## Regional Agriculture Master Plan

### Task Force

June 15, 2018, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm  
Calmar Legion Hall  
4815 47 St, Calmar, AB T0C 0V0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Opening</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **1.1 Quorum**   | Action: Confirmation   
|                  | Lead: Chair Shaigec    |
| **1.2 Call to Order** | Action: Declaration  
|                  | Lead: Chair Shaigec    |
| **1.3 Chair Opening Remarks** | Action: Information  
|                  | Lead: Chair Shaigec    |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Approval of Agenda</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action: Approval</td>
<td>Lead: Chair Shaigec</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Recommended Motion:** That the Regional Agriculture Master Plan Task Force approve the Agenda of June 15, 2018.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. Approval of Minutes</th>
<th>Page 4 of 58</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action: Approval</td>
<td>Lead: Chair Shaigec</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Recommended Motion:** That the Regional Agriculture Master Plan Task Force approve the Minutes of April 19, 2018.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. Regional Agriculture Master Plan</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Regional Agriculture Master Plan – Provincial Funding</td>
<td>Approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recommended Motion:</strong> That the Regional Agriculture Master Plan Task Force receive the update on Provincial Funding for the project as information.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Regional Agriculture Master Plan – Request for Federal Representative</td>
<td>Approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recommended Motion:</strong> That the Regional Agriculture Master Plan Task Force receive the letter requesting a representative from the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Foods Canada as information.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Regional Agriculture Master Plan – Edmonton Metropolitan Region draft “Situation Analysis” Report</td>
<td>Approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recommended Motion:</strong> That the Regional Agriculture Master Plan Task Force receive the draft “Situation Analysis” Report for information.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 TASK FORCE DISCUSSION – Conservation/Preservation of Agriculture</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 LESA Overview &amp; Introduction</td>
<td>Approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recommended Motion:</strong> That the Regional Agriculture Master Plan Task Force receive the LESA Overview &amp; Introduction as information.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 4.6 Regional Agriculture Master Plan – Communications Plan

**Action:** Approval  
**Lead:** Chair Shaigec/ Ms. Shuya

**Recommended Motion:** That the Regional Agriculture Master Plan Task receive the Communications Plan update as information.

### 5. Next Steps

**Action:** Information  
**Lead:** Chair Shaigec/ Ms. Shuya

### 6. Next Meeting

- July 13, 2018, 9:00 a.m. – Noon, Edmonton to Host

### 7. Adjournment

**Action:** Declaration  
**Lead:** Chair Shaigec

**Recommended Motion:** That the Regional Agriculture Master Plan Task Force meeting of June 15, 2018 adjourn.
Regional Agriculture Master Plan Task Force

Thursday, April 19, 2018
10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Broadmoor Golf Course
2100 Oak St, Sherwood Park, AB T8A 0V9

Members:
Rod Shaigec, Parkland County (Chair)
Michael Walters, City of Edmonton (Vice Chair)
Nicole Boutestein, Town of Morinville (Alternate)
Tanni Doblanke, Leduc County
Alanna Hnatiw, Sturgeon County
Paul Smith, Strathcona County

Technical Members:
Joel Gould, Strathcona County
Darren Haarsma, Parkland County
Michael Klassen, Sturgeon County
Kathryn Lennon, City of Edmonton

Consultants:
Jerry Bouma, Toma & Bouma
Bob Burden, Serecon Inc.
Dr. Thomas Daniels, Sole Proprietor, Professor of Design, University of Pennsylvania (via Telecon)
John Steil, Stantec Consulting Ltd.

Regrets:
Kathy Barnhart, Town of Beaumont
Garet Broadbent, Leduc County
Jason Cathcart, Government of Alberta
Karen Sundquist, Government of Alberta
Peter Vana, Parkland County
Markus Weber, Serecon Inc.

EMRB Staff:
Malcolm Bruce, CEO
Sharon Shuya, Project Manager
Stephanie Chai, Project Manager
Loreen Lennon, Communications Manager
Leslie Chivers, Operations Manager
Taylor Varro, Municipal Planning Intern
Amanda Borman, Executive Assistant
Raquel Chauvette, Administrative Assistant

Guests:
Jordan Brown, City of Leduc
Neal Comeau, Sturgeon County
Charleen Currie, City of Edmonton
Gibby Davis, City of Edmonton
Linton Delaine, Strathcona County
Trevor Duley, City of St. Albert
Jordan Evans, Leduc County
Schaun Goodeve, Town of Morinville
Larissa Hepp, Sturgeon County
Cory Labrecque, City of Leduc
Marnie Lee, Strathcona County
Avril McCalla, City of Edmonton
Robert Parks, Strathcona County
Joannes Wong, Town of Beaumont
1. Opening

1.1 Quorum

Quorum achieved.

1.2 Call to Order

Chair Shaigec called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

1.3 Chair Opening Remarks

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion: That the Regional Agriculture Master Plan Task Force approve the Agenda of April 19, 2018 as amended.
Moved by: Mayor Tanni Doblanke, Leduc County
Accepted by: Chair
Decision: Carried unanimously

3. Approval of Minutes

Motion: That the Regional Agriculture Master Plan Task Force approve the Minutes of March 29, 2018.
Moved by: Councillor Michael Walters, City of Edmonton
Accepted by: Chair
Decision: Carried unanimously

4. Regional Agriculture Master Plan

4.1 Regional Agriculture Master Plan – Project Purpose Statement

Ms. Shuya reviewed the Regional Agriculture Master Plan Task Force Project Purpose Statement.

Motion: That the Regional Agriculture Master Plan Task Force reaffirm and endorse the Project Purpose Statement and recommend the Board receive it for information.
Moved by: Councillor Michael Walters, City of Edmonton
Accepted by: Chair
Decision: Carried unanimously

4.2 Regional Agriculture Master Plan – Draft Stakeholder Engagement Plan
Ms. Shuya provided information on the Draft Stakeholder Engagement Plan to members of the Regional Agriculture Master Plan Task Force.

**Motion**: That the Regional Agriculture Master Plan Task Force endorse the draft Stakeholder Engagement Plan and recommend the Board receive it for approval.

**Moved by**: Councillor Paul Smith, Strathcona County

**Accepted by**: Chair

**Decision**: Carried unanimously

### 5. Introduction of the Project Consultants

The Regional Agriculture Master Plan Task Force members are introduced to Project Consultants Jerry Bouma, John Steil, Bob Burden, Dr. Thomas Daniels via telecon and Markus Weber, in absentia.

#### 5.1 Project Overview and Approach

#### 5.2 Workplan and Schedule

#### 5.3 Introduction to the Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Tool

#### 5.4 Task Force Discussions

#### 5.5 Letter to Federal Government

**Motion**: That the Regional Agriculture Master Plan Task Force recommend that the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board send a letter to the Federal Minister of Agriculture Agri-Food Canada, requesting the appointment of a Federal representative on the RAMP Task Force.

**Moved by**: Councillor Paul Smith, Strathcona County

**Accepted by**: Chair

**Decision**: Carried

### 6. Adjournment
Motion: That the Regional Agriculture Master Plan Task Force meeting of April 19, 2018 adjourn at 1:28 p.m.
Moved by: Mayor Tanni Doblanko, Leduc County
Accepted by: Chair
Decision: Carried unanimously

Task Force Chair, Rod Shaigec
Regional Agriculture Master Plan – Provincial Funding

Recommended Motion: That the Regional Agriculture Master Plan Task Force receive the update on Provincial Funding for the project for information.

Background

Letters from the Board CEO were sent on May 29, 2017, December 13, 2017 and March 2, 2018 to the Deputy Minister Bev Yee, requesting matching funding support for the Regional Agriculture Master Plan in the amount of $138,000.

One April 19, 2018, the Board CEO received a letter from new Deputy Minister Andre Corbould, advising the Board that the Ministry was unable to support the request for funding and extended in-kind support in the form of technical-advisory, as required.

Recommendation:

That the RAMP Task Force receive the Province’s response as information.
April 19, 2018

Malcolm Bruce, CEO
Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board
1100 Bell Tower,
10104 – 103 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5J 0H8

Dear Mr. Bruce,

Thank you for your recent letter requesting matching funding of $134,000 toward the creation of an Agriculture Master Plan for the Edmonton Metropolitan Region.

I note that in November 2017, Bev Yee, former Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, encouraged you to re-submit this request prior to the 2018/19 fiscal year. While I appreciate your objectives, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry's current fiscal situation remains constrained, and does not allow us to support this project with matching funds at this time.

I would like to extend our commitment to providing in-kind support – technical and advisory – as required and as available within my department. Please feel free to contact either Darren Chase, Executive Director of Policy, Strategy and Intergovernmental Relations at 780-427-3338 or Karen Sundquist, Manager, Land Use Policy (who currently sits on the Regional Agriculture Master Plan Working Group) at 780-644-2989 to discuss areas of support.

Your commitment to agricultural land use planning is commendable, and I wish you the best in completing this project.

Sincerely,

Andre Corbould
Deputy Minister

cc: Dr. Jodi L Abbott, Chair, Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board
    Brad Pickering, Deputy Minister, Alberta Municipal Affairs
    Anthony Clark, Chief of Staff, Agriculture and Forestry
    Darren Chase, Executive Director, Agriculture and Forestry
    Karen Sundquist, Manager, Land Use Policy, Agriculture and Forestry
Regional Agriculture Master Plan – Request for Federal Representative

**Recommended Motion:** That the Regional Agriculture Master Plan Task Force receive the letter requesting a representative from the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Foods Canada as information.

**Background**

One April 19, 2018, the Regional Agriculture Task Force unanimously approved the motion requesting the EMRB write a letter to the Federal Government Agriculture Agri-Food requesting the appointment of a Federal representative to the RAMP Task Force.

On May 14, 2018, the EMRB, unanimously approved the request to send a letter to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Foods.

**Recommendation:**

That the RAMP Task Force receive the letter as information.
May 11, 2018

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay,
Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Dear Minister MacAulay,

Re: Edmonton Metropolitan Region – Development of Regional Agriculture Master Plan (RAMP)

On behalf of the members of the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board (EMRB) Regional Agriculture Master Plan (RAMP) Task Force, I invite you to designate a local federal representative to the Task Force table.

Several of our members have reported on the great value in having the federal representation and perspective at a discussion table, in particular regarding the recent Beaver Hills (UNESCO) Biosphere Initiative.

This Task Force is charged with creating this Regional Agriculture Master Plan for the Edmonton Metropolitan Region. In identifying alignment of this work with similar objectives of federal and provincial governments, we have added representatives for each of Alberta Agriculture and Forestry and the Alberta Land Use Secretariat of Environment and Parks to the Task Force.

The Task Force is made up of regional elected officials from the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board (EMRB), and is supported by local technical experts and a diverse, experienced consultant team. Our purpose is to ensure the Ag Master Plan provides direction to:

1. Identify and conserve an adequate supply of prime agricultural lands in the Region to provide a secure local food source for future generations

2. Minimize the Region’s fragmentation and conversion of prime agricultural lands for non-agricultural uses

3. Promote diversification and value-added agriculture production in the Region and plan infrastructure to support the agricultural sector and regional food system

It is important to note that 36 per cent of the prime agricultural lands in the province is found in this region, representing an important source of food production locally, as well as nationally and globally.

As part of the Ag Master Plan, we will also be developing one Canada’s first customized land evaluation and site assessment tool (LESA) to better categorize the value of agricultural land.
Finally, Ag Master Plan objectives and outcomes are closely aligned with the Calgary Statement of 2016, Towards the Next Agricultural Policy Framework, in particular:

"...the commitment by federal, provincial, and territorial Ministers of Agriculture to working together to enhance the Agriculture’s sector’s ability to compete, innovate, capture new opportunities, cultivate public trust, respond to new consumer demands and grow sustainably."

We believe meaningful and active participation from the Provincial and Federal Governments, both from a financial and a policy/regulatory perspective, will be critical to the success of this Ag Master Plan, which in turn will support the success of Agriculture and the Agr-Food industry in this country.

Please see the attached Regional Agriculture Master Plan FAQs and Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board booklet as background about this project and our region. Should you require further information or details about participation in the Task Force, please contact my Executive Assistant Amanda Borman at aborman@emrb.ca or 780-638-6001.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to Federal participation in this important project.

Sincerely,

\[Signature\]

Dr. Jodi L. Abbott
Chair, Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board

Encl. Regional Agriculture Master Plan FAQs
      Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board Booklet

cc. Hon. Amarjeet Sohi, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities Canada, MP Edmonton Mill Woods
    Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agr-Food
    Hon. Oneil Carlier, Minister, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry
    Mr. Randy Boissonnault, MP, Edmonton Centre
    Mayor Rod Shaigec, Chair, Regional Agriculture Master Plan Task Force
    Regional Agriculture Master Plan Task Force Members
    EMRB Board Members
    Mr. Malcolm Bruce, CEO, EMRB
Regional Agriculture Master Plan – Draft “Situation Analysis” Report

Recommended Motion: That the Regional Agriculture Master Plan Task Force receive the draft “Situation Analysis” Report for information.

Background

On February 8, 2018, the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board approved the Terms of Reference for the development of a Regional Agriculture Master Plan (RAMP) as part of the implementation of the Agriculture Policy Area of the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan.

The first deliverable in the development of the project was to complete an analysis of the current state and future opportunities for Agriculture and Agri-foods in the region to inform the development of a RAMP.

Over the past several months the consulting team has completed a comparative review and analysis of Municipal Development Plans, Agriculture Studies, and various strategies, reports and Ag master plans from the region to inform this draft “Situation Analysis”.

The literature reviews were supplemented with a statistical analysis of the Agriculture Sector over the past 15 years and more than 20 one-on-one interviews with both local and national representatives from Industry, Education Institutes, Agencies / Associations, Investment and Finance, and Government Departments regarding their views on the issues and opportunities facing the Agri-Foods and valued added sector.

The assembly of this information and the identification of trends, regional issues, observations and implications, serves as the starting point for further discussion.

Recommendation:

That the RAMP Task Force consider the draft “situation report” as the basis for further discussion and regarding the region’s agricultural sector and to inform the scope and direction of the RAMP.

Rationale:

The purpose of the “Situation Analysis” is to present (1) a common “fact base” based on a statistical review of trends and changes that have taken place over the past 15 years; (2) an overview of the
opportunities and issues facing the Edmonton Metropolitan Region agriculture and food community; and (3) provide a preliminary set of directions from which to begin the process of building a RAMP.

Attachments:

1. Draft Situation Analysis Report
Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board
Regional Agriculture Master Plan
Draft Situation Analysis

Prepared by:
Toma and Bouma Management Consultants
Serecon Inc
Stantec
Dr. Thomas Daniels
1.0 Purpose of the Situation Analysis

The purpose of the Situation Analysis is to present: (a) a common ‘fact base’ based on a statistical review of trends and changes that have taken place from 2001 to 2016; (b) an overview of the opportunities and issues facing the Edmonton Metropolitan Region (EMR) agriculture and food community; and (c), a preliminary set of potential directions from which to begin the process of building the Regional Agriculture Master Plan (RAMP). This document is presented as information to the RAMP Task Force and is a summary of a more detailed set of documents presented to the Working Group on June 4, 2018. Additionally, a complete report will be presented at the July 13th meeting.

2.0 Background and Objectives

2.1 Background to the RAMP

Further to the EMRB’s Growth Plan approved by the Province in 2017, the key challenge for the RAMP is to “clarify the role of agriculture in the ERM and in particular to define what and where the disposition and protection of agricultural lands is appropriate.” The Growth Plan presents a central guiding principle specific to this broad challenge:

Ensure the wise management of prime agricultural resources.

The RFP notes, “The conversion of prime agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses is a significant issue for the region and a fundamental challenge to a thriving agricultural sector.” The Growth Plan states:

Agriculture is the largest single land use in the Region, a key economic sector and an irreplaceable resource for local food security. During the Region’s recent period of rapid uncoordinated growth, neither the Province nor municipalities considered ways to conserve prime agricultural lands for farmland. Existing and planned urban development is encroaching on high quality agricultural soils and placing pressure on the Region’s agricultural land base. From 2002 to 2012, a total of 38,250 hectares of farmland have been converted to non-agricultural uses, with over 60% of loss being lands prime agricultural lands. The agricultural sector is experiencing significant change—with a decrease in the overall number of farms and operators, but an increase in farm productivity and profits. Although Region-wide, agriculture represented only 1% of all jobs in 2014, it provides 10 to 20% of employment in many regional municipalities. This Plan recognizes the importance of a viable agricultural sector as a key asset, economic sector and strategy for enhancing local food security.

Agriculture & food (agri-food) is a major industry in the EMR. In its entirety (including farm production and food processing), agri-food is Alberta’s second largest industry, surpassed only by the energy sector. Furthermore, it is by far the largest user of land in most rural municipalities including the EMR. In the context

---

of growing global food demand\textsuperscript{2}, it is apparent that Alberta has a healthy future as a major food/agricultural commodity supplier. It is also important to point out that the EMR contains approximately 35\% of Alberta’s Class 1 soils.

The challenge of managing growth for rural municipalities adjacent to urban or industrial development results in stress on the agriculture sector and on agricultural land. This is an issue for the EMR given the high percentage of agricultural land, including both highly-productive and some more marginal areas. This presents both an opportunity and certain challenges that will require careful consideration in the EMRB’s planning process. It is a most challenging task and takes place within the context of issues that are exceedingly difficult to address: What is the future of agriculture?; What does this mean for resource and policy requirements at the municipal and regional level?; What agricultural land should be preserved?; and what decisions should be made across the EMR to sustain the agriculture food sector as a vibrant and growing industry?

\textbf{2.2 The RAMP Objectives}

The Growth Plan provides more agriculture-based policy than the previous plan. It has three key objectives:

1. Identify and conserve an adequate supply of prime agricultural lands to provide a secure local food source for future generations;
2. Minimize the fragmentation and conversion of prime agricultural lands for non-agricultural uses; and
3. Promote diversification and value-added agricultural production and plan infrastructure to support the agricultural sector and regional food system.

Out of these objectives comes the need for a regional agriculture master plan (RAMP). To accompany this, and to assist in RAMP implementation, is the desire to develop a land evaluation and site assessment tool (LESA). It is described as a “critical and objective method to assess, qualify and quantify the prime agriculture lands in the Region.” Until the master plan is approved incorporating LESA, the EMRB will apply plan policies and use Schedule 11 to identify prime agricultural lands.

Current policies state that, in the rural area, identified prime agricultural lands will be conserved, including encouraging opportunities to conserve areas currently defined by municipalities for non-agricultural uses. In the metropolitan area, the intent is that agricultural lands will be used for agriculture if possible but will ultimately be converted.

\textsuperscript{2} FAO estimates that the global population increases 85 million each year, the size of Germany.
3.0 Agriculture in the EMR – A Statistical Review

3.1 Introduction

A detailed analysis was taken of trends and changes that have taken place across the EMR during the period 2001-16. Over 70 variables, encompassing a range of farm business indicators, the cropping mix, livestock populations and speciality enterprises (greenhouses, fruits, vegetables and nursery products), were reviewed. Specifically, the analysis focused on identifying and understanding three dynamics when comparing the EMR to the Province of Alberta:

- Changes similar to the broader trends taking place across the province;
- Positive changes occurring at a greater rate than in the province;
- Negative changes occurring at a greater rate in the province.

3.2 EMR Compared to Alberta

3.2.1 EMR Trends Similar to the Provincial Trends

Changes in the structure of farming within the EMR are very similar to the broader trends taking place in Alberta. In summary: a prevailing trend to fewer but larger farms (see Table 3.1), which illustrates that while the number of farms has declined by approximately 25%; their size in terms of acres has grown by 30%. The biggest changes have occurred in the following measures: (a) Average Capital per Farm – up approximately 250%; and (b) Total Gross Sales – up 75%. The crop mix has also changed, namely a significant increase in canola acreage – a reflection this crop’s relative profitability to other crops. Provincial canola acreage grew by 132% and 92% in the EMR.

One major difference between EMR farms and the average Alberta farm is size (523 acres vs. 1,237 acres in 2016). This disparity can be explained by major differences in soils and climate. EMR is in the black soils zone—the most productive soil zone in the Prairies. By comparison, many Alberta farms and ranches are in dry, brown and light brown soil zone areas which are much less productive leading to larger farm units on average.

Table 3.1 Business Indicators Where Changes for EMR and Alberta are Similar: 2001-2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Farms</td>
<td>4,736</td>
<td>3,209</td>
<td>-22.2%</td>
<td>53,652</td>
<td>40,638</td>
<td>-24.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Farm Size</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>+32.7%</td>
<td>970</td>
<td>1,237</td>
<td>+27.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(acres)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Capital per</td>
<td>$811,000</td>
<td>$2,919,000</td>
<td>+260.1%</td>
<td>$1,030,000</td>
<td>$3,542,000</td>
<td>+243.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Gross Sales</td>
<td>$476.6 M</td>
<td>$838.2 M</td>
<td>+75.8%</td>
<td>$9.9 B</td>
<td>$17.73 B</td>
<td>+78.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canola acres</td>
<td>160,164</td>
<td>307,690</td>
<td>+92.1%</td>
<td>2,660,509</td>
<td>6,165,746</td>
<td>+131.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2.2 Positive Changes

Areas where the EMR is ‘outpacing’ the rest of Alberta in terms of agriculture are:

- Average capital per farm – the overall capital increase of EMR farms is slightly higher – largely the result of rising land values, proximity to urban areas and the higher valued black soils.
- Number of farms over 1,120 acres – the EMR saw an increase in this category (up 10%), where the provincial number is down 11%.
- Potatoes – in relative terms, potato acreage in the EMR increased by 1.5% compared to a provincial decrease of 7.6%.

3.2.3 Negative Changes

The most significant negative changes within the EMR compared to Alberta are taking place in two areas:

- Livestock populations (see Table 3.2) – in all major livestock areas, the reduction rate of EMR’s livestock numbers exceed that of the province. Most notable is the poultry category: overall provincial numbers are up 16% while the EMR saw a 28% decline. Cattle, dairy cow and pig numbers are in decline across the province, however the rate of decline in the EMR is higher – particularly the case with dairy cows and pigs.

- Specialty enterprises (see Table 3.3) – five categories are listed: nursery products; greenhouse area; fruits, nuts & berries; and vegetables. Three enterprises – nursery products, greenhouse areas and bees have shown increases in Alberta (up 11.7%, 14.7% and 45.7% respectively). However, all these enterprises as well as fruits, nuts & berries as well as vegetables have been on the decline in the EMR.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pigs (had)</td>
<td>81,659</td>
<td>19,887</td>
<td>-75.4%</td>
<td>2,027,533</td>
<td>1,462,247</td>
<td>-28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poultry (hd)</td>
<td>2,350,845</td>
<td>1,685,508</td>
<td>-27.9%</td>
<td>12,175,246</td>
<td>14,125,401</td>
<td>+16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Cattle</td>
<td>265,323</td>
<td>155,129</td>
<td>-41.5%</td>
<td>6,615,201</td>
<td>5,206,999</td>
<td>-21.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy Cows</td>
<td>12,514</td>
<td>6,888</td>
<td>-45%</td>
<td>84,044</td>
<td>80,014</td>
<td>-4.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nursery (ac)</td>
<td>1,838</td>
<td>1,450</td>
<td>-21.1%</td>
<td>6,642</td>
<td>7,420</td>
<td>+11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenhouse area (sq. ft)</td>
<td>1,559,772</td>
<td>1,340,397</td>
<td>-14.1</td>
<td>11,029,753</td>
<td>12,647,517</td>
<td>+14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit, Nuts, Berries (ac)</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>-36.9</td>
<td>2,515</td>
<td>2,164</td>
<td>-14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables (ac)</td>
<td>793</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>-56.9</td>
<td>14,194</td>
<td>10,108</td>
<td>-28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bees (colonies)</td>
<td>30,329</td>
<td>24,917</td>
<td>-17.8</td>
<td>209,821</td>
<td>304,846</td>
<td>+45.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nursery products typically include shrubs, ornamental plants, trees, hedges. Greenhouses tend to supply either vegetables or bedding plants.

The areas listed reported here do not include the rapidly emerging cannabis sector. In 2017 and 2018, an 800,000 square foot facility is being built in Leduc at the airport. Parkland County will also be the base for 2 million square feet.
### 3.3 Trends within the EMR

A series of graphs and charts are presented to highlight a few of the changes that are taking place within the EMR from 2001 to 2016. A summary set of figures and charts are presented in Attachment 1. A full set of figures and charts on all 70 variables are available upon request. The highlights include:

- **Farm Business Indicators (Figures 3.1 to 3.4)** – illustrate the very clear trend to fewer but larger farms across the EMR. Overall, gross sales for the regions have increased by 75% from 2001 to 2016.

- **Area Farmed and Selected Crops (Figures 3.5 to 3.9)** – the total area in crops has declined only 28,000 acres over the 15-year period. 5 Canola has grown to be the major field crop (over 307,000 acres) followed by barley (160,000 acres); peas have also become a major field crop (51,000 acres in 2016 vs. 18,000 acres in 2001). Potatoes grown mostly in Parkland and Sturgeon Counties (approximately 4,000 acres in 2016), represent 7.5% of the Alberta potato acreage and are indicative of the unique soils and climate characteristic of areas within the EMR.

- **Livestock Enterprises (Figures 3.10)** – overall livestock numbers are on the decline led by major decreases in the number of beef cattle, dairy cows and hogs. Cattle numbers in total have declined from a 2001 inventory of 265,000 head to 155,000 head in 2016 – a decline of 41.5% vs. 21.3% for the province. Much of this decline can be attributed to the 2003 BSE crisis in the beef industry and an extended period of poor returns that persisted for almost 10 years.

- **Speciality Enterprises (Figures 3.11 and 3.12)** – the 15-year trend for specialty enterprises illustrate that both vegetable acres and greenhouse area have declined. For example, the greenhouse area has dropped from 1.56 million square feet to 1.34 million square feet – a decline of 14%.

- **Food processing and employment** - employment trends in the agriculture production and manufacturing (agriculture and food processing sectors) are illustrated in Table 3.4. Note that the employment projections for ‘Agriculture Industries’ (or production) appear suspect. However, employment estimates for the processing sector seem more realistic – these show that the number of employees has increased from 4,000 to 6,000 during the 2001-2016 period. It is estimated that 25% of food and beverage processing takes place in the EMR – total revenues are in the order of $3.75 billion to $4 billion annually. Overall, total food and beverage processing shipments for Alberta in 2016 were $14.6 billion, up from $9.3 billion in 2001 – an increase of 57 percent over the period.

- **Urban Agriculture** – both the City of Edmonton and Strathcona County have committed to the implementation of urban agriculture plans. We are awaiting statistics in this area but have been informed that interest and activity levels are high: the number of farmers markets and community gardens are on the increase; the bee keeping program is fully subscribed; and a new generation of new small-scale food processors, food service providers and food centred events is emerging.

---

5 We advise caution with this statistic in view of how Statistics Canada collects crop acreages and assigns these to the address of the originating producer. Thus, anyone who farms in municipalities out of the region will have that acreage attributed to his or her home municipality. For example, both Strathcona and Sturgeon show actual increases in crop acreage – both municipalities are also home to several large crop producers who farm in other municipalities both in Alberta and Saskatchewan.

6 Specialty enterprises include fruits, nuts & berries, vegetables, greenhouses, nursery products, bee keeping/honey as well as new emerging crops such as hemp and cannabis.
### 3.4 EMR Profile – An Overview

An overview of the five major municipalities in terms of relative strengths and differences is summarized in Table 3.4 and the accompanying Schematic Profile.

**Table 3.4 Profile of the EMR by the Five Major Municipalities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Unique Features/Differences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Strathcona       | • Smallest county in terms of area farmed, number of farms  
|                  | • Has lost nearly 32,000 acres in area farmed since 2001.  
|                  | • Smallest cattle population (15,000 head); few dairy cows; no pigs  
|                  | • Second largest poultry population (488,705 birds)  
|                  | • Third largest horse population (2,100 head)  
|                  | • Largest greenhouse area in the EMR (443,000 square feet)  
|                  | • Home of the Pioneer-DuPont seed research site  
|                  | • Urban agriculture strategy has been adopted and in early stage                                                                                                                                                    |
| Leduc            | • The largest county in terms of area farmed; number of farms; the number of farmers under 35  
|                  | • Second largest canola producer (81,000 acres); largest barley producer (60,000 acres)  
|                  | • Largest cattle population (58,000 head); largest dairy herd – 4,600 head  
|                  | • Largest horse population (2,800 head)  
|                  | • Largest area growing nursery products (585 acres)  
|                  | • Home of the Food Development Processing Centre (City of Leduc)                                                                                                                                                    |
| Parkland         | • Smallest county in terms of total gross sales  
|                  | • Has lost the largest area (100,000 acres) since 2001.  
|                  | • Largest potato producer (2,700 acres)  
|                  | • Second largest cattle population (47,000 head); 1,000 dairy cows; very few pigs; largest sheep population (8,300 head)  
|                  | • Second largest horse population (2,600 head)  
|                  | • Largest number of vegetable producers (14)  
|                  | • Home of the Devonian Garden – U of A Research Facility                                                                                                                                                    |
| Sturgeon         | • Similar to Leduc in terms of area, but largest in terms of overall gross sales, average capital per farm and land in crops  
|                  | • Largest canola producer (129,000 acres)  
|                  | • Second largest barley producer (48,000 acres)  
|                  | • Largest poultry population (969,000 birds)  
|                  | • Only county with a hog operation (20,000 head)  
|                  | • Largest area growing fruit, nuts and berries (149 acres)  
|                  | • Second largest area growing nursery products (447 acres)  
|                  | • Home of the U of Alberta Research Farm                                                                                                                                                                           |
| City of Edmonton | • Base of a large food and agriculture processing sector (estimated product sales of $3.75 billion to $4 billion annually)  
|                  | • Estimated 6,000 employees working in the sector  
|                  | • Adopted the Edmonton’s Food & Urban Strategy in 2013 (fresh)  
|                  | • Urban agriculture plan is gaining momentum – focus on community gardens (75 sites), access to vacant lots, bee keeping (130 participants), backyard chickens (50 licenses issued)  |
4.0 Summary of Factors and Issues

4.1 Introduction

This section provides an overview of two major sets of ‘data’ to be considered in the RAMP process:

1. Global Trends and Developments – these are factors impacting the future structure of the agriculture and food industry for the next 10 to 30 years.

2. Regional Issues – the result of extensive consultation that has taken place across the region in all municipalities in the EMR over the past 3 to 5 years.

4.2 Global Trends and Developments

1. Continued growing food demand - multiple sources forecast the world population to exceed 9.7 billion by 2050 and accordingly an increased demand for food. Not only will there be more ‘mouths’ to feed, income levels as evidenced by a rapidly expanding middle class (such as India and China) is driving demand for higher quality foods (specifically red meats and prepared foods). Much of this growth will take place in the world’s major urban centres which are also the location of the best agricultural production areas. Thus, food demand will grow as the production capacity to produce food will decline. On the surface, this bodes well for Alberta as a major agricultural and food producer and exporter.

2. Industry and sector consolidation: the phenomena of fewer but larger farms in the crop and livestock sector, as well as fewer but more capital-intensive processors are having profound impacts on the structure of agriculture. It is not unusual today for individual farming operations to comprise 10,000 to 50,000 acres (and there are several such farms based in the EMR). Furthermore, major consolidation is also taking place in the processing, farm input, wholesale and retail sectors. In the case of the latter, large-scale retailers with national sourcing and distribution requirements make it extremely difficult for small scale food processors or start ups to overcome the enormous ‘gap’ from operating as a niche player to becoming a regional or national supplier.

3. Technology and automation – the availability and adoption of technology is having profound impacts on how businesses operate as well as the very structure of the industry itself. Today’s equipment is bigger, faster and easier to operate as automation becomes more dominant; livestock operating systems are also increasingly more automated with such innovations as robotic milkers; feeding and housing systems that require little or no labour – in both crop and livestock production there is a clear substitution of capital for labour. According to Successful Farming, the top technologies impacting agriculture include: (a) robots as fieldworkers of the future driven by machine learning algorithms; (b) drones that can monitor and respond to a wide range of production scenarios; (c) superior sensors able to monitor a host of production conditions; (d) big data that can be used to power digital services leading to improved management decisions; (e) data control systems for precision (or smart) farming; )f) 3-D printing that will enable the onsite production of parts or foods for that matter; and (g) artificial intelligence that will drive decision making and optimization to new levels of efficiency. Furthermore, farm operators are becoming sophisticated business managers (referred to in some circles as CEO farmers). These farmers typically rent large areas of land, employ a range of services such as agronomists, custom applicators and can manage their farms remotely using cellular and satellite technologies.

But the technology advancements also impact smaller-scale operations. For example, greenhouse and/or warehouse productions systems can now be almost completely automated. Small-scale orchards (apple trees growing much like grapes), can be operated by employing automated systems including harvesting that vastly reduce the amounts of pesticides and labour required.
4. **The changing food economy** – the food economy and food system continue to change. Several dynamics are at play including:

   a. **The rise of new market channels** – with changing lifestyles, new technologies (as per the rise of Uber Eats, Skip the Dishes, etc.); new players (SPUD, The Organic Box, Amazon) and retailers also providing delivery and on-line services, more and more prepared foods, specialty products and/or meals are in demand. Some estimates suggest that nearly 50% of all meals are being served this way. These developments challenge traditional marketers but represent new opportunities for others and have the potential to create major disruption to established distribution channels and retailers.

   b. **Alternative proteins** – there is a growing interest and, potentially, a significant shift to food products made from alternative proteins. Much of this is coming from plants (pulses) but there is also activity in such sources as protein from insects (crickets) and ‘meat’ being produced through the propagation of synthetic proteins. Just recently, Maple Leaf Foods has re-positioned itself as a ‘protein’ company, moving away from its historical roots as a meat company. A newly formed organization called The Good Food Institute has emerged – many of its members are mainstream food companies. This rapidly growing sector is actively working to change the current food system to reduce impacts on climate and the use of resources, such as water and grains, for livestock feeding.

   c. **Local food and food experiences** – there is an increased interest in growing, sourcing and supplying local foods and related services, a trend which is also very evident in the EMR with the growth of new niche food processing companies, new restaurants and events (such as the What the Truck Food Festival).

5. **Climate Change as a growing concern** – there is no industry that is more ‘weather’ dependent than agriculture and food production. Without question, climate change is a growing concern – the phenomenon has both positive and negative impacts. On the positive side, warmer temperatures lengthen the growing season and increase the choice of crops a farmer can consider. As a result, crops such as corn and soybeans are more commonly grown in Alberta including the EMR. Also on the positive side, the emphasis on carbon capture affords farmers the opportunity to earn carbon credits through improved (reduced) tillage practices, the growing of ‘green’ crops such pulses and alfalfa capable fixing nitrogen, although it should be noted that this market which was initially established in 2006 has yet to emerge in a significant manner and is highly dependent upon government policies. There are a range of negative impacts however: increased weather volatility including drought, hail, excessive rains, etc. All these factors increase production risk. In response mitigation strategies become increasingly important including: the choice of crop and varieties better able to withstand stress; land management (for example, minimum or no-till practices are increasingly common); variable rate inputs (the right amounts of seed/fertilizer at the right place at the right time); crop and risk insurance programs etc. In this regard, the advent of ‘smart’ agriculture is a major enabling factor in responding to the impacts of climate change.

6. **Land use and the issue of conserving agricultural lands is an issue that is only likely to grow** - By 2030, it’s estimated that urban and industrial areas will grow dramatically, expanding onto cropland and undermining the productivity of agricultural systems that are already stressed by rising populations and climate change. Roughly 60% of the world’s cropland lies on the outskirts of cities which is worrying, since this peripheral habitat is, on average, also twice as productive as land elsewhere on the globe. “We would expect peri-urban land to be more fertile than average land, as mankind tends to settle where crops can be produced,” says Felix Creutzig from the Mercator Research Institute on Global Commons and Climate Change in Berlin, and principal author of the paper. “However, we were ignorant about the magnitude of this effect.” The agricultural losses they calculated in the study, published in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, translates to a 3 to 4% dip in global agricultural production.
This may not appear to be a huge figure at first glance, but on the regional scale the picture changes. Across countries and different crops, the effects of this loss vary and become more intense. In Africa and Asia especially—which together bear 80% of the projected loss due to rising urbanization in these regions—urban expansion will consign farmers to an even tougher agricultural reality. A major worry surrounding the disappearance of this productive land is the impact it will have on staple crops such as maize, rice, soya beans, and wheat, which are cornerstones of global food security.

Closer to home, the movement to address agricultural land conservation has been slowly growing. Significant provincial initiatives in British Columbia and Quebec reflected the recognition of the relatively small proportion their land that was suitable for agriculture led to, for example, BC’s Agricultural Land Reserve in the 70s. This has continued with the more recent protection of agricultural land in Ontario with the implementation of the Greenbelt in 2005.

4.3 Regional Issues

The issues that are prevalent and common across the Region7 are summarized as follows:

1. **Agriculture as a Priority** – there is a strong sense that agriculture as an industry (and a sector) has had little to no priority for municipal governments (and for the Provincial Government). This sentiment varies – the view is stronger in some municipalities and less so in others. However, the prevailing focus on the part of Counties to attract industry, commercial interests and/or more residents has left the agriculture community feeling that their sector is a very low priority if it is any priority at all.

2. **An Uncertain Long-Term Future for Agriculture in the Region** – agriculture as a low priority coupled with the steady and seemingly inevitable expansion of urban development throughout the EMR, is leaving many producers questioning the future of agriculture and indeed their own farm businesses. Livestock producers exhibit the greatest concern – in many cases, expansion is either exceedingly difficult or impossible. Some crop producers have already begun the process of transition by purchasing and/or leasing farmland in more distant municipalities. Many are of the view that it is only a matter of time before the land that they farm in the EMR will be bought for development purposes.

3. **Ongoing rural-urban frictions** – the growing number of non-farm rural residents juxtaposed to fewer but larger farm operations is leading to increased conflicts between farmers and non-farm residents. The major complaint heard is the lack of appreciation for and understanding of agriculture. Thus, the range and intensity of complaints is on the rise and include issues of dust, noise, odours, operating hours and dangerous traffic conditions when farmers are transporting large pieces of equipment on area roads when moving from site to site or hauling input supplies or harvested grain.

4. **The ‘Right to Farm’** – a growing sense of vulnerability is rising within the farming community specific to their ability to farm and perform a range of necessary operations. The concerns are especially evident during such intense seasonal periods as seeding and harvesting. Simply put, the agriculture community is feeling outnumbered and undervalued. A major concern is their declining political influence in a changing community. Some are openly questioning: “Are we going to face a movement (or an anti-farm Council) that may actually restrict our ability to farm?”

5. **The need to conserve agricultural land** - no issue is more contentious or as potentially divisive as the

---

7 Well over 500 people contributed to this consultations over the course of the various planning projects undertaken across the EMR.
subject of preserving agricultural land. Two major questions prevail: (a) should agricultural land be preserved? And (b) if yes, how should this be done? There are two very distinct points of view with respect to the land preservation issue. On one hand, farmers who plan to farm for the long term, support the principle of preserving good agricultural land – which means limit fragmentation and small land parcels amid farming areas and the encroachment of non-farm rural residents. On the other hand, there is considerable support to maintain the current subdivision policies and not restrict land owners from realizing the financial benefits from subdivision.

6. **Land Use and Zoning** – the issue of zoning is inextricably related to the land preservation issue. Generally, there is agreement that agriculture requires areas or zones that are designated as priority areas for the long term. Some municipalities have already begun to move into this direction. Two major issues underlie this issue: (a) how to reduce and/or mitigate land fragmentation?; and (b) how to manage expectations now that the ability to subdivide properties is seen as a ‘right’ and in many cases may already have been capitalized into the value of the land?

7. **Opportunities and Challenges with Value added/Diversification** – there is considerable interest and good intentions to develop opportunities in the areas of local food, food experiences and value-added food and agriculture processing opportunities. Nevertheless, the pathways for success remain unclear. While there are several examples of successful ventures that have developed over the past twenty years, overall progress in value added development has been limited. The barriers are considerable: the challenges associated with start-ups; marketing; accessing existing market channels; and/or creating new market opportunities either domestic or export. Furthermore, attracting and/or training the required business and management skills are identified as a significant challenge. Furthermore, there is a growing interest among a new generation of local food advocates to produce food locally. However, the cost of land in the EMR for most of these proponents is prohibitive.

8. **The Regulatory Environment** – the regulatory requirements for agriculture and agri-food/business are viewed as complex and, in many cases, challenging. There were numerous concerns about the multiple and different levels of regulation (municipal, provincial and federal). Also, there are more questions about definitions: What is defined as agriculture? What is considered agri-business? What is agri-tourism? To be sure, this is a complex area. The key point to be made is this: ensure that the regulatory requirements do not unduly limit or de-motivate the emergence and growth of new value added and diversification opportunities.

9. **The lack of a ‘Voice’ for the Agriculture and Food Industry** – a key concern to advance any strategies or initiatives for food and agriculture in the EMR is advocacy and support. This dynamic is clearly lacking – it was consistently stated that there is no voice for agriculture or for the food industry. Rather comments stressed, again and again, how fragmented and disconnected the sector really is. The reasons are many. For example, the actual number of farmers are few; most are aligned with commodity groups or marketing boards which typically have provincial mandates. Food processors meanwhile are running flat out just to stay on top of their businesses. Thus, few have the time or energy. To devote to broader industry concerns. Overall, no organization exists to provide this leadership.

10. **Other issues** – several additional issues raised by individuals or small groups emerged over the course of the consultation process. These include such concerns as irrigation – the need for access to water and infrastructure in certain areas of Sturgeon, Parkland and Leduc Counties; the need for farmers to be rewarded for their contributions in addressing climate change through tillage practices, planting ‘green’ crops, maintaining wetlands as well as other conservation or preservation activities. Note: Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) is an example of such an initiative and support for Agribusiness as a growth sector in the region.
5.0 Policies and Planning Context

5.1. Introduction

To understand the current planning framework in the Edmonton Metropolitan Region and how agriculture fits in, it is important to consider the provincial, regional, and municipal policies which influenced its evolution over time to where we are now. A detailed review beginning with the Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission (established in 1950) to the recently approved Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Board Growth plan is presented in Attachment 2. This review includes the provincial land use framework and the North Saskatchewan Regional Plan.

5.2. Comparison of Regional and Municipal Policies

As part of the RAMP process, a matrix that compares the agriculture and agriculture related policies for the EMRB, the four counties (Leduc, Parkland, Strathcona, Sturgeon) and the City of Edmonton (the smaller municipalities have not been included). The plans were compared across numerous attributes starting with their visions – see summary below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visions for Agriculture Across the EMR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strathcona County</strong> as ‘Canada’s most livable community’ is distinguished by its agricultural heritage that builds on history and responds to opportunities as a leader in the Capital Region in the provision of a broad range of agricultural and food opportunities as well as services to one of Canada’s fastest growing metropolitan regions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leduc County</strong>: A vibrant and resilient agri-food future built on a proud agriculture history.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parkland County</strong>: A vibrant agriculture and food community characterized by its diversity, creativity and entrepreneurship, focused on sustainability as well as new opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sturgeon County</strong>: The ‘Heart’ of Agriculture for the Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COE Fresh</strong>: Edmonton has a resilient food and agriculture system that contributes to the local economy and the overall cultural, financial, social and environmental sustainability of the city.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, the guiding principles for agriculture across the municipalities are quite similar both in terms of intentions and tone. There are subtle differences between the major thrusts of each of the various plans. Sometimes this is one of emphasis (focusing more narrowly on managing land vs. a broader view of community) or from perspective (urban vs. rural), or different historical perspectives. Differences are
mostly by omission, not by opposing viewpoints. Overall, at this high level of policy, there is
acknowledgement that there are important "agricultural resources" in the region and efforts should be
made to ensure and enhance its diversity and vibrancy, resiliency and sustainability, creativity and
entrepreneurship.

There are several key principles that should comprehensively drive the regional agricultural master plan:

1. The diversity of agriculture can make an important economic contribution in the local to
global marketplace
2. The historical and cultural/social aspects are important in maintaining a high quality rural
lifestyle and community character.
3. Environmental sustainability of the rural landscape is important.
4. The food system is an important perspective to consider.

Implications for the RAMP: Developing a ‘shared vision’ for agriculture and the future role, look and ‘feel’
of agriculture and food within the region is the critical starting point. Once this is in place and agreed to,
the planning process becomes much easier.

A total of 22 factors were reviewed to compare similarities and differences. The following five factors are
included below; all factors are discussed in Attachment 2.”

Prime Land

There is acknowledgment that there are differing qualities of soil throughout the region although
different rating concepts are used: Land Suitability Rating System (LSRS), Canada Land Inventory (CLI),
and Farmland Assessment Rating (FAR). Regardless of the relative merits of each system, the planning
policies focus attention on the higher capability lands (sometimes referred to as ‘prime’). However, it
should be noted that attention should be given to ‘unique farmlands’ that have usefulness to produce
specific high-value food and fibre crops because of characteristics.

Implications for the RAMP: The EMRB will need to provide clear direction on which rating system (s) will
be used and for what purposes and the role different areas in the overall agricultural and food sector.

Land Use Zones

There are a variety of agricultural zones defined across the EMR. Generally, there is one all-purpose
agricultural zone that has been used to support traditional agriculture—sometimes different zones for
larger and smaller agricultural holdings. The multiple-purpose zones are sometimes supplemented by a
‘holding’ zone generally designed to limit subdivision and uses that would conflict with future urban
development. These zones tend to have a very broad range of uses (either permitted or discretionary),
including residential uses or others that aren’t really soil based, which tend to have inherent conflict with
agriculture and, perhaps, are not consistent with long term priority agricultural areas. In addition, there is
a question about the range of agricultural-related uses (support, service, agri-tourism, etc.) that should
be provided for.

Implications for the RAMP: The implications are like the previous two sub-sections. There may be a case
to agree to a common set of agricultural zones across the Region. However, there may be a need for
special zones (or overlays) that might apply to unique or special locational circumstances.

Conversion

There are several approaches: (1) a recognized intent to permanently designate large contiguous
agricultural areas so agriculture can thrive on both large and small holdings; (2) development of better
lands should only be where there are no reasonable alternatives (as a last resort?) and the impact on
agriculture is minimized; (3) pressure can be taken off these areas by requiring higher densities, directing
development to other suitable locations (lower capability lands, existing urban centres) where possible,
transferring development rights and clustering; (4) development of agricultural areas should be phased so that agricultural remain as long as possible; and (5) Some lands that are currently designated for non-agricultural uses (such as large areas of country residential) could be re-designated to agriculture.

**Implications for the RAMP:** The protection and preservation of agricultural lands requires a broader range of tools than what has been employed to date. The most decisive of these would be a policy to ‘freeze’ lands like approaches taken in British Columbia’s Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and Ontario (Greenbelt). Such measures are politically challenging. Other more nuanced tools include transfer of development credits; conservation easements; establishing farmland trusts; and clustering development in areas of lower land quality. There is legislation (ALSA) to facilitate this. Specific to a policy enabling the transfer of development rights, a major issue to consider will be the ability and/or the desirability to allow transfers from municipality to municipality.

**Lots and Sizes**

Traditional zoning practice throughout the region is that 80 acres is an acceptable minimum size for most agriculture, although some municipalities propose or allow smaller agricultural holdings. Approaches range from Strathcona where a quarter section can be split into halves or a smaller residential parcel can be subdivided out; other Counties allow the creation of up to four parcels per quarter section, in a variety of formats (Parkland for example allows 4-40-acre parcels or 4 smaller residential parcels).

**Implications for the RAMP:** The impact to agriculture and farming operations of differing lot sizes will need to be addressed. Lot sizes should be addressed in accordance to associated land use (i.e. Ag Acreages). For example, if a lot is being used as a residence only, then a maximum size may be prescribed. However, if the lot is being used for agricultural or food production purposes, a larger size may be allowed.

**Economic Development**

There is widespread support for increasing the economic development potential of the agricultural sector. Most plans are supportive of "value-added agriculture" and the "diversification of agriculture" as major goals. The suggested opportunities are extensive—from agri-tourism and to energy creation to specialized livestock and local food initiatives. However, there are little in the way of concrete initiatives and implementation strategies for this economic development goal.

**Implications for the RAMP:** A major challenge facing the EMRB will be to adopt and implement an economic development plan that can stimulate the regional food and agriculture industry. Three distinct strategies will be required (1) ensuring the ability of traditional forms of production to continue (grains, oilseeds, dairy, beef, pork, poultry etc.); (2) stimulating and/or supporting new ventures that are emerging to response to local food demand; and (3) Building the core of regional and nationally focused agri-food enterprises that have successfully emerged over the past 20 years.
6.0 Observations and Implications

6.1 Observations

1. Agriculture, food production and the visible presence of farming operations as an integral part of the community fabric are highly valued. This position is supported by the ‘Vision’ statements that have been generated by all four major agriculture municipalities and the City of Edmonton. These statements are reflective of an extensive input and consultation process from a wide range of stakeholders and residents within the Region.

2. Further input based on interviews with twenty-three industry food industry representatives strongly support the prospect that the EMR can become a bigger player in terms of being a ‘Food and Agriculture’ centre. Many expressed optimism with regards to the numerous opportunities in response to export demand, interests in local food, examples of companies that have become successful and an emerging entrepreneurial class that is actively developing new ventures in this space. In addition, the imminent legalization of cannabis has stimulated major new investments in greenhouse production and the processing of hemp. It should also be noted that many of those interviewed expressed frustration that ‘Agriculture and Food’ has not received more focus as a strategic industry sector that is capable of generating economic growth and employment.

3. Perhaps one of the Region’s biggest strength is the size of the food and agricultural processing industry. Approximately 25% of the total provincial industry (as measured by the number of employees working in the sector) is located within the Region. The EMR is home to two major poultry processors (Sofina, Maple Leaf Foods) as well as several specialty food processors including Alyia’s, Champion Pet Foods, Heritage Foods, Hempco, Kinickkinick, Kitchen Partners, Little Potato Company and Siwin. Several of these companies exceed $100 million in annual revenues.

4. Production agriculture in the EMR is undergoing rapid change. Like the province (and elsewhere) the trend is to fewer but larger farms. Overall, the changes in the region’s crop mix reflects the changes in the province. Two areas differ however: (a) livestock populations and farms are decreasing more rapidly; and (b) specialty enterprises are also on the decline. The reduced levels of livestock (particularly pigs) are not surprising in view of proximity to urban development. However, the relatively small acreages of vegetables, fruits and greenhouse production are indicative of the challenges that local operators are facing with respect to viability, accessing current market channels and/or in developing direct market opportunities.

5. Based on the consultations, many farmers themselves feel less certain about their long-term future in view of the growing development pressures coming both from industry, commercial and residential growth. Not surprisingly, this viewpoint varies by proximity to urban developments. The closer these farms are, the greater the concern. In response, some of these farmers have already begun transitioning their operations and land base out of the EMR. The steady decline in livestock populations over the past 15 years is further testimony to this transition since land for forage production and the spreading of manure without complaints are critical.

6. A major and growing concern among the farming community is the increase in rural-urban conflicts. There is a strong feeling that agriculture is not understood and at best is ‘misunderstood.’ As the non-farm rural population increases, so do the conflicts and concerns. Furthermore, farmers are concerned about being outnumbered. Therefore, there is considerable support for ‘Right to Farm’ policies that assure farmers of their ability to undertake the necessary and timely operations fundamental to their farms.
7. The long-term availability and affordability of land the ability to operate are major concerns to many farmers in the EMR. In many cases, the value of the land exceeds the value of the agricultural operations taking place on it. Availability and affordability are also major barriers for new entrants – both those who are seeking to continue conventional farming operations and those who are interested in establishing new operations to supply the growing demand for local food and food experiences.

8. Measures taken to preserve agricultural land will receive mixed support from most farmers and landowners. While many support efforts to preserve good agricultural land, at the same time, there are concerns that overly restrictive policies may impact property values – a concern to those farmers who are planning to retire soon.

9. While new agricultural, food and value-added enterprises such as food processing, equine operations, market gardens, horticultural, specialty crops or agri-tourism offer potential within the Region, the path forward to success remains unclear. Overall value added and new enterprise development in the Region (and the Province) has been modest. Furthermore, despite the strong interest in food and sourcing locally, the statistics illustrate that growth to date has been modest at best and serves as a future opportunity for the region.

6.2 Implications

1. The review of the trends combined with a review of the literature, the changes in technology and first-hand input from the food and agriculture sector affirms that agriculture is changing and it is changing fast. Thus, a first step to be taken in the planning process is to ensure that a broad definition of agriculture is defined, understood and applied. Agriculture is far more than the traditional family farm – it ranges from large scale family corporations farming thousands of acres to small scale service-based specialty enterprises that may be involved in production but focus on the provision of customer experience.

2. The agriculture and food industry tomorrow will be markedly different from what it has been in the past. Several of the changes have been noted earlier in this document. However, two areas warrant further attention: ‘Smart’ Agriculture” and “Smart Food.”

Smart Agriculture can be summarized by one driving imperative: “No Molecule is Wasted”. Driven by economics and enabled by technology, smart agriculture is effectively bringing what has been referred to as “Precision Agriculture” to a new level. Technical and management systems are now available to deal with every farm, every field and indeed every square meter uniquely. All of this is data driven – top down using satellite imagery; yields maps; imagery; drones; the use of sensors, monitoring; as well as bottom up – the continuous flow of data from the soil, topography and local weather. The consequences are significant: improved economic performance; and reduced environmental impacts. Nutrient run-off or pesticide drift will become concerns of the past.

Smart Food involves the development and selection of foods that have been validated to provide desired health effects or performance. This includes: targeted nutrition research that identifies compounds in foods that interact with longevity genetic pathways (smart food compounds); validates the effects of “smart food compounds” and “smart foods” in disease prevention and cure; and develops “smart food compounds” into dietary supplements or pharmaceutical drugs.

3. The EMR can “raise its game” as a major centre for agriculture and food. The EMR is replete with numerous assets to actualize this opportunity: excellent soils and climate; a high performing farming
sector; a strong processing sector many of whom who have developed unique products and markets; excellent supporting infrastructure including the University of Alberta (Faculty of Agriculture Life and Environmental Sciences with several regional based research facilities such as the Research Farm in Sturgeon County and Devonian Garden in Parkland County and an internationally renowned nutrition research group), NAIT with its culinary program, Alberta Agriculture & Forestry including the Food Product Development Centre and Crop Development Centre (CDC North). In addition, several initiatives are emerging to build momentum in this area such as the Food and Agri-Business Initiative led by the City of Edmonton, the Local Food Act led by the Province of Alberta and the Super Cluster Initiative supporting Protein Industries Canada led by Industry Science and Economic Development (ISED), Government of Canada.

4. A major limiting factor to the realization of the Food and Agriculture opportunity for the EMR is the long-term availability of agricultural land. However, the specific requirements and issues pertaining to land vary by the differing segments. For example:

- Crop Producers who largely produce forages, grains, oilseeds and pulse crops require large areas of contiguous agricultural land to operate efficiently. Furthermore, they require that these lands are available for the long term. The shorter (or the more uncertain) the term, the less attention is paid to soil quality and maintaining long term fertility.

- Specialized crop producers such as potato growers require specialized soils and micro-climates. For example, potatoes perform best when grown on sandier soils and with access to water (irrigation).

- Vegetables, fruits and other specialized produce for local food demand require high quality, well drained soils and access to water for irrigation. Much of these can take place on small parcels (1 to 10 acres). Many of these growers (or would be growers) are simply unable to afford the purchase of such lands nor are such parcels readily available on a lease basis close to the City of Edmonton.

5. At first glance, agriculture in the region appears to be holding its own. However, the consultation process across the EMR while conducting the four municipal agriculture plans clearly indicates that the agriculture and food system is not stable. It is already clear that livestock production is exiting from the EMR. Furthermore, specialty enterprises even in the shadow of a large urban market are not showing signs of growth, rather the reverse. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, crop producers expressed strong concerns about their ability to operate their businesses in view of the increasing encroachment by non-farm rural residents and urban based conflicts (traffic, theft, complaints regarding dust, noise, sprays, manure etc.) Some have already begun to secure lands for farming outside the EMR. Should encroachment and conflicts increase and the size and shape of available lands becoming limiting, these operators will choose to farm outside of the region. Thus, the prospect that significant tracts of land not being cropped or underutilized is foreseeable.

6. The emergence of new value-added enterprises whether these are production, processing or service based will not come easy. The barriers are substantial. History has shown that successes have been few; the many initiatives applied to this area have yielded modest results. However, it should also be said that food and agriculture has never been a strategic focus for the City of Edmonton or the Edmonton Metropolitan Region. The question remains: what can be accomplished with a vision, focus and the long-term commitment of resources?
7.0 Creating a New Future

The essence of the RAMP is to shape a future for agriculture and food in the EMR. It can be argued that the agriculture and food sector has functioned in the region largely by default. That is, the sector has not been the focus of a clear set of land, economic development or public relations/communications policies. But what can be achieved by design?

Three questions prevail:

1. What needs to be done to provide an assured future for grains, oilseeds and to a lesser extent the major livestock producers who are by far the largest land owners and stewards of the land in the region?

2. How can the opportunities and the growth of specialty and food producing enterprises be facilitated?

3. How can the food and agriculture industry be a major economic driver for the region?

To seed the response to these questions, we begin by providing a profile of two agriculture businesses that are currently operating in the EMR. (See the short story lines on the Little Potato Company and Kalco Farms – next two pages). These profiles provide a glimpse of what is happening and most importantly what the future may hold.

The question of the future is predicated on a clear understanding of differing sectors, each with differing needs. We have identified three: (1) the Commodity Production Sector – producing largely for regional, national or export markets; (2) the Local Food/Emerging Sector – producing largely for the local and regional markets; and (4) the Value-Added Diversification Sector – producing for any and all markets. A brief summary of what each of these sectors may look like and what their requirements are presented in Tables 7.1 to 7.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7.1: Commodity Production Sector: Future Picture and Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Picture of the Future</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Few but large operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Large areas of farming/field – contiguous agriculture land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Minimal encroachment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Extensive use of professional, operational and technical services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Technology driven</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7.2: Local Food/Emerging Sector: Future Picture and Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Picture of the Future</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Small plot production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Large number of small producers – multiple products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Soil and facility based production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Extensive automation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Excellent economics - competitive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7.3: Value-Added Diversification: Future Picture and Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Picture of the Future</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Local products are competitive and preferred – significant market share</td>
<td>• Targeted market strategies – dedicated supply chains serving local, regional and export markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• New generation of processors, co-packers, supporting services</td>
<td>• New infrastructure supporting retail, wholesale and processing – incubators, co-packers, logistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Robust production of products and ingredients for the multiple markets</td>
<td>• Entrepreneurship and mentoring support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advanced technical, nutritional and business management services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Little Potato Company

In 1996, Angela Santiago, a recent graduate in Political Science was washing 'baby' potatoes in her bath tub. Her plan: grow a few potatoes in the families’ backyard, set up at the Strathcona Farmers Market and hope for the best. It didn’t take long for her to realize that her ‘test’ was successful. People loved her product. And the idea for a specialty produce company was born.

Twenty years later, the Little Potato Company (LPC) has grown to be one of Alberta’s largest and fastest growing fresh produce companies. Three years ago, it surpassed $100 million in annual sales; this year it will reach $200 million. And it is not stopping here. Development of the US market remains early stage and $1 billion in annual sales is not out of the question.

The company operates out of three facilities: the ‘home’ plant based in Edmonton; a co-packer in Prince Edward Island; and a newly constructed plant which just opened in DeForest, Wisconsin. The Edmonton plant alone has more than 300 employees and the total workforce exceeds 600. More than 25 growers supply over 100 million pounds of potatoes annually from several provinces and states including Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, PEI, Georgia, Florida, Wisconsin, Illinois and California. But the original potato supply began in Parkland County where it continues to this day.

The LPC story is truly inspirational. It is a story of a visionary, a culinary product and a passion to supply a tasty nutritious branded product. And a readiness to surround herself with the expertise necessary to manage, operate and grow a company. Today the Little Potato Company stands tall in most major grocery retailers in Canada and the USA. As Angela would say: “We may be ‘little’ but we are getting bigger!”
Kalco Farms – A New Generation

Just 4 years ago, Mike Kalisvaart, who owns and operates Kalco Farms, had 8,000 acres under his watch. This year, he planned to farm 14,000 acres. By the time he finished seeding, he had over 16,000 acres of crops.

Mike Kalisvaart is an example of a new generation of CEO farmers. They are young, business minded, focused on efficiency and ready to employ any technology or expertise to improve their operations. And expanding rapidly.

Mike’s home base is near Gibbons. But his farming operation now covers three municipalities: Sturgeon, Strathcona and Thorhild Counties. The majority of his land is rented - over 14,500 acres. And the opportunity to add another 2,000 acres to his production base this spring came unexpectedly. Word got around that Mike was in the area and before long several farmers turned over their properties to him. Ten years ago, it took a month to seed 2,500 acres. Now he can seed the entire 16,000 acres in 3 weeks.

A second generation farmer, Mike took over from his father who had been a long time hog producer and an active member of the Western Hog Exchange. But the hog business changed – positive margins were more the exception than the rule and it was time to move on. Since then Mike is totally focused on learning and adopting best practices for cropping. For example, he employs over 10 full time employees including a full time agronomist to oversee all the crops in production. During seeding and harvest, this work force doubles with the addition of contractors.

The farm uses a tablet based record keeping system. Employees enter data on the tablet while in the field. It is Cloud based, allowing analysis and the pulling of real-time reports on input supplies and inventory for sale at any time.

How big will Mike’s farm become? His response: “I know farmers who are two or three times larger than me. So I guess there’s still some room to grow yet.”
8.0 Suite of Principles

As noted earlier, the rationale for managing regional and municipal growth to conserve agricultural land is generally fourfold:

1. Take advantage of the opportunity to grow the economic contribution of agriculture
2. Incorporate historical & cultural aspects for the agricultural community
3. Sustain the environmental quality of the rural landscape
4. Emphasize the food system perspective (food security)

The major consistent thrust of exiting regional and municipal policy is that a supply of land (with subtle differences about quality, prime, long term, contiguous size, large and small parcels, etc.) should be maintained (or protected, preserved or conserved, used only as a last resort etc.) and not developed for other uses for a period (from development, long term, etc.).

The analysis of regional and municipal plans and policies revealed a 'suite of principles' with different emphasis or priority across the region. The following are key elements to be addressed by the regional agricultural master plan which will require a series of strategies:

1. To define a long term secure agricultural land base
2. To minimize fragmentation in agricultural areas
3. To minimize conversion of agricultural land to other uses
4. To promote diversification and value-added agriculture
5. To accommodate compatible and supportive land uses in agricultural areas
6. To support agriculture with appropriate hard and soft infrastructure—including physical assets, economic development programs, and leadership development
7. To manage and reduce conflicts between agriculture and other uses

Implications for the RAMP: It will be critical to define and subsequently agree on a ‘suite of principles’ that are common across the Region. Again the ‘shared vision’ and the long-term intentions to be achieved by the shared vision serve as the key starting point.
9.0 Next Steps

We recommend the following areas of focus and sequencing:

1. **Developing a Shared Vision for Agriculture and Food in the Region** – in other words, what is the desired state to be achieved? What will the EMR 'look and feel' like as a community in 50 years? Can a clear picture be created and articulated?

   A clear vision with the support of guiding principles is the first and most important step. Currently the municipalities have similar visions and aspirations to the extent that agriculture is explicitly valued. A clear articulation of and commitment to agriculture and food as a strategic industry for the Region, is a critical starting point. Such a commitment will enable this all important visioning process. This process to be led by the Task Force should be a foremost priority and be completed by the fall of 2018.

2. **Land Use Policies** – land use policies will be critical to the realization of the EMR as a Food and Agriculture Centre. The ‘Vision’ will drive this process and influence the decisions regarding choices specific to agricultural land and the priorities given to agricultural lands. Several questions will need to be addressed: Will some areas for agriculture be zoned as permanent? If so, what policies could enable this? Will there be different priority areas to reflect differing types of agriculture? How to minimize the impact of urban growth on agricultural lands? Where should growth not take place? When growth requires the use of good agriculture land, or any agricultural land such as areas for grazing - how can this be done? What considerations should be given to the value of the environmental goods and services that agricultural is able to provide a community? Where should this be done? How do deal with permanent agriculture vs. transition? What tools can be used to deal with speculation? How do we take a regional planning approach and not just cater to land owners who want to sell for the highest price?

   Many of the above questions specific to priority areas, choices and tradeoffs will be addressed through the process of developing the LESA tool. The LESA development process which begins on June 15th 2018 will inform the land use policy questions and vice versa. This process will take place over the course of the next year. The Task Force will be in a position to evaluate and make recommendations regarding a specific set of land use policies by the fall of 2019.

3. **Economic Development and Diversification** – it is apparent that economic development policies directed to the food and agriculture industry need to be strengthened. The question of how to foster agricultural and food business viability is a difficult one. What types of agricultural activities/food related enterprises can thrive? Can agriculture and food become the major economic driver within the Region in the future? If so, how and what must differently or better than past efforts? How can economic development strategies enhance the full spectrum of the agri-food system – production, processing, and marketing? What needs to be done to address new and emerging initiatives?

   The question of how to sustain and support the food and agriculture industry for the next 30 to 50 years is an important one. Simply preserving agriculture lands especially those in close proximity to urban development without a strong a growing food industry would be sub-optimal. This process will begin in parallel to the Land Use Policy development. Again, the Task Force will be in a position to consider recommendations in the fall of 2019.

The three components listed above are highly inter-related. The vision will drive a definitive land use policy that is seen to value and support agricultural land that will in turn foster the conditions that enhance or lead to economic diversity and viability.
Conversely, a land use policy in the metropolitan context that regards any and all lands (including prime agricultural lands) as merely holding (or transition) areas for future development, will create conditions that undermine the economic viability of the agri-food sector and a pro-active vision will not be attained.

In closing, the Situation Analysis remains a draft working document. We welcome your comments, insights and directions.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerry Bouma
Toma & Bouma Management Consultants
Attachment 1: Charts and Graphs

Farm Business Indicators

Figure 3.1: Number of Farms by County, 2001-2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leduc</td>
<td>1,464</td>
<td>1,438</td>
<td>1,255</td>
<td>1,088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkland</td>
<td>1,144</td>
<td>979</td>
<td>782</td>
<td>679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sturgeon</td>
<td>1,055</td>
<td>967</td>
<td>823</td>
<td>730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strathcona</td>
<td>896</td>
<td>772</td>
<td>658</td>
<td>579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmonton</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart 3.1 Schematic Comparison of Farm Numbers by Municipality: 2001-2016
Figure 3.2: Average Farm Size (Acres, by County, 2001-2016) 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leduc</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkland</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sturgeon</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>585</td>
<td>657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strathcona</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmonton</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>512</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is assumed that the 2011 Edmonton statistic is an anomaly due to the way data was collected.

Figure 3.3: Total Gross Farm Sales (by County, 2001-2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leduc</td>
<td>142,621</td>
<td>138,528</td>
<td>162,680</td>
<td>198,898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkland</td>
<td>82,064</td>
<td>85,070</td>
<td>97,975</td>
<td>119,328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sturgeon</td>
<td>146,696</td>
<td>154,789</td>
<td>185,794</td>
<td>230,940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strathcona</td>
<td>87,871</td>
<td>87,606</td>
<td>90,895</td>
<td>122,401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmonton</td>
<td>17,433</td>
<td>28,737</td>
<td>35,356</td>
<td>166,655</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

It is assumed that the 2011 Edmonton statistic is an anomaly due to the way data was collected.
Area Farmed and Selected Crops

Figure 3.4: Total Area of Farms (by County: 2001-2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leduc</td>
<td>554,298</td>
<td>600,825</td>
<td>564,865</td>
<td>531,518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkland</td>
<td>475,926</td>
<td>455,677</td>
<td>401,863</td>
<td>375,449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sturgeon</td>
<td>499,567</td>
<td>517,537</td>
<td>467,464</td>
<td>479,508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strathcona</td>
<td>256,270</td>
<td>250,937</td>
<td>220,184</td>
<td>224,475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmonton</td>
<td>70,690</td>
<td>66,548</td>
<td>13,011</td>
<td>68,033</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.5: Total Area of Crops (by County: 2001 – 2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leduc</td>
<td>359,027</td>
<td>379,013</td>
<td>373,077</td>
<td>354,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkland</td>
<td>227,729</td>
<td>206,235</td>
<td>180,512</td>
<td>187,021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sturgeon</td>
<td>361,288</td>
<td>369,728</td>
<td>362,846</td>
<td>377,722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strathcona</td>
<td>152,850</td>
<td>159,636</td>
<td>150,138</td>
<td>164,078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmonton</td>
<td>46,065</td>
<td>40,761</td>
<td>10,012</td>
<td>36,338</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chart 3.2 Schematic Comparison of Crop Mix in the EMR: 2001-2016
Figure 3.6: Canola Acreage (by County, 2001-2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leduc</td>
<td>37,665</td>
<td>71,071</td>
<td>95,746</td>
<td>81,322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkland</td>
<td>19,738</td>
<td>31,659</td>
<td>36,667</td>
<td>35,114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sturgeon</td>
<td>64,576</td>
<td>111,367</td>
<td>130,518</td>
<td>129,182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strathcona</td>
<td>28,411</td>
<td>44,918</td>
<td>48,540</td>
<td>52,916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmonton</td>
<td>9,774</td>
<td>12,897</td>
<td>3,487</td>
<td>9,156</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.7: Potato Acreage (by County, 2001-2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leduc</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkland</td>
<td>1,576</td>
<td>2,739</td>
<td>2,642</td>
<td>2,557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sturgeon</td>
<td>1,609</td>
<td>1,654</td>
<td>1,294</td>
<td>1,127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strathcona</td>
<td>819</td>
<td>842</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmonton</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Selected Livestock Statistics

Figure 3.8: Number of Cattle and Calves (by County, 2001-2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leduc</td>
<td>97,176</td>
<td>90,850</td>
<td>60,388</td>
<td>57,879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkland</td>
<td>79,084</td>
<td>68,709</td>
<td>45,353</td>
<td>47,134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sturgeon</td>
<td>50,988</td>
<td>47,324</td>
<td>27,184</td>
<td>32,532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strathcona</td>
<td>32,879</td>
<td>24,125</td>
<td>14,781</td>
<td>14,845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmonton</td>
<td>5,196</td>
<td>3,786</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>2,829</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Specialty Enterprises

Figure 3.9: Acres of Vegetables (by County)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leduc</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkland</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sturgeon</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strathcona</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmonton</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 3.10: Greenhouse Area by Square Feet (by County, 2001-2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leduc</td>
<td>218,562</td>
<td>136,694</td>
<td>117,685</td>
<td>134,836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkland</td>
<td>169,797</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>197,465</td>
<td>186,424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sturgeon</td>
<td>364,118</td>
<td>447,380</td>
<td>344,904</td>
<td>260,712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strathcona</td>
<td>558,421</td>
<td>526,716</td>
<td>500,756</td>
<td>443,338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmonton</td>
<td>248,874</td>
<td>478,976</td>
<td>390,856</td>
<td>315,087</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table: 3.4 Profile of Agriculture/Food Processing Employment in Alberta and the EMR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REGION</th>
<th>INDUSTRY</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>%: 2001-14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Measure</td>
<td>,000</td>
<td>'000</td>
<td>'000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALBERTA</td>
<td>Total All Industries</td>
<td>1,627.4</td>
<td>2,274.6</td>
<td>2,301.1</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agriculture Industries</td>
<td>59.50</td>
<td>60.60</td>
<td>62.80</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1100 - Mixed Farming (N.E.C)</td>
<td>8.60</td>
<td>5.40</td>
<td>6.80</td>
<td>-37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>111 - Crop Production</td>
<td>16.50</td>
<td>24.80</td>
<td>18.60</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>112 - Animal Production</td>
<td>33.00</td>
<td>28.20</td>
<td>33.80</td>
<td>-15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Support Activities for Crop and Animal Prod.</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1151 Support Activities for Crop Prod.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1152 Support Activities for Animal Prod.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>139.20</td>
<td>144.50</td>
<td>139.90</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>312 -Beverage and Tobacco Product Manufacturing</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>311 - Food Manufacturing</td>
<td>20.60</td>
<td>22.70</td>
<td>24.60</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3121 - Beverage Manuf.</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDMONTON REGION</td>
<td>Total All Industries</td>
<td>526.90</td>
<td>765.30</td>
<td>780.10</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agriculture Industries</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>7.90</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1100 - Mixed Farming (N.E.C)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>111 - Crop Production</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>112 - Animal Production</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>5.20</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Support Activities for Crop and Animal Prod.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1151 Support Activities for Crop Prod.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1152 Support Activities for Animal Prod.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>50.10</td>
<td>58.10</td>
<td>53.30</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>312 -Beverage and Tobacco Product Manufacturing</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>311 - Food Manufacturing</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3121 - Beverage Manuf.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour force survey, custom tabulation G0108_12_Tab1.ivt
Note: The statistics for Edmonton Region in 2015 appears suspect. For example, employment in the Animal Production category is reported to 5,200 – a marked increase over the 2014 reported number of 2,000. We have used the 2014 numbers as a more accurate estimate of employment.
Attachment 2: Policies and Planning Context

Introduction

To understand the current planning framework in the Edmonton region and how agriculture fits in, it is important to consider the provincial, regional, and municipal policies which influenced its evolution over time to where we are now.

Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission

The Edmonton Regional District Planning Commission was established in 1950 and first adopted a regional plan for the metropolitan area in 1958, which sought to maintain compact communities and prevent ‘unwarranted’ fragmentation of good agricultural land. The Commission adopted other policies as early as 1975:

- The Commission aims to ensure that agriculture will remain a valuable component of the regional economic base.
- The Commission opposes the unwarranted fragmentation of prime agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes

In 1979, the Commission prepared policies stating that ‘Prime agricultural land… shall not be subdivided for country residential uses except…’ In 1980, the Commission wrote that ‘the competition for the use of the basic land resource of the region has created major problems for the agricultural community…’

A new Metropolitan Regional Plan was approved in 1984—driven by: (1) Provincial policies in favour of the conservation of ‘better’ agricultural land and other policies such as the first parcel out; (2) development patterns based on continued contiguous growth regardless of soil conditions; and (3) soil quality and the dividing line between Classes 1 & 2 and Class 3 in ‘rural areas’ as a major determinate.

Provincial Land Use Policies

In 1996, the Provincial Government adopted Provincial Land Use Policies (PLUPs) pursuant to the Municipal Government Act. With a goal to contribute to the maintenance and diversification of Alberta’s agricultural industry, four policies were adopted. Municipalities were ‘encouraged’ (1) to identify areas for extensive and intensive agriculture, (2) limit the fragmentation of agriculture lands and their premature conversion, (3) direct non-agricultural development to areas where they will not constrain agriculture, and (4) minimize conflicts arising from intensive agricultural operations. The policies were only discretionary and non-binding.

Provincial Land Use Framework and ALSA

The Land Use Framework (LUF), released in 2008, outlined a new Provincial approach to managing land and resources. The Alberta Land Stewardship Act (ALSA), proclaimed in 2009, enabled, not only regional planning, but it also provided tools for implementation: conservation directives, conservation easements and transfers of development credits that could be aimed at the protection, conservation, and enhancement of agricultural lands and lands for agricultural purposes. To date, these new tools have not been utilized to any extent.
North Saskatchewan Regional Plan

The Lower Athabasca Regional Plan, the first provincially approved regional plan, merely repeats the PLUPs as its agricultural policies. This regional plan is currently under preparation, but the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the planning process state the plan is to ‘provide advice on maintaining a viable agricultural land base to support growth and diversification of the agricultural industry.’ In its discussion of biodiversity, the ToR notes that the trade-off discussion related to the settled area revolves around the value of the land in terms of its agricultural productivity and the ecosystem services that the private land base provides versus the value of the land if used for other purposes (e.g. residential development). The plan is required to address the use of the various conservation tools.

In summary, the language of these Regional Plans to date have moved from the term ‘encouraged’ to ‘expected’ to limit fragmentation and the premature conversion of agricultural lands. Although there is no requirement per se in the first two regional plans, the North Saskatchewan Regional Plan may be more directive in the conservation of agricultural lands if desired by stakeholders and municipalities.

Capital Region Board Growth Plan

The primary purpose of the Capital Region Land Use Plan was to manage sustainable growth in a manner that protects the region’s environment and resources, minimizes the regional development footprint, strengthens communities, increases transportation choice and supports food and agricultural sector development. The Capital Region Growth Plan: Growing Forward was approved by the Government of Alberta in 2010.

The plan had the following acknowledgement about agricultural land:

*Agricultural land is a limited, non-renewable resource which is competing with other forms of development. If the land is not protected in the long-term for food production, the land will be converted to another use and lost forever. Agricultural land has significant value, both at the local and regional levels, beyond its pure economic capacity, including green space, aesthetics, community character, lifestyle, air quality, wildlife habitat, as well as a risk management measure in the event of future food shortages. In order to ensure agriculture lands are complementary with policies to reduce the regional footprint, further collaboration on implementing agricultural land policies is required.*

Specific to agriculture, the CRB Plan did little else other than to identify those areas that have been designated for agricultural purposes by municipalities. However, the CRB, took the position that it would wait until the Province took further policy decisions relative to agricultural land fragmentation and preservation. Since that time, the Alberta Government wrote the CRB in August 2014, stating that the Province ‘determined that the economic, environmental and social evidence did not currently support the need for a provincial-level policy on agricultural fragmentation and conversion, though we recognize the issue as a growing concern throughout Alberta, particularly within the Edmonton-Calgary corridor.’ The letter goes on to state that ‘municipalities are now expected, rather than encouraged, to follow the direction provided through the PLUP on this important issue.’

Growth Plan Update

The CRB went through an extensive process to update the Growth Plan. In its review, the CRB acknowledged the pressure on agricultural land. It noted that 80% of land within the primary growth areas is classified as best or better agricultural land; 56,000 ha of lands would be consumed within the urban growth shadow; the total number of farms and area of farmland in the region is declining; and there is a need to optimize the potential for value-added agriculture. The CRB noted that currently “there is no policy
direction concerning the encroachment of urban development on high quality agricultural lands in the region.”

The ‘Agriculture Working Paper’ for the plan update identified policy gaps specific to the preservation of agricultural land: (1) A lack of leadership and direction from the Province; (2) No differentiation with respect to which agricultural lands are more suitable for preservation or development; (3) lack of a robust analytical framework; and (4) differing approaches being taken by municipalities.

The ‘Metropolitan Regional Growth Structure Working Paper’ said that protecting land areas for agricultural use can be done in numerous ways and a suite of other policy tools is recommended to protect prime agricultural land, including the introduction of a LESA system. But, one of the principles of the plan update was to “wisely manage prime agricultural resources. In the context of metropolitan growth, we will ensure the wise management of agricultural resources to continue a thriving agricultural sector.” It included the following key strategy:

Growth needs to be carefully managed as region to ensure the long-term viability of the agricultural sector. The policies of this Plan are designed to address this issue from multiple standpoints including our cultural heritage, future need for food production and for its contribution to the region’s economic prosperity. Maintaining agricultural viability requires managing growth to protect prime agricultural lands from development, preventing fragmentation of the land base, recognizing the important role of agriculture in the global and regional economy and fostering growth and diversification and the potential for value added products within the agricultural sector.

The draft plan stated that ‘a supply of prime agricultural lands will be identified and preserved.’ This was to be accomplished through the future development of a Regional Agriculture Master Plan using a Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) analysis and be informed by municipal agriculture master plans. The CRB’s expectation was that “policies will be included to implement the regional agricultural policy directions at the municipal level and identify priority and prime agricultural lands in municipal statutory plans on a map.” The new Growth Plan prepared by the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board was approved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs in October 2017.

The plan was based on six guiding principles, one of which addressed agriculture—this is a new policy area in the Growth Plan. The guiding principle for agriculture is "Ensure the wise management of prime agricultural resources to continue a thriving agricultural sector." Further, in the context of metropolitan growth, we will ensure the wise management of prime agricultural resources to continue a thriving agricultural sector.

Three objectives were identified in the Growth Plan, each with a set of policies:

- **Identify and conserve an adequate supply of prime agricultural lands to provide a secure local food source for future generations**
- **Minimize the fragmentation and conversion of prime agricultural lands for non-agricultural uses**
- **Promote diversification and value-added agriculture production and plan infrastructure to support the agricultural sector and regional food system**

Several of the implementation techniques suggested earlier in the planning process were not carried forward into the approved Growth Plan. These include conservation easements; alternative land use services (ALUS); and a capital region transfer of development credits program.
Comparison of Regional and Municipal Policies

As part of the RAMP process, a matrix that compares the agriculture and agriculture related policies for the EMRB, the four counties (Leduc, Parkland, Strathcona, Sturgeon) and the City of Edmonton (the smaller municipalities have not been included). The plans were compared across numerous attributes starting with their visions.

### Visions for Agriculture Across the EMR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Visions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strathcona County</strong></td>
<td>as ‘Canada’s most livable community’ is distinguished by its agricultural heritage that builds on history and responds to opportunities as a leader in the Capital Region in the provision of a broad range of agricultural and food opportunities as well as services to one of Canada’s fastest growing metropolitan regions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leduc County</strong></td>
<td>A vibrant and resilient agri-food future built on a proud agriculture history.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parkland County</strong></td>
<td>A vibrant agriculture and food community characterized by its diversity, creativity and entrepreneurship, focused on sustainability as well as new opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sturgeon County</strong></td>
<td>The ‘Heart’ of Agriculture for the Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COE Fresh</strong></td>
<td>Edmonton has a resilient food and agriculture system that contributes to the local economy and the overall cultural, financial, social and environmental sustainability of the city.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Guiding Principles for Agriculture

Overall, the guiding principles for agriculture across the municipalities are quite similar both in terms of intentions and tone. There are subtle differences between the major thrusts of each of the various plans. Sometimes this is one of emphasis (focusing more narrowly on managing land vs. a broader view of community) or from perspective (urban vs. rural), or different historical perspectives. Differences are mostly by omission, not by opposing viewpoints. Overall, at this high level of policy, there is acknowledgement that there are important "agricultural resources" in the region and efforts should be made to ensure and enhance its diversity and vibrancy, resiliency and sustainability, creativity and entrepreneurship.

There are several key principles that should comprehensively drive the regional agricultural master plan:

1. The diversity of agriculture can make an important economic contribution in the local to global marketplace
2. The historical and cultural/social aspects are important in maintaining a high quality rural lifestyle and community character.
3. Environmental sustainability of the rural landscape is important.
4. The food system is an important perspective to consider.

**Implications for the RAMP:** Developing a ‘shared vision’ for agriculture and the future role, look and ‘feel’ of agriculture and food within the region is the critical starting point. Once this is in place and agreed to, the planning process becomes much easier.

**Definition of Agriculture**

Agriculture means many things and different things to different people as traditional agriculture evolves. There are key elements that should be addressed in the regional agricultural master plan:

1. In the broadest sense, agriculture includes the people, the community and the land.
2. Most of agriculture focuses on growing (whether traditional or new specialized crops) and raising (a wide range of animals).
3. Scale is a consideration—extensive farms to intensive operations.
4. Value-added (includes some processing of raw materials, etc.) is part of a new view of agriculture.
5. There are a wide range of commercial activities from export of raw product to farm gate sales and farmers markets.
6. A broader definition of agriculture often includes support services serving the agricultural sector.
7. Location enters in to it—for example, urban agriculture.
8. Another perspective is consideration of a ‘food system,’ ranging from production through to eating and composting.
9. Some definitions address motivation—not just for profit but acknowledging that it can also be motivated by lifestyle preferences.

**Implications for the RAMP:** There is a need to balance two different perspectives. (1) Work toward the broadest definition of agriculture possible recognizing that the sector continues to change and evolve as new enterprises and services emerge; and (2) not make it too broad that ‘anything goes’ and the door is left open to uses that might lead to the conversion of agriculture land. Agreement of a common definition for agriculture across the Region will impact the land use bylaw definition for each municipality. Consistency is inherently desirable, but there must be recognition of the different circumstances throughout the region.

**Sub Areas**

The Regional Growth Plan has three tiers: Metro core with no provisions for agriculture; Metro area which provides for agriculture until required for urban development; and rural which includes large areas of potentially long-term agriculture. These areas all have different policies related to agricultural land. It’s also important to note that there is a ‘commuter shed’ designation that is particularly relevant to policies about the designation and conversion of land for country residential.

While Edmonton currently has significant agricultural lands, it has not designated large areas for permanent agriculture. Outside of their proposed growth areas in the Metro area tier, the Counties are recognizing the need to address soil quality and locational factors.

**Implications for the RAMP:** It will be critical to determine and agree on an overall coherent strategy for priority agriculture areas. Two different priority areas will need to be defined: (1) Long term or permanent priority areas – lands that will be designated for agriculture uses only; and (2) Short or medium term permanent priority areas – land that will be designated as areas that may be transitioned to other uses over time.
Prime Land

There is acknowledgment that there are differing qualities of soil throughout the region although different rating concepts are used: Land Suitability Rating System (LSRS), Canada Land Inventory (CLI), and Farmland Assessment Rating (FAR). Regardless of the relative merits of each system, the planning policies focus attention on the higher capability lands (sometimes referred to as 'prime'). However, it should be noted that attention should be given to 'unique farmlands' that have usefulness to produce specific high-value food and fibre crops because of characteristics.

Implications for the RAMP: The EMRB will need to provide clear direction on which rating system(s) will be used and for what purposes and the role different areas in the overall agricultural and food sector.

Other Values

While the major policy emphasis is on agricultural production and economic values, there is some recognition of the importance of other values in the agricultural setting, such as those relating to culture, history, lifestyle, recreation, community, environment, etc.

Implications for the RAMP: Currently, land regardless of its agricultural value has no acknowledged value or priority relative to urban development. Historically, agricultural land for the most part has been considered ‘land in waiting’ for development when this is needed. Other factors may need to be considered including ascribing value to prime agriculture land in a manner like values associated with clean air and water; food security; aesthetics; environment benefits; etc.

Policies

There are indications that there is a need to use a variety of tools to protect and preserve the better agricultural lands, outside what is 'required' for urban development, on a certain and long-term basis.

Implications for the RAMP: The protection and preservation of agricultural lands requires a broader range of tools than what has been employed to date. The most decisive of these would be a policy to ‘freeze’ lands like approaches taken in British Columbia (ALR) and Ontario (Greenbelt). Such measures are politically challenging. Other more nuanced tools include transfer of development credits; conservation easements; establishing farmland trusts; and clustering development in areas of lower land quality. There is legislation (ALSA) to facilitate this. Specific to a policy enabling the transfer of development rights, a major issue to consider will be the ability and/or the desirability to allow transfers from municipality to municipality.

Conversion

There are several approaches: (1) a recognized intent to permanently designate large contiguous agricultural areas so agriculture can thrive on both large and small holdings; (2) development of better lands should only be where there are no reasonable alternatives (as a last resort?) and the impact on agriculture is minimized; (3) pressure can be taken off these areas by requiring higher densities, directing development to other suitable locations (lower capability lands, existing urban centres) where possible, transferring development rights and clustering; (4) development of agricultural areas should be phased so that agricultural remain as long as possible; and (5) Some lands that are currently designated for non-agricultural uses (such as large areas of country residential) could be re-designated to agriculture.

Implications for the RAMP: The implications on the issues of conversion are like the ‘Policies’ – see previous sub-section.
Land Use Zones

There are a variety of agricultural zones. Generally, there is one all-purpose agricultural zone that has been used to support traditional agriculture—sometimes different zones for larger and smaller agricultural holdings. The multiple-purpose zones are sometimes supplemented by a 'holding' zone generally designed to limit subdivision and uses that would conflict with future urban development. These zones tend to have a very broad range of uses (either permitted or discretionary), including residential uses or others that aren't really soil based, which tend to have inherent conflict with agriculture and, perhaps, are not consistent with long term priority agricultural areas. In addition, there is a question about the range of agricultural-related uses (support, service, agri-tourism, etc.) that should be provided for.

Implications for the RAMP: The implications are like the previous two sub-sections. There may be a case to agree to a common set of agricultural zones across the Region. However, there may be a need for special zones (or overlays) that might apply to unique or special locational circumstances.

Fragmentation

The general policy 'understanding' is that fragmentation is not conducive to effective agricultural practice because it reduces the area of agriculture, may introduce inefficient property patterns, or create potentially conflicting (and limiting) land uses. However, policy has been to allow at least limited subdivision in agricultural areas for other uses (residential farmsteads, a new first parcel out, recreation or resource development, etc.)—perhaps with a requirement for some mitigation. Those favouring subdivision raise questions of equity and the need to 'subsidize' the purchase of already expensive agricultural land through the ability to subdivide at least one parcel.

Implications for the RAMP: Given existing rules, there is a tremendous amount of potential future subdivision throughout the agricultural areas of the region. Long term priority agricultural areas may have considerably more restrictions. However, the impact of these restrictions could be mitigated by the ability to transfer development credits to address the equity question.

Lots and Sizes

Traditional zoning practice throughout the region is that 80 acres is an acceptable minimum size for most agriculture, although some municipalities propose or allow smaller agricultural holdings. Approaches range from Strathcona where a quarter section can be split into halves or a smaller residential parcel can be subdivided out; other Counties allow the creation of up to four parcels per quarter section, in a variety of formats (Parkland for example allows 4-40-acre parcels or 4 smaller residential parcels).

Implications for the RAMP: The impact to agriculture and farming operations of differing lot sizes will need to be addressed. Lot sizes should be addressed in accordance to associated land use. For example, if a lot is being used as a residence only, then a maximum size may be prescribed. However, if the lot is being used for agricultural or food production purposes, a larger size may be allowed.

Economic Development

There is widespread support for increasing the economic development potential of the agricultural sector. Most plans are supportive of "value-added agriculture" and the "diversification of agriculture" as major goals. The suggested opportunities are extensive—from agri-tourism and to energy creation to specialized livestock and local food initiatives. However, there are little in the way of concrete initiatives and implementation strategies for this economic development goal.

Implications for the RAMP: A major challenge facing the EMRB will be to adopt and implement an economic development plan that can stimulate the regional food and agriculture industry. Three distinct strategies will be required (1) ensuring the ability of traditional forms of production to continue (grains, oilseeds, dairy, beef, pork, poultry etc.); (2) stimulating and/or supporting new ventures that are
emerging to response to local food demand; and (3) Building the core of regional and nationally focused agri-food enterprises that have successfully emerged over the past 20 years.

**Urban Agriculture**

The Regional Growth Plan promotes urban agriculture in the metropolitan tier. Both Edmonton and Strathcona have urban agriculture strategies and Leduc includes policy in support.

**Implications for the RAMP:** Urban agriculture remains in a nascent stage. Nevertheless, there is a strong and growing interest in urban agriculture as a response to local food demand and food security. To date, limited resources have been committed to this area. However, it fits with the previous initiative particularly the new and emerging enterprise group but does not have major significance on the regional land base.

**Infrastructure**

Most policies are general and in support of physical infrastructure (roads, drainage, irrigation, etc.) needed to support the growth and diversification of agriculture, but implementation rests with the strategic and budget plans of the municipalities. There are also 'soft' infrastructure suggestions in other areas (market development, education, etc.).

**Implications for the RAMP:** There may be key infrastructure investments to be considered that can effectively increase the viability and growth of the emerging food and services sector.

**Advocacy**

There is some recognition that one of the requirements in promoting agriculture is that the sector needs a voice and leadership to champion and advocate on its behalf. Suggested efforts include leadership development, marketing, education, an industry institute and/or agricultural forums. The regional agriculture master plan process will have to determine what initiatives might be appropriate at the regional scale to advance food and agriculture.

**Implications for the RAMP:** The lack of a voice or ‘leadership’ coming from the agriculture and food community is a major concern. While many producers and processors are member of organizations, no organization speaks for issues pertaining to the sector in the EMR. This will be an important issue to address.

**Land Use Conflicts**

Conflict is closely associated with fragmentation. It is accepted that the notion of land use conflicts in agricultural areas is generally undesirable insofar as it may limit efficient agricultural production. Examples of conflicts are increased country residential development in agricultural areas or CFOs impacting on residential. Leduc's draft MDP states that 'agricultural uses shall take precedence within the Agricultural Area.' Two other Counties refer to the concept of 'right to farm.' What is an appropriate regional response and what is appropriate at the municipal level—to be determined through the process?

**Implications for the RAMP:** Perhaps one of the most significant outcomes of the RAMP is a clear articulation of and support for ‘Right to Farm’ legislation. Currently long-established farms are concerned about their long-term future and their ability to operate. The enactment of such legislation would send a very clear message to farmers in the region as well as those residents who make the choice to live in an agricultural area.

**Agricultural Impact Assessments**

The concept of agriculture impact assessments (and what they are) as a contribution to better decision making is certainly gaining ground. The question is where and when they should be applied—on prime
lands, on all agriculture lands, adjacent to these lands, etc.?

**Implications for the RAMP:** To date, the use Agricultural Impact Assessments (AIA) is in the very early stages within the region. A clear vision for agriculture for the region and supporting policies will clarify what the AIA needs to assess.

**Other Strategies**

Preserving agricultural land and promoting the agricultural economy can be enhanced using new and/or innovative strategies in the Edmonton region. These include best practices such as ALUS, transfer of development rights, conservation easements, growth boundaries, permanent agriculture priority areas, etc. They will have to be explored through the planning process.

**Implications for the RAMP:** Perhaps the most significant point to make now is this: an effective RAMP will require the integration of several strategies and policies to be effective. There will be no one policy alone that will lead to a successful outcome. For example, changes in land use policies must be supported with effective communications plans and pro-active economic development strategies all working together to achieve the vision for the region.

**Indicators & Monitoring**

Most agencies are committed to monitoring and developing key indicators to measure changes in the agriculture sector, including addressing a range of planning measures (land conversions, fragmentation etc.), and business measures (market development achievements, agricultural trends, etc.).

**Implications for the RAMP:** The selection of a key set of practical as well as easy to obtain indicators will be key to the RAMP.

**Implementation**

The RAMP and the LESA tool are key to implementing the Growth Plan's agricultural objectives. The municipalities, of course, will have a key role in implementation.

**Implications for RAMP:** The best plan without the will or the capacity to implement achieves little or nothing. Structure, strategy and accountability will be key to the required implementation plan.
Regional Agriculture Master Plan – LESA Overview & Introduction

Recommended Motion: That the Regional Agriculture Master Plan Task Force receive the LESA Overview & Introduction as information.

Background

On February 8, 2018, the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board approved the Terms of Reference for the development of a Regional Agriculture Master Plan (RAMP) as part of the implementation of the Agriculture Policy Area of the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan.

To support the implementation of the RAMP, the Board has identified the need to develop a Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) tool.

The LESA System tool will be used to support the implementation of land use policies to achieve the Agriculture policy objectives in the Growth Plan.

Recommendation:

That the RAMP Task Force accept the LESA Overview and Introduction as information.
Regional Agriculture Master Plan – RAMP Communications Plan

**Recommended Motion:** That the Regional Agriculture Master Plan Task receive the Communications Plan update as information.

**Background**

On April 19, 2018, the RAMP Task Force Approved the Communications Plan for the project.

The key component would be the development of a landing page for the project on the EMRB website to provide stakeholders with a single source of information.

On May 7th, 2018, the RAMP landing page went live on the EMRB website and includes the Project TOR, Task Force Members, Meeting Information, FAQ's, links to the regional ag studies and plans and a space for Comments.

**Recommendation:**

That the RAMP Task Force accept the Communications Plan Update, as information.