QTE 290974
Additional Incoming

From: Minister / Ministre (AAFC/AAC)
Sent: Friday, September 12, 2025 11:52 AM
To: Briefings-MINCOR-A / Breffages-CORMIN-A (AAFC/AAC)
Cc: Minister / Ministre (AAFC/AAC)
Subject: FW: Declaration of Agriculture Disaster for Hay and Pasture Production - Birch Hills County

From: AGRIC Minister <AGRIC.Minister@gov.ab.ca>
Sent: Friday, September 12, 2025 11:41 AM
To: ward1councillor@birchhillscounty.com
Cc: Office of the Premier <Premier@gov.ab.ca>; Minister / Ministre (AAFC/AAC) <aafc.minister-ministre.aac@agr.gc.ca>; FP Minister <FP.Minister@gov.ab.ca>; EPA Minister <EPA.Minister@gov.ab.ca>; Arnold.viersen@parl.gc.ca; agfieldman@birchhillscounty.com
Subject: Declaration of Agriculture Disaster for Hay and Pasture Production - Birch Hills County

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Dear Reeve Poetker:

Thank you for your letter noting the declaration of agricultural disaster for hay and pasture production in Birch Hills County.

I assure you my ministry is taking the necessary action to help address sector challenges. I advocated to the federal government to expedite the release of the preliminary list of prescribed regions for the 2025 Livestock Tax Deferral Program to help producers reduce their tax obligations and alleviate financial pressures. This list was made available on August 18, 2025, designating several Alberta regions, including Birch Hills County, as prescribed regions for 2025. The final list of prescribed regions is usually made in December, when finalized forage yield information is available.

My ministry has also taken action, working with the federal government and Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC), to adjust the low yield allowance for 2025 program year. This will enable farmers to salvage crops for livestock feed in an effort to reduce producers' feed-related costs. Producers can get detailed information about this announcement at afsc.ca.

We continue to monitor the moisture and crop conditions for the 2025 growing season and regularly communicate with producers, agricultural organizations and commodity groups to get updates on latest concerns.

It is important producers know about programs that are available to help manage risks to their farming operations. AFSC offers AgriInsurance for protection against severe and uncontrollable natural hazards; AgriStability for protection against income declines; and AgriInvest, a producer-federal government savings account, for managing small income declines. These programs help producers stay prepared and resilient in the face of uncertainty.

AFSC confirms that 64 per cent of annual crops and 37 per cent of perennial crops in Birch Hills County have been insured by producers. The Moisture Deficiency Insurance (MDI) program offered under perennial crop insurance allows producers to insure native, improved, bush or community pasture. This program responds to dry conditions quickly and has become one of the most meaningful risk management programs for pasture insurance. AFSC has confirmed that producers in Birch Hills County who enrolled in the 2025 MDI program have received payments. In addition, AFSC offers the Moisture Deficiency Endorsement (hay) program, which can be purchased along with dryland Hay Insurance.

To further assist producers during the 2025 season, the federal, provincial and territorial (FPT) Ministers of Agriculture extended the enrolment deadline for the AgriStability program to July 31, 2025 in light of the pressures facing the agriculture sector. As a margin-based program, it can help stabilize incomes and alleviate pressures due to declines in market prices or cost increases.

FPT Ministers also approved temporary enhancements to AgriStability for the 2025 program year due to ongoing trade uncertainty and production losses. These enhancements include an increase in compensation rate from 80 to 90 per cent and the increase in maximum payment limit from $3 million to $6 million. Producers enrolled in AgriStability, who access benefits after experiencing a significant loss, will see an increase in payments due to these changes.

Additionally, the federal government has retained the interest free limit at $250,000 under the Advance Payments Program (APP) for the 2025 program year. This program supports producers in managing financial challenges and offers producers marketing flexibility rather than forcing them to sell for immediate cash flow needs, which is important in times of uncertainty. On September 5, 2025, the federal government further announced it is temporarily doubling the interest-free portion for canola advances. For the remainder of the 2025 program year and the 2026 program year, the interest-free limit will rise to $500,000. These changes came in response to ongoing trade uncertainty, especially affecting canola producers, who represent 41 per cent of APP users.

I know this season may bring significant challenges. My ministry will continue to monitor the situation and remains focused on supporting producers as needed.

Sincerely,

Honourable RJ Sigurdson
Minister, Agriculture and Irrigation
AR88311

Classification: Protected A

From: Jenifer Lizotte <agfieldman@birchhillscounty.com>
Sent: August 27, 2025 2:42 PM
Subject: Birch Hills County Declaration of Agricultural Disaster

CAUTION: This email has been sent from an external source. Treat hyperlinks and attachments in this email with care.

Good Afternoon,

Please find attached a letter, sent on behalf of our Reeve Albert Poetker, issuing a Declaration of Agricultural Disaster for Tame Hay and Pasture Production for Birch Hills County effective August 26, 2025.

Thank you,

Jenifer Lizotte, RTAg, CCA, Certified Fieldman

Director of Agriculture Services

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