

**RESOLUTION 8-21**  
**REINSTATING PROVINCIAL AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT STAFF**

**WHEREAS:** The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry is responsible for supporting environmentally sustainable resource management practices;

**WHEREAS:** Staffing levels in the Agriculture and Forestry department have been reduced significantly;

**WHEREAS:** Municipal staff have been required to provide assistance to agricultural producers and acreage owners;

**WHEREAS:** Agriculture and Forestry staff members having years of experience represent institutional experience that cannot be replaced;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**

**THAT ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST**

That the Ministry of Alberta Agriculture and Forestry reinstates funding for extension staff that will assist agricultural, apicultural, and horticultural producers throughout Alberta.

**SPONSORED BY:** Stettler County No. 6

**MOVED BY:**

**SECONDED BY:**

**CARRIED:**

**DEFEATED:**

**STATUS:** Provincial

**DEPARTMENT:** Alberta Agriculture and Forestry

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

In October of 2019, the provincial budget showed 51 positions would be eliminated, which ultimately occurred in December. The 2020 provincial budget released in February detailed plans for an additional 277 job cuts, which would be 40% of all government reductions this year. Many of these staff members have years of experience with the province, and represent many years of institutional experience that cannot be replaced.

Several of these many cuts were positions based in the Ag-Info Centre, a trusted resource for producers around the province. The staff members whose positions were eliminated provided unbiased information based on years of research, much of which was performed by provincial researchers. While industry representatives are available to producers to provide information on livestock and grain production methods, the private sector may lead to more biased information being relied upon. If so, this will increase costs for producers that once relied on an impartial source like the Ag-Info Centre.

Municipal staff members have also begun assisting agricultural producers more at the same time that municipalities around the province have seen dramatic reductions in revenue. Rather than refer to documents that were once available on Ropin' the Web, municipal staff must now refer to a small amount of industry representatives when the information cannot be found.