



News Release

Agricultural Research and
Extension Council of Alberta

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FARM TRAINING SURVEY DEMONSTRATES DESIRE, NEED FOR TRAINING

ALBERTA, May 8, 2009 – Beginning in January, the Agricultural Research and Extension Council of Alberta (ARECA) conducted a survey to determine public interest in returning to the land, and to assess what kinds of training, skills and background information people would require to do just that.

The results have been compiled and according to participants, there is both an interest in and a need for a training program for new and transitioning farmers.

Of those surveyed:

- 89.7 per cent said that there was a need for farm training for new entrants into the business of farming
- 93.2 per cent indicated that there was a need for training for farmers who want to transition into a different aspect of the farming business
- 75.7 per cent said that there were insufficient resources for new or transitioning farmers to begin the process
- 89 per cent said that if new training opportunities were available to either enter into or transition within the farming business, they would attend

“We are encouraged by the response we received and the strength of the interest expressed,” says Dr. Ty Faechner, executive director of ARECA. “Clearly, there are those who are seriously considering making farming their career of choice. If we can help make sure that those same people have the education and tools they need, it is our hope that we can keep current operations sustainable and help new farmers get off on the right foot.”

ARECA conducted the survey with a view towards creating a new program to address the training and information needs of those who might consider a career in agriculture. Tentatively titled **FarmCraft**, the program will be delivered by ARECA and its member associations throughout Alberta via the internet, conferences and workshops, as well as mentoring and apprenticeships. “Now that we know that there is an appetite for this kind of program, we are going to craft potential delivery models, and work on partnerships between ourselves and other agencies and organizations involved in sustainable agriculture in Alberta,” says Faechner. “Once we have those pieces in place, we can apply for funding and put the program into practice.”

ARECA anticipates offering courses such as:

- tools for getting a farm business started
- what is involved in owning and managing different types of farming operations
- marketing opportunities
- alternative practices
- farm business management
- production management.

The Agricultural Research and Extension Council of Alberta (ARECA) is a not-for-profit organization working with producers to enhance and improve their operations through access to field research and new technology.

Made of up of 17 member associations focused on applied research, demonstrations and extension in the areas of forages, annual crop and livestock production, ARECA acts as a strong united voice for producers by speaking on their behalf to industry leaders and government representatives.

Each member association delivers programs and develops projects that address the concerns and priorities of producers in their specific regions.

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