

UPDATED JANUARY 2021

# GOVERNANCE OF THE AEFP WEBBOOK



[www.albertaefp.com](http://www.albertaefp.com)

## HISTORY

The Alberta Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) was developed by the government of Alberta in consultation with industry starting in the late 1990s. Alberta's EFP was based on Ontario's EFP and was adapted, through expert review, to be more suitable to meet Alberta's farm-based risks. The first edition of Alberta's EFP was launched in January, 2003.

In 2019, Alberta's EFP was modified in terms of content and potential uses. EFP (Version 3.01) in conjunction with federal and provincial legislation was found to be equivalent on content to the Sustainable Agriculture Initiative's (SAI) Farm Sustainability Assessment - Version 2.1 (FSA 2.1) at the Silver level.

On December 21, 2020 a modified version of Alberta's EFP version 3.1 called EFP-Plus (EFP+) was launched. This modification meets the verification minimum. i.e. it enables Farm Management Groups and individuals wishing to make an equivalence claim against FSA 2.1 at up to the Silver level

## ONGOING DEVELOPMENT

ARECA is committed to ensuring the EFP-Plus standard:

1. Maximizes benefits to industries and industry associations choosing to use it.
2. Remains both as simple to use as is possible and retains the core purpose of the Environmental Farm Plan Program; education and awareness.

Ongoing development of the standard will be undertaken under the following principles:

### INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT

ARECA will continue to engage industry in EFP development through the following mechanisms:

- Continued reliance on the Stakeholder Advisory Committee as representatives of the end users (producers).
- Outreach and communication to industries wishing to use it to make claims.

### USE OF EXPERTS AND LAYPERSONS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- ARECA is committed to making scientific integrity fundamental to future development. As such experts will ensure we have the best.
- In keeping with our commitment to education and awareness, lay people (generally producers and EFP Technicians) will be invited to participate in beta-testing new developments.

## MANAGEMENT OF THE STANDARD

The mechanisms of actual management of the standard are covered in Appendix 1.

The EFP-Plus Standard will be managed under the same principles that guide its development.

ARECA is committed to ensuring the EFP-Plus standard:

1. Maximizes benefits to industries and industry associations choosing to use it.
2. Remains both as simple to use as is possible and retains the core purpose of the Environmental Farm Plan Program; education and awareness.

The standard EFP is valid for 10 years upon review and approval of the workbook and action plan by a certified technician. However, the FSA requires producers to renew every three years. Producers wishing to maintain FSA equivalency should follow the FSA requirement and renew within **three years of the date on their EFP certificate**. Producers are only considered FSA equivalent if their EFP+ certificate dates within the last 3 years

## CHANGES TO THE WORKBOOK

### WHAT IS THE ALBERTA EFP+ FSA (AEFP-FSA) ADD-ON?

The AEFP-FSA Add-on enables a farm or farm group that is already using the EFP+ system to make an FSA claim in the most efficient way possible. It includes a tailored set of FSA-inspired questions that can be audited alongside the EFP+ system for all crops to produce a verified FSA performance level claim. It bridges the gap between the EFP+ and FSA standards, allowing producers to make FSA claims up to FSA 2.1 Silver level with only one audit.

### FOR WHOM IS THE AEFP-FSA ADD-ON INTENDED?

The AEFP-FSA Add-on has been designed for any legal entity that is already using the EFP+ system (whole-farm assessment) and wants to make an FSA claim in the most streamlined way possible.

### WHAT IS THE BENEFIT OF MAKING AN FSA CLAIM?

The FSA is widely recognized as food and drink industry reference for sustainable crop farming. It was created to stimulate the uptake of industry-shared better management practices that improve farm performance and sustainability outcomes. Using the AEFP-FSA Add-on replaces the need to be a part of multiple company-specific sustainability schemes by providing one approach that is recognized throughout the industry.

## CHANGES TO THE WORKBOOK (CONTINUED)

### WHY WAS THE EFP-FSA ADD-ON TO EFP+ CREATED?

Uniting the FSA and EFP brings us closer to a common definition of sustainable agriculture, that farmers, food manufacturers, and policy makers so urgently need.

### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS FOR COMPANIES AND FARMS?

The EFP-FSA Add-on saves time and money for both farms and companies, allowing them to focus on sustainably developing their business. Having the verification take place at the same time as other audits reduces the assessment workload significantly. There is no redundancy or overlap, making self-assessment as efficient as possible.

### HOW MANY QUESTIONS ARE IN THE AEFP-FSA ADD-ON AND WHAT DO THEY COVER?

Users of the EFP+ standard are asked FSA1 and FSA 2. The 17 questions in the AEFP-FSA Add-on all relate to on-farm environmental or operational concerns (Appendix 2)

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## DEALING WITH QUESTIONS

A comprehensive auditor guidance document has been created that provides ARECA

- Requirements
- Guidance
- Audit points.

Where applicable, we will use and/or create records that can be placed in their farm plan.

## SCOPE VERIFICATION – ENTITIES

To establish a Farm Management Group in accordance with SAI guidance, the farms within a group must: (i) be located within the same country; (ii) use the same FSA implementation option (e.g., benchmarking); (iii) deliver the same crop ; (iv) have an identified Farm Management Group Coordinator; (v) be engaged in the same continuous improvement program for sustainable agriculture; and, (vi) have an agreement with the Farm Group Coordinator to track volumes and commit to the FSA.

For newly established Farm Management Groups, the SAI-FSA program recommends that the group is already defined (e.g., same supply chain; same organization, cooperative, etc.), although this is not a requirement. For implementation in the context of the Alberta EFP, the creation of Farm Management Groups may depend on the need of buyers related to sustainable sourcing and could likely align with those farms that form part of the same supply chain.

A key part of the establishment of the Farm Management Group is to define the group and identify the Farm Management Group Coordinator. The Farm Management Group Coordinator will be the individual or organization generally responsible for the FSA process, including tracking various aspects (e.g., farms in the group; volumes supplied, administering self-assessments, continuous improvement plans, training, etc.). The Farm Management Group Coordinator is also responsible for being present during the audit, and to demonstrate that there is an effective Farm Management System in place, that includes two fundamental requirements: (i) a robust mass-balance accounting system, and (ii) a continuous improvement program. An audit of a Farm Management Group includes an audit of both the Farm Management System, which typically occurs first, followed by an audit of a sample of the farms.

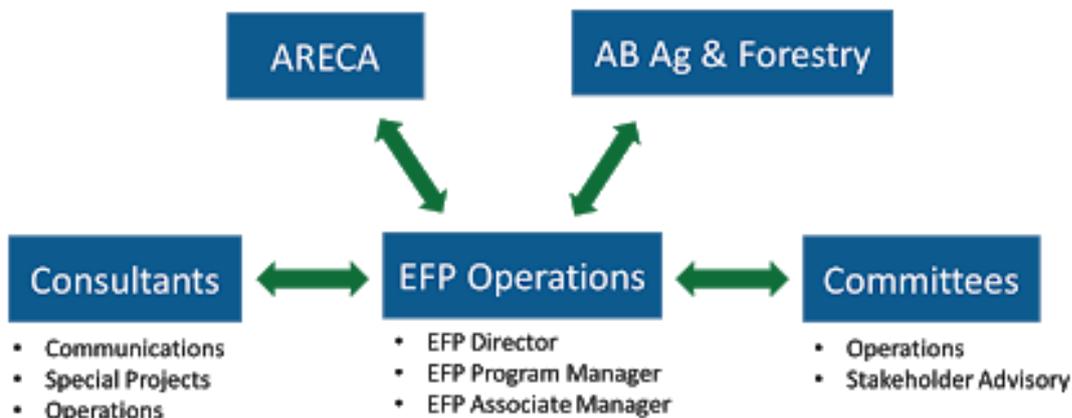
## APPENDIX 1: MANAGEMENT OF THE STANDARD

- The standard is managed by ARECA. The management structure (see Figure 1) functions to keep stakeholders engaged in the strategic development of the standard. The core program staff, as of December 2020, consist of 2 people (Director and Manager). Staff are under the supervision of the ARECA Executive Director who is responsible for human resources, strategic planning and financial oversight.
- The EFP Director sets strategic direction for the EFP program and online workbook (with its associated tools) and manages other permanent and part-time (as needed) staff. The Director is responsible for:
  - Consultation and communications with stakeholders; especially the Alberta EFP Stakeholder Advisory Committee. This Committee is comprised of representatives of affected industries and provides guidance to the EFP Director, which is reflected in program activities and outputs. The Stakeholder Advisory Committee holds veto power over new additions to the Environmental Farm Plan.
  - Reporting to the Alberta Government on use of funds and progress in meeting contractually-defined goals.
  - Initiating projects and ensuring they are completed in a timely manner.
  - As the primary liaison with most of the contractors.

## APPENDIX 1: MANAGEMENT OF THE STANDARD (CONTINUED)

The EFP Manager is predominantly responsible for the day-to-day operationalizing of Alberta EFP’s strategic vision. The Manager:

- May manage consultants after projects are defined and initiated.
- Is the primary and first line of contact with the delivery agents.
- Bears responsibility for the Operations Committee and chairs all sub-committees formed. The Operations Committee is a geographically and experientially representative group of technicians who offer operational guidance to the EFP Program on how to achieve its goals. In addition, they serve as members of various ad hoc sub-committees that meet specific goals (for example, tech training and resource development sub-committees).



## APPENDIX 2 - EFP QUESTIONS IN THE AAFP-FSA ADD-ON

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FSA 9: Do you have an up-to-date farm management plan that addresses all relevant farming risks and opportunities?

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FSA 10. Do you regularly seek advice, training and collaboration on sustainable production, technologies and human resource management?

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FSA 12. Do you use crop rotation where applicable?

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FSA 17. Do you take into account the optimum seed rate or plant population for your local situation and crop?

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Pesticide FSA 19. Do you perform periodic soil sampling to monitor the changes in soil condition and keep the sampling records?

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FSA 23. Do you choose fertiliser type, quantity and application method according to crop needs whilst reducing environmental impacts?

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FSA 24: Do you have a nutrient management plan?

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FSA 28: Do you keep records of fertilizer applications?

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FSA 31: Do you apply the principles of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) or use IPM based pest management advisors or services when controlling weeds, pests and disease on your farm?

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FSA 35: Do you apply chemical crop protection products only when absolutely necessary and use alternative methods where possible?

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FSA 37: Do you prevent pest resistance by varying the type of chemicals?

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FSA 52: Do you reduce, reuse, and recycle waste?

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FSA 57: If you irrigate, do you use an optimized irrigation method?

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FSA 63: Have you assessed biodiversity and identified priority actions to preserve biodiversity on your farm?

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FSA 64: Do you have a biodiversity plan for your farm to maintain or improve biodiversity?

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FSA 67: Do you practice habitat restoration and do you compensate for areas on your farm that have been prone to habitat/ biodiversity loss?

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FSA 71: Do you take measures to maximize energy use efficiency such as optimizing your farm equipment, optimizing electricity use, etc?

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## APPENDIX 3 - QUESTIONS NOT COVERED IN THE AAFP-FSA ADD-ON

Code	Topic	Question
FSA4	Financial Stability	Do you plan your activities to support the long-term economic viability of your farm?
FSA5	Financial Stability	If you have only one source of income, have you considered the risks and is this an informed choice?
FSA6	Financial Stability	Do you have a business plan to optimize the long-term economic viability of the farm?
FSA36	Crop Protection	Do you minimize side effects of crop protection product use by using selective pesticides (rather than broad spectrum), targeted application and/or seed dressing?
FSA72	Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Do you identify sources of greenhouse gas and do you measure and monitor your emissions?
FSA73	Market Access	Do you discuss with customers the best timing for crop deliveries to ensure good prices and to maintain quality?
FSA75	Market Access	Do you have a documented system for ensuring food safety and quality of your products?
FSA76	Market Access	Do you have a traceability system from individual production areas to farm gate, have you discussed this with your buyer and is it agreed by the buyer?
FSA83	Labor Conditions	Do you ensure that daily working hours for permanent and temporary workers do not exceed the maximum number of hours set by national regulations and ILO Conventions?
FSA84	Labor Conditions	Do you ensure that overtime work is voluntary and compensated according to national legislation?
FSA106	Health & Safety	Do you undertake activities to promote the prevention of diseases and do you encourage personal hygiene (including farmer and workers)?
FSA111	Local Community	Does your farm contribute actively to the neighboring communities?