



Alternate Land Use Services

Farmers Growing a Better
Environment for Canadians

NATIONAL UPDATE

November 2006

Alternate Land Use Services (ALUS) is “the farmers’ conservation program,” and a completely new policy concept for Canada. It links the environmental demands of Canadians to the farmers who provide the ecological goods and services - something that no other program in this country does. ALUS is a voluntary, incentive-based method of recognizing and rewarding farmers for maintaining, creating or enhancing environmental benefits.

ALUS continues to benefit from the full support of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture and its member organizations across the country. While the provinces noted below are currently actively pursuing ALUS pilot projects, the ALUS network continues to encourage other organizations to expand our reach.

Rural Municipality of Blanshard, Manitoba

The first ALUS pilot project in Canada was launched by the federal and provincial governments along with KAP, Delta Waterfowl, and the RM of Blanshard in November 2005. The three-year, \$1.8 million initiative is delivered through the Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation and is receiving national, provincial, local and international funding to proceed. An implementation committee consisting of key stakeholders has been struck to ensure the success of the pilot project. Over 20,000 eligible acres have been enrolled in the RM by 160 landowners, totaling over \$300,000 in annual payments for ecological goods & services.

Norfolk County, Ontario

Led by the Norfolk Federation of Agriculture, the Norfolk County ALUS proposed pilot has had input from a collaboration of 55+ partners including local, provincial, national and USA organizations. The collaboration has commitments of \$90,000 towards a near 3-year, \$1.9 million pilot and is waiting funding approval from several other funding sources. A benchmark survey of public opinion on the environment in relation to farming and the quality of life in Norfolk County was completed in 2005 and the final report was released on July 18, 2006. Air quality was the most important environmental issue mentioned by half of urban and one- third of farm and rural non- farm respondents.

Water quality was the second highest ranking environmental issue mentioned for all groups. A significant finding of the survey was that a majority of non- farm residents in Norfolk County believed that farmers should be, or possibly could be paid to deliver environmental services. Four ALUS demonstration farms are now established and hosting tours by the public and potential partners of the county wide pilot proposal.

Prince Edward Island

PEI has resubmitted its ALUS pilot project proposal to function on a watershed basis and is waiting for funding approvals. The final decision on location is expected to be made soon.

Saskatchewan

Progress on a pilot project continues to move forward at an excellent pace, with international funders already expressing interest in this province. The ALUS task force has selected the RM of Lakeside as the project site from among 21 applications. It's estimated that the three-year pilot project will cost \$1.9 million, and will focus on water-related benefits like groundwater recharge, flood control, reduced municipal infrastructure costs, and cleaner water.

The ALUS task force in Saskatchewan includes the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Soil Conservation Association, Provincial Council of Agricultural Development and Diversification Boards (PCAB) and the Delta Waterfowl Foundation. Their advisor is Dr. Suren Kulshreshtha an agricultural economist with the University of Saskatchewan.

Alberta

Five counties requested that ALUS pilot projects be located in their areas, and the County of Vermilion River was selected. A funding proposal was recently submitted federally, sponsored by the Delta Waterfowl Foundation in partnership with the Alberta Research Council, who would carry out the evaluation. The ACAAF proposal was developed by Delta associate Mr. Ted Sutton, retired Dean of Agriculture at Lakeland College. Six hundred thousand dollars of private sector funds have been secured for this three year pilot project.