

## 2018 Business Plan: Agricultural Services

### 1. WHO ARE WE: DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

Agricultural Management including the coordination planning and implementation of various agriculture related programs and services as required by legislation and council.

Key programs, services, and activities include:

- Inspecting for weeds and other invasive plant species on public and private lands
- Managing vegetation on County roadsides and properties
- Cutting grass and brush on all roads, shoulder to fence, in the County
- Providing agricultural extension events
- Providing horticultural consultations for the public
- Conducting pest control and inspections for ratepayers

### 2. RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS

#### 2.1 Classroom Agriculture Program

- This involves one-hour sessions delivered to Grade 4 students and teaches students about agriculture and where their food comes from. The program is delivered in 10 schools in the Parkland County area, averaging a total of 20 classrooms and 500 students.

#### 2.2 City Slickers

- City Slickers aims to teach children about agriculture by bringing children from urban schools to farms in Parkland County. Children spend the day between farm sites and stations at the Heritage Pavilion. In 2016, Parkland County's Agricultural Services' station, "Farm Beneath Our Feet," taught children about the importance of soil in food production. Each year, an average of 1200 children from elementary schools are in attendance.

#### 2.3 Weed Inspection Application

- Weed inspectors use this application to record weed inspections and to issue weed notices. The data collected with the application can be used to track case history, monitor weed infestations over time, and identify priority areas where inspectors need to focus inspection and enforcement activities. 2017 was the first season this application was used in the field.

#### 2.4 Pest Control Application

- This application is used by the Crop Inspector and Rural Extension Coordinator to track Clubroot inspections. This is under development and scheduled to be used in the field in the 2018 field season. The newly created application will have the flexibility to enable the tracking of Clubroot inspections, as well as other agricultural pest inspections, such as Grasshoppers, Fusarium, Bertha Armyworms, and Diamondback Moths.

### 3. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

#### 3.1 Boards and Committees

- The Agricultural Service Board (ASB) was previously used by Agriculture Services for input and feedback.

- Changes were made to the committee structure for Parkland County and the department's new relationship with this board is still unclear.

#### 4. LINKS TO PLANS AND STUDIES

##### 4.1 Future of Agriculture Study

Several longer-term recommendations from the Future of Agriculture Study may affect this department, including:

- Tracking and monitoring agriculture activities
- Expand Agriculture Services Board (ASB) to address needs of specific sub sectors
- Create Senior Agriculture Leadership Position

##### 4.2 Municipal Development Plan and Integrated Community Sustainability Plan

- Both these documents may have implications for Agriculture Services.

#### 5. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Customer interactions – phone calls, office visits, site visits
- Running hours of tractors
- Distance of roadways mowed
- Revenue generated – through sales, rentals, hay permits, grazing permits, strychnine
- Average time to respond to complaints

#### 6. PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

- No Spray Program
- Sustainable Agriculture/Education/Extension
- Crop/Forage Services/Testing
- Events
- Hay permits
- Grazing Leases
- Hazardous Trees
- Horticulture
- Problem wildlife/Pest Control
- Rental/sale items
- Roadside mowing
- Weed control
- Weed inspections