



SEED AN IDEA

A youth in agriculture entrepreneurship program

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Proposal Submitted By: Heritage Agricultural Society
Box 2188, 5411-51 Street
Stony Plain, AB. T7Z 1X7
c/o Judy Unterschultz, Executive Director
judyu@multicentre.org
780-963-2777

Proposal: Seed An Idea – Phase 1
Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurship
Feasibility Study and Pilot Project

Amount Requested: \$75,000

The Heritage Agricultural Society is requesting \$75,000 from Parkland County to complete a Feasibility Study and Pilot Project for engaging high school aged youth in agricultural entrepreneurship.

The funds may be positioned with other grant applications in order to create a larger benefit for the community. Altogether the funds will be used to engage high school aged youth with the agricultural community to better understand job and business opportunities and also to hear from the industry on the challenges they are experiencing and the assistance they require from today's youth in creating solutions.

This interaction will be completed by social events, a committee, community surveys and filling the position for a youth to be involved in Parkland County's Agriculture and Rural Life Advisory Committee. We have also had discussions with County staff on encouraging youth to participate in the annual County Tour so they also get to know their county better in hopes of creating an even stronger connection and commitment to rural life in our area.

This first step in this multi-year project will benefit the County by providing to them a better understanding of what youth think and believe in regards to agriculture and at what level they would be willing to work towards a solution for youth involvement in an industry and lifestyle that is already experiencing many challenges with youth choosing an urban future and leaving rural roots behind.

From this initial study we will also have a template for moving forward in designing and implementing a Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurship Centre of Excellence in the Parkland County region. We have a fully developed program which only needs to be adjusted to include results from the feasibility study. This program has taken over a year to develop and involved feedback from youth in its development.

This Centre is an important step in the Multicultural Heritage Centre's long term sustainability plan. Agriculture is one of the Key Business Activities of the Multicultural Centre and has been since its inception. Throughout The Multicultural Centre's forty years of existence, it has developed a significant database of connections in agriculture. The Multicultural Centre plans on incorporating this innovative program to gain youth involvement and to keep them motivated throughout the process.

It is anticipated this program will take a further 3 years in development and implementation to the point that the program will also have a strong sustainability plan that rolls up into the Multi-Cultural Village Development Plan, currently in the Business and Financial Plan Phase with the Heritage Agricultural Society (HAS).

Parkland County may anticipate that the Seed an Idea program will require continued financial support during these 3 years. The level of financial commitment will be determined on how we are able to position this first \$75,000 with granting agencies, and it is our strong intent to produce the visible outcomes required by funders. We have been provided letters of support from Parkland County in regards to previous grant applications, however, because the funds were not fully committed already to the Seed an Idea program, funders are not considering the support letters. Being able to have a firm commitment of funds will allow the Multicultural Centre to have the ability to seek matching funds from a number of other organizations and granting agencies in order to take full advantage of leveraging Parkland County's financial commitment.

The Seed an Idea program will complement the commitment Parkland County has already made by engaging the programs of Green Hectares. Green Hectares will ensure there are programs throughout the county in regards to entrepreneurship resources – making business support and education accessible everywhere on demand. Seed an Idea will be engaging youth to take on agriculture jobs and businesses that will then feed into the Green Hectares programs. This will ensure we encourage youth leadership in our community and have the resources to educate them and start them on this path and once they are engaged on this path, the continued support of the Green Hectares programs will help to ensure a better opportunity of success in the youth endeavors.

APPENDIX 1

The following is a list of organizations that have supplied letters of support for the Seed an Idea program – or in general to the Multicultural Heritage Centre:

- Agriculture for Life
- Agriculture and Food Council
- Agrium
- Alberta 4H
- Alberta Barley
- Alberta Barley Commission
- Alberta Canola
- Alberta Chicken
- Alberta Goats
- Alberta Honey
- Alberta Institute of Agrologists
- Alberta Lamb
- Alberta Milk
- Alberta Pork
- Community Futures
- Green Certificate
- Olds College
- Parkland School Division
- Selmac Sales
- Town of Stony Plain
- UFA

APPENDIX 2

The Heritage Agricultural Society (HAS) is the applicant for the *Seed an Idea* project. The Society incorporated in 1974, and is a seven day/week year round, cultural programming and educational organization. The Heritage Agricultural Society (Multicultural Heritage Centre) has a long history in developing and delivering successful programs aimed at the youth age demographic. The following are included as examples of successful programs designed, developed and implemented by the Society:

- The Society currently, and for the past 15 years, has run more than a dozen agricultural related programs for grade school children that are matched to Alberta Education's curriculum. Tens of thousands of children have participated in these programs.
- MultiYouth Productions has provided theatrical training to local 12-18 year old children for the past 20 years, and is considered one of the preeminent theatre schools in the province. Each year this troupe provides teen social issue performances throughout Alberta before tens of thousands of junior/senior high school students. Several of their performances have been professionally filmed and made available to all junior/senior high schools in Alberta as teaching tools.
- City Slickers – established in 1998, this one-day event annually brings over 1,200 children from Edmonton to farms in Parkland County to learn about agriculture and food production. This program is currently in the process of being offered to other communities throughout the province, with additional interest from Manitoba in franchising the program for delivery in their province. Scaling this program into other communities will include mentorship and guides for teachers and other community organizations to assist with successful delivery of the program.
- ZAP! Safety Programming – sponsored by Fortis Alberta, the Society offers an electrical safety on the farm program that is offered directly in schools throughout Alberta. More than 5,000 children receive this educational program annually.
- Alberta Café – utilizing the Canada Food Guide to recognize the importance of basic, healthy nutrition choices, including locally grown Alberta products, this program runs from Kindergarten through Grade 9, offered on-site but also as a "suitcase program" where we take the program into Edmonton schools.
- Turn Down the Volume – educates children about sound induced hearing loss and the importance of hearing and sound safety, particularly on the farm. This program is offered on-site, but additionally is offered as a suitcase program in Edmonton schools.
- Grounds for Change – Schoolyard naturalization is about restoring areas of natural habitat to schoolyards, which provides engaging, complex landscapes for creative play and learning. A growing local food component is a required aspect of this program. Naturalization projects promote environmental stewardship and an understanding of nature in urban areas. A pilot program to work with schools in Parkland County is in the planning stage.

The Heritage Agricultural Society has also developed and successfully implemented agricultural education programs and opportunities for adults, including:

- Heritage Farmers Market – Since 2002, The Multicultural Heritage Centre has offered producers a direct market venue for their produce, crafts and baked goods. The Market attracts a building customer base as interest in purchasing local food grows within the population. The Farmers Market is an important link in our promotion of local food producers.
- Organic Master Gardener Program – established in 2008, this year-long Certificate program is offered in conjunction with Gaia College in British Columbia and includes both classroom instruction and practical experience. It is the only Organic Master Gardener Program in Alberta and currently there is interest in expanding this program into other communities in the province.
- Community Gardens – The Multicultural Heritage Centre provides garden plots to persons interested in planting an organic garden. This program is a partnership between three entities: Town of Stony Plain (building supplies and manpower), Alberta Parenting for the Future (APFA advertising and community networking) and the Multicultural Centre (provision of the land). This collaboration demonstrates the history of partnerships working together towards a common goal.
- A Demonstration Farm – Since obtaining the five-acre school site in 1996, The Multicultural Centre has worked with ongoing partners and projects showing contemporary agricultural production methods and presenting emerging agricultural issues to the public.