

## NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

### **WRAP raises agricultural issues with party leaders**

**Sherwood Park (April 16, 2012)** – With the upcoming provincial election, Albertans will have been to the polls three times in less than a year. Yet, as in the federal election and Progressive Conservative leadership race in 2011, the issues facing agriculture have received little or no consideration during this provincial campaign.

Wild Rose Agricultural Producers (WRAP) is working to change that. “As Alberta’s largest renewable resource and second largest industry, it’s surprising that agriculture doesn’t generate more discussion,” said Lynn Jacobson, WRAP President. “In an effort to bring some of the concerns of our industry to the fore, we sent a brief survey to the party leaders to solicit their views on agricultural issues including alternative land use services (ALUS), green energy, transmission lines, check-off support, and right to farm and land use.”

“With the exception of the Wildrose party, who needed more time to research the questions, all of the parties responded,” noted Jacobson. “With only a week left until election day, it’s important to let farmers know about the agriculture platforms so they can vote for the party that will best support our industry now and into the future.”

Alberta voters are being encouraged to check out the survey results by visiting the Wild Rose Agricultural Producers’ website at [www.wrap.ab.ca](http://www.wrap.ab.ca).

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Backgrounder: Election 2012 – Agricultural Issues

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*Wild Rose Agricultural Producers is Alberta's largest producer funded general farm organization. Whenever decisions are being made that affect the province's agricultural industry, we're there, providing an effective voice for Alberta's farmers. For more information on WRAP, please visit our website at: [www.wrap.ab.ca](http://www.wrap.ab.ca).*

# Backgrounder

## Election 2012 – Agricultural Issues

### Survey questions

1. The ability to utilize all potential sources of on-farm income, beyond the primary one of growing and selling commodities, would help ensure the ongoing viability of farms in Alberta. Alternate Land Use Services (ALUS) provides one such avenue and with cooperation from municipal and provincial governments, along with wildlife and waterfowl groups, farmers could be paid for maintaining and improving habitats for wildlife and waterfowl. There is an ongoing ALUS project in the Vermilion County.

If elected, would your party extend ALUS to other areas of the province?

2. Alternate energy (i.e. solar, wind and/or geothermal) could be a viable source of farm income if farmers were allowed to connect to the grid at a reasonable cost and sell power into the grid at a viable green energy price. These would require changes to the present regulations governing micro-generation and sale. To demonstrate the interest in alternate energy by farmers, a pilot project in Alberta was fully subscribed in four days.

Would your party, if elected, make changes to power regulations to give farmers the opportunity to contribute both to the environment and the well-being of the Alberta economy by better utilizing alternate energy?

3. It has been estimated that Alberta developers will spend \$16 billion on transmission line development. Power consumers, including major industrial users and other power companies, are saying this is overbuilding the transmission system and will result in a threefold increase in power bills.

If elected, what will your party do to ensure that Albertans are not burdened with the expense of unnecessary or overbuilt transmission lines?

4. The Carbon Capture and Storage Statutes Amendment Act (Bill 24) and the Alberta Land Stewardship Act (Bill 36) continue to generate controversy. Government's interpretation of these bills seems at odds with what lawyers and constitutional experts are saying.

If your party is elected, what will you do to address the concerns raised about these bills?

5. Alberta has one of the largest agricultural sectors in Canada, yet remains one of the few jurisdictions in the country that does not have a legislated stable funding mechanism (checkoff) in place for general farm organizations (GFOs). This lack places Alberta producers at a disadvantage as current federal agricultural policy is influenced by strong farm organizations in other provinces.

If elected, how would your party work with the existing GFOs to develop a process that would provide assured funding so producers have a forum to address non-sector specific issues and promote their industry in the future?

6. The development of Regional Plans under the Land-use Framework provides a basis for future development and siting of industry in the seven regions of the province. Implicit in these plans is the need to recognize increasing demands on land and water resources. The agriculture industry, with its dependency on these resources, must be assured that any future regional plans will balance the land and water needs of each region so that agriculture can continue as a viable industry in the future.

If elected, how will your party ensure that agriculture is meaningfully engaged in the development of these Regional Plans and that the future needs of agriculture are balanced with a growing urban demand for land and water resources?

### **Survey responses**

Survey responses are available at [www.wrap.ab.ca](http://www.wrap.ab.ca).

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