

Agri-Environment Bulletin

September/October 2013

A newsletter from Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives

Funding for Water Quality Improvements Announced

A new *Growing Forward 2* environmental initiative under Growing Assurance has been announced for ecological goods and services (EG&S) called [Growing Assurance – Ecological Goods and Services](#). It provides funds to local Conservation Districts (CDs) across the province to help producers adopt beneficial management practices (BMPs) on farms. The goal of the program is to conserve and enhance EG&S on agricultural land. This program focuses on improving water quality and other important environmental services that result from good management of natural resources within the Lake Winnipeg Watershed.

The program has two components – one for projects in all CDs and one for targeted on-farm proposal-based projects.

Component 1 helps fund projects within all CDs. Using a coordinated approach, the CDs will implement BMPs to improve critical watershed processes and increase EG&S across the area of the Lake Winnipeg watershed that includes agricultural land. Projects that incorporate the following BMPs are eligible:

- water retention structures
- wetland restoration
- constructed wetlands
- riparian area enhancement
- natural area maintenance and enhancement
- buffer and grassed waterway establishment
- perennial cover for sensitive land
- shelterbelt/ tree establishment



Component 2 helps fund targeted, on-farm EG&S project proposals. Proposals can be from individual CDs or can be submitted jointly from two or more CDs. Funding will be provided on a competitive basis for targeted on-farm BMP projects that use innovative decision tools and/or delivery mechanisms, such as:

- cost-benefit assessments
- INvestment Framework For Environmental Resources (INFFER)
- conservation auctions

If you are a producer and want more information on this program, contact your local MAFRI GO Office, or local Conservation District.

Growing Forward 2 is a renewed commitment by the federal, provincial and territorial governments to ensure productivity and profitability for Canada's agricultural sector.

What agri-environmental news is important to you?

Email agrienv@gov.mb.ca with your ideas and suggestions for future articles.

Assessment Pilot to Measure Value of Environmental Projects

With funding from *Growing Forward*, Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives partnered with Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship to pilot and evaluate the use of the INvestment Framework for Environmental Resources (INFFER) in the East Interlake and Pembina Valley Conservation Districts. INFFER is a tool for developing and prioritizing projects that address environmental issues. The goal is to maximize the environmental benefit that can be achieved by investing in protection and sustainability projects that have a high chance of succeeding. This new approach is used successfully in Australia to allocate funds for natural resource development and protection.

Initial review of INFFER suggests that conservation districts can use a modified version of INFFER to select projects that implement actions in local Integrated Watershed Management Plans. The evaluation also indicates INFFER can be valuable when used with other approaches (including an environmental benefits index) in order to clarify assumptions about benefits, costs and uncertainty surrounding project selection. Additional resources in the form of training, support and data sharing are recommended to support the use of INFFER in Manitoba.

The use of an approach such as INFFER can help ensure that funds invested in natural capital secure the greatest environmental benefit. INFFER and other innovative decision support tools and/or delivery mechanisms will be funded through *Growing Forward 2*, [Growing Assurance – Ecological Goods and Services](#).



Important Dates and Notices

- September 10 Manure applied in Red River Valley must be incorporated or injected (perennial crop and zero-till fields exempted)
- November 10 Ban on winter application of manure takes full effect (no exemptions)
- November 10 No further application of nitrogen and phosphorus fertilizers is permitted until April 10 of next year

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- Contact your local MAFRI office to sign up for an [Environmental Farm Plan Workshop](#).
 - A free composting webinar is held the first Wednesday of each month. Please contact van.doan@gov.mb.ca for more information.