

**RESOLUTION 6-21**  
**AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION CHECK OFF OPTION**

**WHEREAS** Producers must pay mandatory checkoff's on various agricultural products;

**WHEREAS** Producers have no voluntary option to chose where they send these checkoff dollars;

**WHEREAS** This process seems to violate freedom of choice and would be an excellent candidate for red tape reduction;

**WHEREAS** Agricultural Research Associations have conducted variety trials and provided proof of concept for farming practices for decades, efforts that are often unsung, and face a funding crunch under the changes to Agricultural Research funding in the Province of Alberta;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST**

That Alberta Agriculture and Forestry and the Alberta Agricultural Products Marketing Council create the option for producers to allocate check-off dollars directly to their local Applied Research Association or various approved Agricultural Research and Development Organizations.

**SPONSORED BY:** MD of Peace No. 135

**MOVED BY:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SECONDED BY:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CARRIED:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DEFEATED:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STATUS:** Provincial

**DEPARTMENT:** Alberta Agriculture and Forestry; Alberta Agricultural Products Marketing Council, Alberta Wheat Commission, Alberta Barley Commission, Alberta Canola Producer Council, Alberta Pulse Growers, Alberta Seed Processors Association, Alberta Seed Growers Association, Alberta Beef Producers, Alberta Pork Producers, Alberta Milk, Alberta Chicken Producers, Potato Growers of Alberta and other appropriate bodies.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Under the Marketing of Agricultural Products Act, check-off dollars are mandatory for every producer marketing their products in Alberta. The receiving facility must then remit these funds to the appropriate commission. If a producer wants their funds back, they must remit for reimbursement in two narrow windows in January and August.

The sustainable funding of Agricultural Research Associations, which have been providing proof of concept and regional variety trial work for decades, is in doubt. With recent changes to the funding of Agricultural Research within Alberta and discussions from the current interim chair of RDAR indicating the potential for Alberta tax dollars funding out-of-province research, the Province of Alberta should allow producers to direct check-off dollars to these valuable organizations, should they so choose.

### [Alberta's new vision for ag research](#)

**Published: August 13, 2020**

**Opinion- Western Producer**

At the core of the plan is the creation of Results Driven Agriculture Research (RDAR), a non-profit, producer-led company that will operate at arm's length from the government of Alberta. This new organization will determine and fund industry-wide research priorities to enhance producers' competitive advantage.

Alberta is embarking on a bold new direction in agriculture research where the spending priorities will be set by producers who grow the crops and raise the livestock. It's a model like none other you will find anywhere in Canada.

On March 30, Agriculture and Forestry Minister Devin Dreeshen announced a new vision for provincial agriculture research following a series of consultations with farmers, ranchers and other stakeholders throughout the province. The process revealed that producers, in collaboration with other partners, including scientists, educational institutions and private industry, are better positioned than government officials to determine research priorities.

At the core of the plan is the creation of Results Driven Agriculture Research (RDAR), a non-profit, producer-led company that will operate at arm's length from the government of Alberta. This new organization will determine and fund industry-wide research priorities to enhance producers' competitive advantage.

I am proud to chair the interim board of directors of RDAR, which is currently in its formative stages. Our board consists of a broad cross-section of respected individuals from livestock and crops boards and commissions, applied research associations, farm organizations, academia and individual producers.

Our goal is to incorporate the new company by the fall of 2020 and we have been extremely busy, holding eight board meetings since April 1. At our meeting in Red Deer on July 6 the board adopted two founding principles:

**Mandate:** To support results-driven research priorities and programs that will increase competitiveness and profitability of the Alberta agriculture industry.

**Vision:** Alberta's agriculture and food sectors achieve their full potential through producer-led, strategic investments in research and innovation.

RDAR will be entrusted with investing \$37 million per year in agriculture research funding. We are currently being funded through a \$2 million Canadian Agricultural Partnership grant administered by the Alberta Barley Commission until the new company is incorporated.

Our initial goals reflect a collective commitment to providing maximum benefit to producers and leveraging opportunities with public, private and producer funders.

One of our first priorities has been to consult early and often with the key players in agriculture research in Alberta — and some beyond our borders.

Working with our interim management team led by chief executive officer Gerald Hauer and consultants with deep experience in the sector, we have hosted 10 separate webinars with more than 250 participants to gauge the views of our partners on issues such as: the core focus areas of our funding, how far up the value chain we should invest, our philosophy on investing beyond our borders and the makeup of the permanent board and advisory committee, to name a few.

Change can be intimidating, but it's also an opportunity for a new beginning. The RDAR board has embraced that challenge and we look forward to the startup of the new company.

*David Chalack is interim board chair of RDAR, a veterinarian from the Calgary-Cochrane area and a Canadian Agriculture Hall of Famer. Chalack has held numerous chair positions including the Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency, and is the former president and chair of the Calgary Stampede. He has also developed international experience in his roles at Alta Genetics Inc.*