Quote: 290974

09/17/2025

Albert Poetker
Reeve
Birch Hills County
4601 50th Street
Box 157
Wanham AB T0H 3P0

Dear Reeve Poetker:

I am writing in response to your correspondence to the Honourable Heath MacDonald, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, co-addressed to the Honourable RJ Sigurdson, Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation, regarding drought conditions in Birch Hills County and your declaration of agricultural disaster. Please be assured that your concerns have been shared with Minister MacDonald. I appreciate the opportunity to reply.

Drought can take a serious toll on producers, their families and rural communities. The Government of Canada recognizes the hardships caused by severe weather conditions and remains committed to supporting those affected during these challenging times.

Producers have access to a robust suite of business risk management programs. Producers with AgriInvest savings accounts can access their funds immediately, and those who have enrolled in AgriStability can request interim payments from their program administrator.

AgriInsurance, the suite's first line of defence for those facing drought conditions, ensures that producers have access to affordable and effective insurance, which includes coverage for insured perils such as insects (including grasshoppers) and disease.

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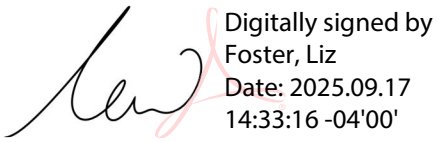
In addition to existing programs, the Livestock Tax Deferral (LTD) provision can be another financial management tool for livestock producers affected by drought. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) is closely monitoring the drought situation and regularly assesses growing conditions to determine whether regions meet the criteria for LTD.

On August 18, 2025, Minister MacDonald announced an initial list of regions prescribed for the 2025 LTD, which includes regions in Alberta. Birch Hills County is on this list and has therefore been prescribed under the provision for 2025. Please consult AAFC's Livestock Tax Deferral webpage for the full list of prescribed regions.

Thank you for writing on this matter. I hope this information is helpful.

Sincerely,



Liz Foster
Assistant Deputy Minister
Programs Branch

c.c.: Office of the Honourable RJ Sigurdson, MLA