

# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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A strong connection to the land and the environment has always been at the heart of farming. Over the past 20 years, that tie has taken on new meaning as society has placed a higher level of importance on environmental care. Today's agricultural industry must be aware of these changes in public opinion.

Alberta beef producers are leaders in operating an environmentally responsible, sustainable and prosperous cow/calf industry. To remain competitive in world markets, cow/calf producers need to use common sense, appropriate management practices and scientific knowledge to minimize environmental impact and maintain public confidence.

For agriculture to remain productive, it must protect the diverse ecosystems in which it operates. Producers must consider the natural features of their land, such as wetlands, trees and native range when managing their operations. Enhancing farm habitat and conserving biodiversity will help maintain a healthy environment capable of supporting sustainable food production. Ultimately, maintaining a healthy environment is in the interest of society as a whole.

Technology, science and information are changing the cow/calf industry. More operations are specializing in a particular area

of production, and are developing alliances and integrating with other sectors of the industry. These changes are another reason the industry needs to become more aware of environmental impacts.

*Beneficial Management Practices: Environmental Manual for Alberta Cow/Calf Producers* was developed to inform and educate producers on beneficial management practices (BMPs) that can enhance soil, water, air and biodiversity. These BMPs protect the environment while keeping production practical and within the law. The manual should be considered general and not specific to any operation. As every operation is unique, BMPs should be applied and modified based on the specific operation.

## **This manual includes information in the following areas:**

- Management according to landscape characteristics.
- Site planning and management.
- Water supply management.
- Manure management.
- Grazing management.
- Pest control.
- Feed storage management.
- Management of agri-chemicals, petroleum products, medical wastes and dead stock.
- Community relations for cow/calf operations.
- Legal requirements for cow/calf operations.