

# AGRICULTURE

*Week*



September 28, 2022

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2 Claresholm Local Press,  
Wednesday, September 28, 2022

# A Salute to AGRICULTURE WEEK

## Agriculture

### Succession planning resources offered

By Rob Vogt  
Local Press Writer

Most business owners, including farmers and ranchers, plan how to start or get into business, but far less plan how to get out.

About 15 people attended a session on business succession planning, to change that.

The session was the latest installment in the Opportunities for Growth series put on by the Claresholm and District Chamber of Commerce and Claresholm Economic Development on Sept. 15 at the Claresholm Seniors' Drop-in Social Centre.

Natalie Gibson, of Innovisions and Associates, facilitated the session.

She is a consultant on economic development who works closely with the Alberta South West Regional Economic Development Alliance, of which Claresholm is a member.

She explained it takes between five and seven years to sell a business, ranch or farm.

Moreover, a recent survey revealed 96 percent of people thought their children would buy their operation, but that is not so.

The result was people leaving the community.

So Gibson looked for resources to help business and farm owners transition out of business.

She noted in Southern Alberta there is an underground economy. Some businesses are listed on the Multiple Listing Service, or MLS, but there are also businesses for sale that only locals know about.

Gibson described some service providers who offer resources that may be able to help.

Invest Alberta offers community profiles and an investment opportunity book, which provides an opportunity to list these types of businesses.

Alberta Agriculture and Forestry offers webinars and a food processor list.

Travel Alberta has an investment division, that offers potential funds for growth, marketing, and more.

Another resource is matchmaking where sellers and buyers of farms or businesses are brought together.

Gibson introduced Allison Anderson, who made her presentation by video conference, on this matchmaking.

She explained a gap was identified between people



**BUSINESS SUCCESSION** - Natalie Gibson, of Innovisions and Associates, was one of the guest speakers at a session on business succession and transition planning at the Claresholm Seniors' Drop-in Social Centre on Sept. 15. It was the latest installment in the Opportunities for Growth series, put on by the Claresholm and District Chamber of Commerce and Claresholm Economic Development. Photo by Rob Vogt

looking to sell businesses and people looking to buy them.

The idea for succession matching came from a plumber who wanted to sell his business. However, if he put up a sign, his suppliers would want their cash up front while his employees might leave.


Anderson said she wanted to help him, but was not happy with the resources out there, so she developed her own.

Consequently, she defined succession planning as preparing the process and schedule for an inevitable farm or business ownership transition, ideally between an exiting owner and an incoming one

Continued on Page 3

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# A Salute to AGRICULTURE WEEK

Claresholm Local Press 3  
Wednesday, September 28, 2022



## Succession planning for farms, ranches

### Continued from Page 2

The greatest problem facing the economy is there is \$10 trillion worth of business assets in North America that will change hands in the next 20 years.

About 72 percent of owners intend to exit their business within the next decade, and only eight per cent have a formal succession plan.

The economic impact of this is could be the premature sales of businesses; failed transitions; reduced productivity and lack of services, particularly in remote areas; job losses; and a destabilized economy.

Anderson said succession planning matters now because it will help business owners understand what options are available to them.

"We want you to have the best possible resources," she said.

There are three types of transitions – family transition; an employee share ownership plan; and a third party sale.

There are five stages of a business transition and succession plan:

- 1) Business sale readiness;
- 2) Engaging the buyer;
- 3) Due diligence;
- 4) Financing;

### 5) Transition.

Getting the business ready for sale can take 12 to 24 months and involves knowing your next chapter; getting the company books in order; business valuation, that is how much is the business worth; and formalizing a succession plan.

Engaging the buyer can take six to 12 months, and involves determining which type of business transition to pursue. If it is family or employee ownership, then communication about the sale must be opened up. If it is a third-party buyer, privacy issues must be considered. The best means of finding the buyer must be determined as well, and the business owner must understand how to talk about their business.

Due diligence can take one to 12 months, and involves knowing your Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement, that is what are you willing to take; outlining timelines and responsibilities in writing; and knowing good paperwork makes good friends. This stage also involves engaging professionals such as accountants and lawyers.

Understanding financing can take one to 12 months, and involves looking at options such as tradition-

al and non-traditional financing, vendor financing, and private capital.

The transition can take zero to 60 months, involving everything from physical items and space; to transferring corporate knowledge; and outlining responsibilities, authority, and relationships.

Anderson concluded by explaining there are resources available to Alberta SouthWest and Community Futures offices.

People can receive coupon codes that give them access to a free 30-minute consultation from her Succession Matching team; and 50 hours of business succession video content.

Anderson said it is easy to get started, by visiting [successionmatching.com](http://successionmatching.com) and answering four questions.

Someone will then reach out, let them know the coupon code, and walk them through filling out a profile.

This is free through a partnership of Alberta SouthWest and Community Futures, to be part of a new national/international platform designed to selectively match a business with the right buyer.

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# A Salute to AGRICULTURE WEEK

4 Claresholm Local Press  
Wednesday, September 28, 2022

## Agriculture

### New Nature Conservancy site west of Claresholm

By Rob Vogt  
Local Press Writer

The Nature Conservancy of Canada has a new conservation site west of Claresholm.

In a Aug. 26 release, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, or NCC, announced that together with an adjacent existing NCC conservation site, this project will form a single protected block of almost 1,900 hectares.

Its conservation will add to almost 7,700 hectares of protected areas along the eastern edge of the Porcupine Hills, of which 87 per cent was conserved in partnership by NCC, local ranchers and other landowners.

Protecting this property will also help further connect nearby conserved lands in the Livingstone Range through Bob Creek Wildland, the Waldron and King Ranches, and across the Porcupine Hills.

Located west of Claresholm in the Municipal District of Willow Creek, this 643-hectare property supports a rich diversity of ecosystems, from riparian habitats surrounding Trout Creek, to rolling fescue grasslands and montane forests, as well as at-risk bird species and imperilled limber pine.

Grasslands are one of the most at-risk ecosystems on the planet. This new project is situated in the Foothills Fescue Natural Subregion, where grassland ecosystems are dominated by rough fescue, Alberta's provincial



**NATURAL BEAUTY** - This is just part of a new Nature Conservancy of Canada site west of Claresholm. Photo courtesy of Brent Calver

grass. Because rough fescue grasslands are sensitive to disturbances, frequently out-competed by introduced plant species and slow to regenerate, they are a priority for conservation.

More than 80 per cent of this project's area features high-quality fescue grasslands. Protecting this ecosystem will maintain habitat for grassland wildlife, including Sprague's pipit, a songbird listed as Threatened under the federal Species at Risk Act, or SARA, and nutritious winter forage for deer, elk and cattle.

This site also features 96 hectares of provincially rare riverbank habitat surrounding Trout Creek, a fish-bearing watercourse that is part of the Oldman Watershed. This habitat is home to the bank swallow, which is

threatened under SARA.

Trout Creek once supported viable populations of at-risk westslope cutthroat trout, another SARA-listed threatened species, and may still harbour a remnant population of them. Conserving lands surrounding the creek is necessary for its restoration, which was identified as a key step in recovering this species.

At its highest elevations, the site also features montane forests with a population of limber pine, a species listed as endangered in Alberta under the Wildlife Act. Limber pine is declining rapidly across its range due to several factors, including white pine blister rust, an introduced fungal pathogen.

A conservation agreement between NCC and the property's landowner voluntarily

restricts development and conversion rights on the land. This legal agreement will ensure the property continues operating as a working cattle ranch, while maintaining the landscape in a natural, healthy, unfragmented state.

This project was made possible by funding from the Government of Canada, through the Natural Heritage Conservation Program, part of Canada's Nature Fund, and the Government of Alberta's Land Trust Grant Program.

A portion of this project was donated to the Nature Conservancy of Canada under the Government of Canada's Ecological Gifts Program. This program provides enhanced tax incentives for individuals or corporations who donate ecologically significant land.

## Quote/Unquote

"The only means of conservation is innovation."

—Peter Drucker

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# A Salute to AGRICULTURE

## Agriculture



### Harvest time

Producers have been busy in the fields combining their crops, including this producer west of Claresholm. *Photo by Rob Vogt*

## Agriculture

### Facility may solve farm waste issues

By Rob Vogt  
Local Press Writer

There is a facility at Beiseker that takes any kind of waste and turns it into diesel, graphite and water.

Recently representatives of the Municipal District of Willow Creek toured the facility, and gave a report on what they saw at M.D. council's Sept. 14 meeting.

Coun. Earl Hemmaway said the facility takes garbage no matter what, be it tires, wood, household waste, or anything else, puts it through the machine and all that is left is diesel and water.

There is no smell, and no environmental permits are needed.

They then sell the diesel at \$1.35 per litre to CP Rail.

"They're making money off it which is a return," Hemmaway said.

Chief Administrative Officer Derrick Krizsan said this process may not be the technology that fits the M.D., but it is one of them, and the M.D. should look at all options before deciding.

Coun. John Van Driesten said everybody was very positive on it.

The process could eliminate a lot of problems in the countryside such as plastics and grain bags.

"We could do a lot," he said.

"It's a good starting point, at least something to look at," he added.

He pointed out graphite is another byproduct, and that currently sells for \$3,500 a tonne.

"There's absolutely nothing being put in the ground," Van Driesten said. "That's what really impressed me."

The water produced could also be used for irrigation.

"I was really impressed," said Coun. John Kroetsch.

"It's something we should look into," he later added. "We could get rid of a lot of stuff, a lot of junk."

Coun. Glen Alm said the facility did 1,100 pounds of garbage a day.

"I hoped it opened up a bunch of people's eyes," he said, to things other than burying waste.

He suggested instead of recycling, that material can be run through this plant and turned into something usable.

Alm added the plants are scalable, meaning they can be built bigger if needed.

Hemmaway said it seems like a way to get started and get something going, adding only one or two people are needed to run the plant.

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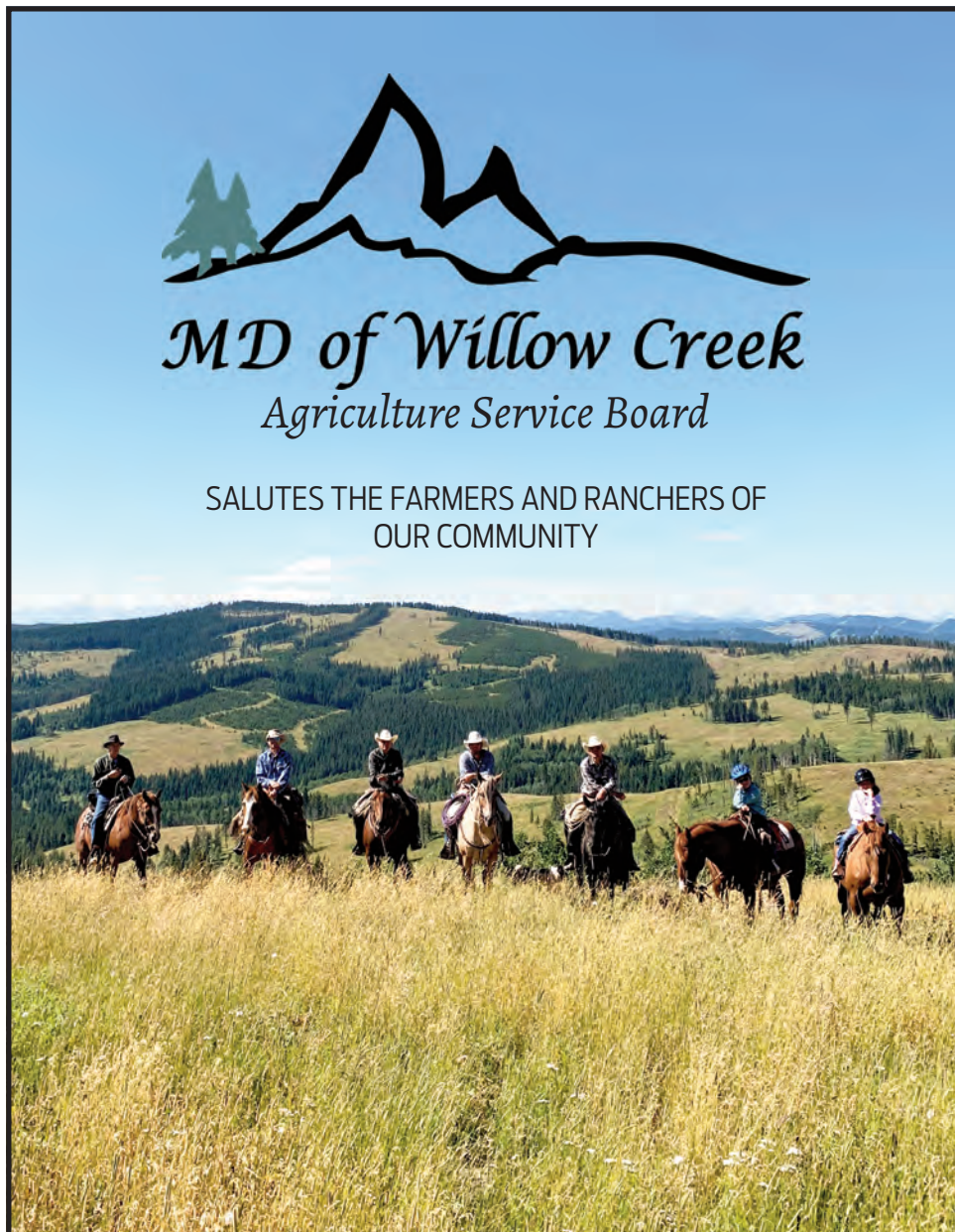
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# A Salute to AGRICULTURE WEEK

## Agriculture

# A collaborative approach to save some good crops from bad pests

By Rob Vogt  
Local Press Writer

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada has teamed up with a diverse group of experts in plant pathology, entomology, weed science, economics and agronomy to share knowledge about the range of pests affecting prairie crops.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada recently issued a release stating crops are susceptible to a number of pests that can cause damage to plants, and not just insects! According to researchers, the word pest is an umbrella term that includes insects, weeds and various plant diseases — anything biotic that could be detrimental to a crop. And since pests are bad for agricultural production.

Dr. Brent McCallum, an Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada research scientist, based at the Morden Research and Development Centre, has teamed up with a diverse group of experts to share knowledge about the range of pests affecting prairie crops.

They've dubbed this network the "Prairie Biovigilance Network," with the goal of improving their capacity to quickly and holistically save good crops from bad pests.

The term biovigilance is a relatively recent term used to describe an innovative, multi-disciplinary approach to understand and combat the negative effects of newly introduced pests, new agricultural farming practices, new crops and climate change on plant health.

Biovigilance relies on a continuous cycle of awareness, identification, assessment, understanding, mitigation and appropriateness to ensure that solving one problem doesn't lead to another. The goal is to proactively mitigate potential threats from plant diseases, weed species and insects before they affect the agricultural sector on a larger scale.

Given the Prairie Biovigilance Network has just begun and focuses mainly on work led by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada researchers, this is only the beginning. Plant pest surveillance is done by many agencies in the public and private sectors, however more collaboration is needed to expand the network and drive this all-encompassing work forward, so producers can fully benefit from this knowledge.

By expanding the Prairie Biovigilance Network to include complementary partners, such as provincial governments, stakeholder organizations and producers, researchers can expand proactive surveillance activities, which is an important first step in the continuous cycle of biovigilance.

Increased surveillance will allow researchers to combat current pests, predict what potential crop pests are on the horizon, and better prepare mitigation strategies that have a smaller environmental footprint while protecting producer's crops. All of these activities will protect Canada's reputation as a food export-

ing nation.

"We want to raise awareness and get producers participating with us. We don't just do this work in isolation, it's something we need to do with the producers. They're the ones who are on the front lines and generally the first to notice pests cropping up in their field — their contributions to the network are crucial," said McCallum.

Maintaining consistent on-farm biovigilance with the support of partners across the prairies will be important as pest populations rise and fall. By creating a sustainable control system using biovigilance principles, all Canadian producers will benefit, now and into the future. With consistency, producers can be better prepared to solve pest problems and improve soil and crop health, while continuing to be environmentally-conscious stewards of the land.

By the end of the project in 2026, one goal is to develop a communications network that translates knowledge into practice and helps producers apply this knowledge to better protect their crops. Information from producers will be an important feedback mechanism to achieve this goal and for a successful biovigilance program on the prairies.

The work being done within the biovigilance network plays a fundamental role in ensuring the resilience of Canada's agricultural sector and contributes to the world's food security and food supply.

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# A Salute to AGRICULTURE WEEK

Claresholm Local Press 7  
Wednesday, September 28, 2022

## Agriculture



### Farming is family

Former Claresholm resident Jennifer Ash (née Toone), daughter of Seth and Donna Toone, passed away suddenly on Friday, Sept. 2. Harvest must go on, so friends and cousins of the Toones came with five combines from Lethbridge so the grieving process and funeral could go on. *Photo submitted*

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## Agriculture

### M.D. hears about proposed bio-digester

By Rob Vogt  
Local Press Writer

A private group is interested in setting up a bio-digester south of Fort Macleod that would turn manure, dead livestock, and much more into natural gas that would be sold into the provincial system.

At its Aug. 24, the council of the Municipal District of Willow Creek heard more about this proposal from Coun. John Van Driesten.

He explained he attended a meeting recently south of Fort Macleod with the group looking to set up the bio-digester.

They were looking for a spot where

they could tap into a high-pressure natural gas line, and have sufficient stock material for their facility.

Van Driesten said they have identified a location south of Fort Macleod.

The \$40 million plant needs about 14 acres, and would use 100,000 tonnes of product to generate 200,000 gigajoules of natural gas.

Moreover, Van Driesten said they will pick up the manure, and will draw from a 25 to 30 mile area.

"I think this (project) would be a win-win," he said.

"I think it's going to be a wonderful project," he later added.

Coun. Glen Alm asked if the group

was looking for a commitment from the M.D. or were they private?

Van Driesten responded they are private.

They were asking him if it would be tough to do business and set up shop in the M.D.

Reeve Maryanne Sandberg said all they can do is wait for the group to make an application to the M.D.

She cautioned council should not say anything about the merits of the proposal so they would not be biased in hearing any application.

Coun. Evan Berger added there may also be re-zoning required and an area structure plan.

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# A Salute to AGRICULTURE WEEK

## Agriculture



### Cutting a swath

Producers have been busy in the fields swathing and combining their crops, including this producer west of Claresholm. Photo submitted by Pat Fogg

## Agriculture

### M.D. to be part of Intensive Livestock Working Group

By Rob Vogt  
Local Press Writer

The Municipal District of Willow Creek is getting involved with the Intensive Livestock Working Group, an organization undertaking a project whose primary objective is a confined feeding operation industry that contributes to the growth, efficiency and sustainability of agricultural production in Alberta in part by facilitating respectful relationships and operating with the concurrence of the community in which it is located.

At a recent M.D. council meeting, Ron Axelson of the Intensive Livestock Working Group appeared as a delegation, while Reise O'Hara, a consultant on the project, joined in by video conference.

Axelson said the M.D. along with Mountain View County have been identified to participate in the project.

The goal of the project is to work together with confined feeding operations collaboratively to solve local problems.

He noted the livestock industry has been insular in the way it has done business.

Axelson observed a lot of issues are not regulatory related either.

Instead he likens the project to a good neighbour policy where confined feeding operations could get involved in the community as corporate citizens, and work with groups who have concerns to come up with solutions collaboratively.

He also reported municipalities have welcomed the Intensive Livestock Working Group with open arms, but they have had a harder time selling producers on the project.

"We'd like to create a collaboration with the M.D. and other stakeholders," Axelson said. "Work together and solve some of the problems that emerge over time."

"We want to be part of the solution." O'Hara then explained the project, which has three phases.

Phase 1 identified the critical issues contributing to the erosion of public trust. The process included an on-line survey, interviews, and engaging various stakeholder groups.

The four key issues identified

are road use; land use; regulation; and taxation.

The goal of Phase 2 was to develop collaborative engagement strategies. The best way, O'Hara said, is to work with the municipality and stakeholders.

"It's very locally focused," he said, adding local issues require local solutions.

Phase 3, currently under way, is to identify two municipalities and apply the process developed in Phase 2.

The M.D. of Willow Creek and Mountain View County have been identified.

Axelson said it is now critical to get open-minded people together.

He stressed there is no "most-important player", but instead everyone is involved so everyone wins.

The goal is to bring together the experiences of elected officials, administration, and producers to come up with innovative ways to solve the problems they are facing.

Axelson said this will be a pilot project with the two municipalities. They will also try to build a process that can be transferred to any

other municipality.

"We want it to be an ongoing process," he said.

Axelson observed challenges can come in quickly and as soon as one is solved, another one arises.

"We need the public's buy-in from this council for this project," he said, adding this is a trust-building exercise.

"We're happy to be involved," said Coun. Glen Alm. "There's ILOs (Intensive Livestock Operations) working in our jurisdiction."

"We need to do whatever we can do to restore that public trust."

Reeve Maryanne Sandberg added the Intensive Livestock Working Group asked for some names of possible cooperative producers and those were provided.

She also advised them to include the Hutterian Brethren colonies who are major producers.

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