, pine cone, ribbon/string

INSTRUCTIONS:

Fill a shallow container with birdseed. Cover the pine cone with peanut butter, except for the top. Roll pine cone in the birdseed, cover thoroughly. Tie a ribbon on the top and hang outside.



COLD
GLOVES
ICE

IGLOO
SCARF
SLED

SNOWFLAKE
SNOWMAN

Can you spot the differences between these picture?



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Agricultural Service Board

MD of Lesser Slave River No. 124
2025-26

