



Agricultural Service Board Annual Report

Overview

The Agricultural Service Board Annual Report summarizes the programs and activities completed under the Agricultural Service Board (ASB) during the 2024 program year. This report will serve to inform Council on what activities occurred in 2024.

As per the *Agricultural Service Board Act*, each municipality may appoint individuals to act as an advisory body to assist Council and the Agriculture Minister in matters of mutual concern. Section 4 of the Act states, "A board must present a summary of its activities for the preceding year to Council in a form acceptable to Council containing any information required by the Council." Examples of activities in which the ASB participates in includes; advising, organizing and directing weed and pest control, overseeing soil conservation programming, and aid in the control of animal diseases.

The Agricultural Service Board is responsible for implementing and enforcing legislative requirements under the *Agricultural Service Board Act*, the *Weed Control Act*, the *Agricultural Pests Act*, and the *Soil Conservation Act*, and assist with the control of animal disease under the *Animal Health Act*. The Agricultural Fieldman, when appointed to the role by Council, becomes an inspector/officer/authorized person by virtue of the position under these Acts.

2024 was a busy year for the department, and was one where we were able to test out some new processes and procedures in an effort to make the department more efficient and effective. Our Weed and Pest Inspector travelled the Municipality, completing inspections for noxious and prohibited noxious weeds, carrying out control in appropriate areas, talking to producers, and completing various pest surveys for Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation. A contracted service provider was also utilized to once again complete a full right-of-way mow in the entire Municipality.

The Agricultural Service Board was also busy. In 2024 they gave input, approved, and enacted a new 2025-2029 Strategic Plan, laying the groundwork to grow and improve the department over the next 5 years. The ASB had a large focus on policy updates, and recommended 6 updated policies to Council for adoption. They also directed advocacy for greater policy change on both the provincial and federal level, sending 4 advocacy letters regarding Farm Mental Health, AgriRecovery, Pandemic Preparedness, and Economic Development brought forth by local conferences. The ASB also brought forward a resolution regarding Farm Mental Health, which was accepted at the Regional level in November 2024, and will be presented at the 2025 Provincial ASB Conference in Edmonton in January.

Year at a Glance



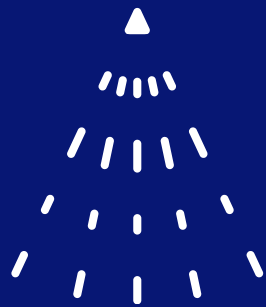
1308
fields
inspected



6
pest
monitoring sites



12
grasshopper
collection sites



72
hectares of
roadside sprayed



30
shelterbelt
seedling orders



3045
total trees
ordered



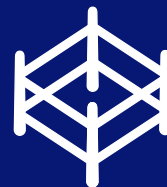
4
new VSI
participants



35
days
water pump



17
days
loading chute



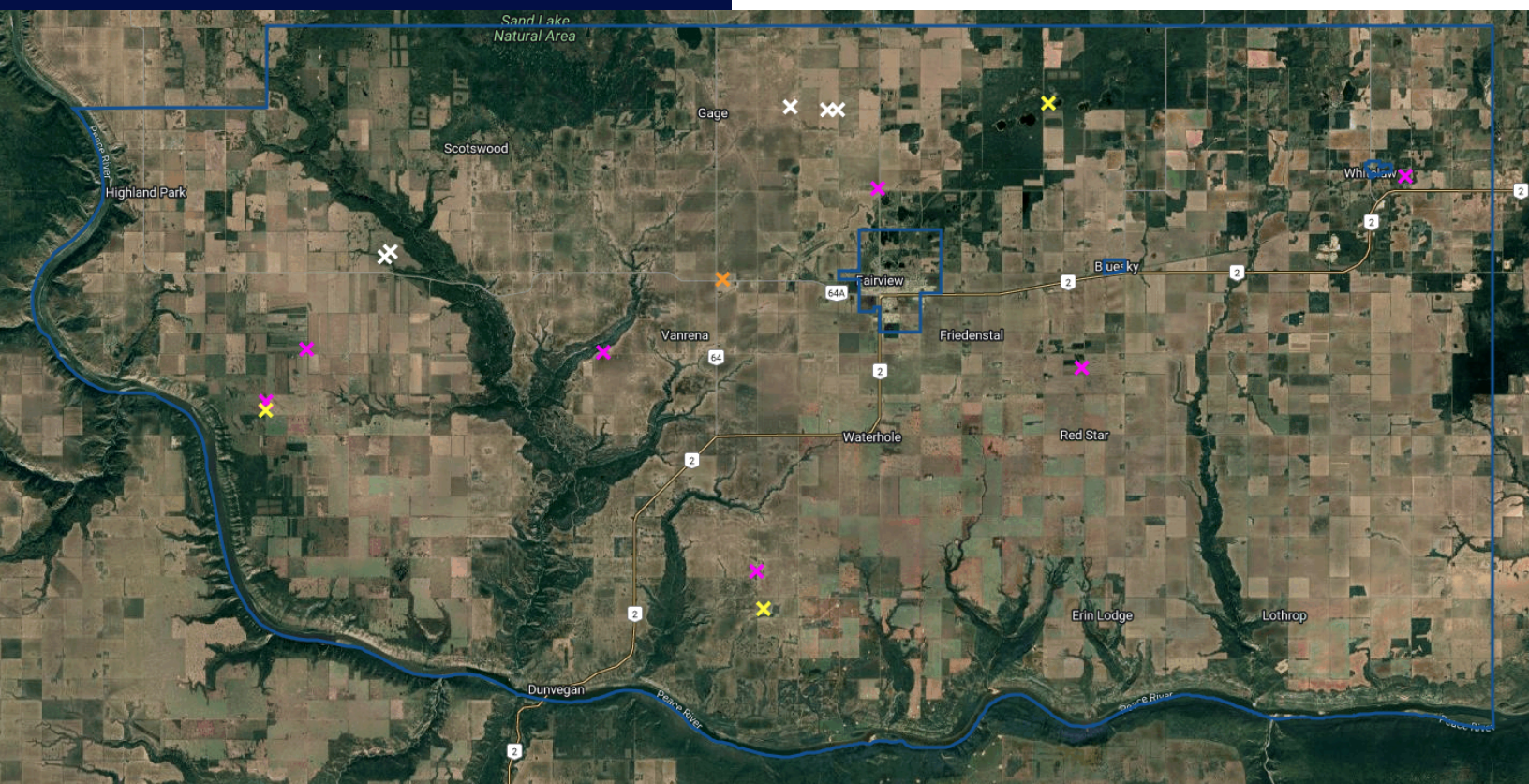
8
days
panel trailer

Weed Inspections

In 2024, there was a substantial focus made on landholder awareness and education regarding the *Weed Control Act*. Several informational and compliance packages were sent, as well as many conversations had with landholders both on the phone and in the field regarding weeds on or near their property. All contacted landholders took steps to control weed issues on their properties.

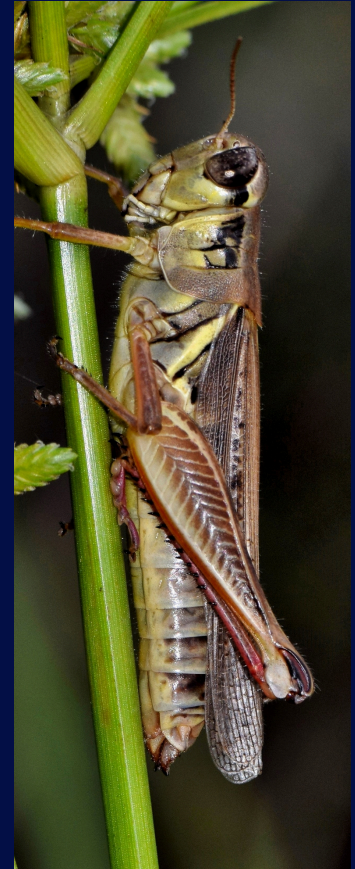
Staff completed several pulls of Scentsless Chamomile on Municipal property. Due to its resilience to chemical application and growth being close to sensitive areas, pulling the patches was considered the best course of action to control these areas.

Properties where compliance was requested, primarily had Yellow Toadflax, White Cockle, and Canada Thistle present. All of which are considered as Noxious under the *Weed Control Act*.



Pest Inspections

In 2024, the Agricultural Department assisted Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation and the Prairie Pest Monitoring Network and surveyed for Diamondback Moth, Bertha Army Worm, Wheat Midge, and Grasshoppers. One Diamondback Moth trap was set in the Gage area from May 1st to June 15th. This trap caught a minimal number of moths, indicating a low risk to this species. Two Wheat Midge traps were deployed on July 2nd in Erin Lodge and Dell. Both traps hit threshold by July 6th and 7th respectively. Communication was made with local agronomists and sent to ratepayers via social media and email blast to make them aware of our trap results along with scouting protocols. Two Bertha Army Worm traps were set from June 15th to July 30th. One trap in Highland Park had consistently low numbers of moths trapped, but the second trap in Golden Meadow had consistently elevated numbers. Producers in the Golden Meadow area were made aware of the elevated trap numbers and were encouraged to scout for berthas.



The annual Grasshopper Survey took place in August. The MD of Fairview surveyed 12 sites across the municipality. Grasshopper numbers were very low compared to 2023 numbers, with only a small envelope with a few specimens sent to the lab in comparison to a full cooler sent in 2023. Bruner's Grasshopper is a very prevalent species in the Peace. This species of grasshopper has a 2-year lifecycle, and we therefore typically see elevated populations of grasshoppers in odd years, making the Peace Region a bit of an anomaly compared to the rest of the province. The MD of Fairview has committed to assisting Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in collecting specimens that can be DNA barcoded to better understand this unique species.

In addition to insects, the Department also took part in provincial Canola, Wheat and Barley surveys. The Canola Survey, which tests for Clubroot, Virulent Blackleg, Sclerotinia, and Verticillium Wilt saw the MD sending 6 samples to the Provincial Lab. The Wheat and Barley Head Surveys test for Bunts, Fusarium Head Blight, Smut, Ergot and Aster Yellows. In 2024, the MD sent in 3 wheat samples and 2 barley samples.

Not all surveys completed in 2024 were for pests. The MD also participated in a Native Pollinator Survey in conjunction with the Alberta Native Bee Council and the University of Calgary. This survey site was located at the Whitelaw Springs, and the data collected will go towards research on native pollinator populations and their activity through the summer months.

Roadside Vegetation Management

The contracted service providers began mowing municipal right-of-ways in late June, beginning at Waterhole Hall, and moving through the municipality in a clockwise rotation. Wet conditions in June meant that some areas were unable to be mowed due to standing water in the ditches. The contractors completed on July 17th, and overall did a satisfactory job.

In late July, the sprayer was put into the Weed Inspector's truck to begin roadside spraying spot work. In 2024, a product called Navius Flex was primarily utilized. This product is a three-year residual broadleaf herbicide. The west half of the MD was targeted in 2024 as the east half was targeted in 2023. Yellow Toadflax, Canada Thistle, Sow Thistle, and White Cockle were all targeted within the right-of-ways this year.

One multi-year brushing agreement was entered this year in an effort to maintain a sightline on RR 61 and TWP 814. This area was brushed in early 2023 and an agreement was entered with the landowner to ensure the municipality access to maintain with both mechanical and chemical brush control until such time that tame grass is established.



Livestock

In 2024, there were 4 new VSI (Veterinary Services Incorporated) numbers given out to livestock producers within the Municipality.

There were decreased instances of coyote predation in 2024. There were 30 Compound 1080 tablets dispensed this year versus 42 in 2023.



Shelterbelt Seedlings

Our Shelterbelt Seedling Program in 2024 was once again very successful. The program saw a total of 30 orders, and 3045 total seedlings being sold. Hemp mats were also available for purchase and were again very popular with shelterbelt clients. The hemp mats are a thick, compostable mat that suppresses growth around the tree seedling, allowing the tree to thrive.

2025 Shelterbelt Orders opened in November and will close in early January prior to the order deadline from the supplier. The Shelterbelt Program is administered on a cost-recovery basis, taking into account the cost of the tree supply and the time to administer the program.

Rental Equipment

In 2024, much like 2023, the water pump trailer was a popular item in the rental fleet, going out to 17 users for a total of 35 days this year. A new 3" trash pump was purchased this spring to replace the old pump on the trailer. The new pump has been reported to pump much faster than the old pump. The Loading Chute and Panel Trailer were also popular items in 2024, leaving the yard 8 and 3 times respectively.

The decision was made to dispose of the Livestock Scale due to the unit's age, significant wear and tear, and low instances of rentals. At present, there are no plans to replace this item in the rental fleet.

Equipment	Number of Users	Days Rented
Water Pump	17	35
Loading Chute	8	17
Panel Trailer	3	10
Livestock Scale	5	8
ATV Sprayers	2	7
ATV Grass Seeders	2	2
Cattle Squeeze	2	2
BBQ	2	2
Calf Tipping Table	1	2



Phone Number

780-835-4903



Email Address

mdinfo@mdfairview.ab.ca



Website

mdfairview.com

