

Growing News

Cultivating More Ways to Profit in Agriculture

Environmental plans make more sense than ever

With input costs rising and concerns about land and water growing, there has never been a better time to invest time and thought in a sound Environmental Farm Plan.

Nearly 6,000 Manitoba farmers have already gone through the planning process – and with a new crop of workshops now underway across Manitoba, hundreds more are joining them.

For some, the motivation is strictly business. The planning process can reveal opportunities to cut costs by making more selective use of fuel, fertilizer and pesticides. Producers have the opportunity to make informed decisions based on an individualized set of resource maps, aerial photos of their property and personal input from Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (MAFRI) specialists. The Beneficial Management Practices they identify as being ideal for their farms can improve their profitability and the value of their property, while reducing their impact on the environment.

For others, the workshops are a way of opening doors to other programs and assistance. Once their Environmental Farm Plans have been through a confidential third-party review by the Keystone Agricultural Producers, producers can apply for funding from the Environmental Farm Action Program.

And for many producers, an Environmental Farm Plan is just part of being a good neighbour. Farmers can use the plan to demonstrate that environmental risks are being managed, and to build acceptance with the surrounding community. By increasing their own knowledge of the risks, they can also foresee potential liabilities and sources of friction that could arise in the future.

Due for an update?

To be considered valid and current, an Environmental Farm Plan must be updated every five years. If you were one of the first Manitoba farmers to go through the process back in 2005 and 2006, it may be time for you to attend another series of workshops and refresh your plan.

This year the workbook has been updated with the latest information on regulations and pest management. A new format makes it easier to zero in on specific management practices.

Find a workshop near you

With 18 workshops scheduled for January, there's sure to be an environmental planning workshop in your area. Check the schedule by visiting the website of MAFRI at manitoba.ca/agriculture. Search the website for "EFP workshop schedule."

You can find out more at your nearest MAFRI Growing Opportunities (GO) Office.

Aussi disponible en français à manitoba.ca/agriculture/growingforward.