

# Alberta Farm Animal Care



ANNUAL REPORT

2021

*A F A C . A B . C A*



# ABOUT AFAC

Alberta Farm Animal Care (AFAC) is a collective, trusted voice on livestock welfare. Founded in 1993 by Alberta livestock organizations, AFAC is now Canada's only provincial farm animal care organization.

The three areas of focus for AFAC are:

- Building awareness and commitment to the best animal welfare practices
- Ongoing knowledge and tech transfer in collaboration with industry partners
- Building public trust through outreach opportunities.

AFAC is supported by various stakeholders, including producers, livestock associations, municipalities, agriculture societies, animal health companies, auction marts, and abattoirs.

## **Vision**

AFAC works to ensure farm animals in Alberta are respected, well-cared for and experience a high state of welfare through collaboration with and support of our members.

## **Mission**

To promote best practices in care and handling by working collaboratively towards continual improvement in responsible livestock care. Engaging the public to build trust through transparency.

AFAC.AB.CA

# Chair's Report

**It has been a year of dealing again with the impact of Covid-19.**

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It has been a year of dealing again with the impact of Covid-19. We had hopes that we could leave that behind us. As an animal welfare organization, we of course have to focus on our mandate and once again, a lot of that work was successfully delivered online.

AFAC stands up for advancing responsible animal care through joint effort with the diverse livestock organizations and industry partners in Alberta. But it's not only in Alberta that AFAC is active. Through the virtual channels, AFAC has been able to reach out to our neighboring provinces and beyond.

The Livestock Care Conference was virtual again in 2021. It brought people together online, to connect on matters of livestock welfare. Commodity members sponsored students to attend the event. We had speakers who offered lots of knowledge, experience and new insights. Speakers from all over the continent. I hope that attendees enjoyed the content.

The Backyard Chicken Workshop is a strong one. There's a high demand for knowledge and practical insight for responsible care of chickens year-round. New this year was the smallholder swine workshops and two more CFIA transport workshops.

The Alert-line continues to be a great accomplishment. Dedicated staff are answering calls 24/7, day and night if necessary. Calls regarding animals at large, info calls, or calls about welfare concerns or to dispatch an emergency livestock trailer. More serious concerns are forwarded to the SPCA. The trailers are in the province, to assist in emergencies like truck roll-overs, barn collapses, animals at large etc. Trailers are stationed at fire departments and other places in the counties and municipal districts. Another source of important information is the AFAC website: [www.afac.ab.ca](http://www.afac.ab.ca).

All this work is possible through the support and contribution from our members, sponsors, commodity partners, and government grants. We welcome any support for the work of AFAC. We appreciate the option to apply for funding through the Canadian Agriculture Partnership program and other grant programs. And all this work is possible through the commitment from the executive director Annemarie, the AFAC team and volunteers, and the input of the board of directors. Thank you all.

We're looking forward to continuing this work, to be a leader in advancing and promoting responsible livestock care in Alberta and beyond.

Regards,  
Your chair Cora Scheele

# The Board



**Cora Sheele**  
Chair

Alberta Hatching Egg  
Producers



**James Jenkins**  
Vice Chair

Western Stock Growers



**Darrell Dalton**  
Council Chair

ABVMA



**Casey Vander Ploeg**  
Finance Chair

Alberta Cattle Feeders



**Heini Hehli**  
Director

Alberta Milk



**Melanie Wowk**  
Director

Alberta Beef



**Merna Gisler**  
Director

Alberta Goat



# Executive Director's Report - Annemarie Pedersen

The past few years have been ones of great change for AFAC. Aside from a global pandemic our organization has made major shifts in the way we do business. We moved from a bricks-mortar office to a virtual office in November 2019, while also shifting from full-time staff to contractors. This provided more flexibility in managing variable budgets for organizational and project funding, and gave us the opportunity to reconfigure the work we were doing.

The challenges in trying to deliver programming since March 2020 have turned into an opportunity as our smallholder workshops continue to grow in breadth and demand. This format provides extension for producers who may not be accessing resources intended for commercial production and provides income to support program development. Aside from the increasingly popular chicken program we also delivered a smallholder pig series, as well as additional CFIA transport webinars. The work on the beekeeping program continued and it will be yet another workshop for smallholders. More is coming for this program in 2022.

The ALERT Line and our support and training for the livestock emergency trailers located throughout the province, continues to be a critical service provided by our team. Three coordinators share the on-call duties and we also delivered a virtual TLAER refresher course.

More than ever, every dollar we receive as sponsorship, membership or in partnership towards government grants is being put towards extension, training and outreach. I am so proud of the AFAC team; thank you to Melissa Moggy, Kaylee Healy, Maria Swan, Makayla Wowk and Katiesue Ross for their hard work and commitment to the vision of AFAC over the last year.

And thank you to our members and partners for your continued commitment and support.

## Financial Officer's Report

Alberta Farm Animal Care continued to work on our mission to promote best practices in animal care and handling in 2021. This work was funded by \$195K from memberships, government grants, industry contributions, and event income. This compares to \$277K received in 2020, with the decline in 2021 due in part to reduced government grants. Despite this decline in revenue the net deficit in 2021 was only \$5K and cash reserves remain solid.

We are grateful for the continued commitment and support of all our funders and look forward to working with you in 2022.

# Our Team



**Annemarie Pedersen**  
Executive Director



**Melissa Moggy**  
Extension Lead



**Kaylee Healy**  
Marketing & Comms Coordinator



**Maria Swan**  
Financial Officer



**Makenna Moore**  
Social Media Lead



**Makayla Wowk**  
Social Media Lead



**Katiesue Ross**  
Marketing & Comms Assistant



# Marketing and Communications Report

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2021 started with AFAC’s annual partnership with the Mount Royal University (MRU) public relations class. This year, the MRU student team tackled three projects: a social media content calendar, updates to the communications content pool, and an ALERT Line public awareness campaign.

Focus for the first three months each year is the annual Livestock Care Conference. 2021’s theme of ‘Are We There Yet?’ rang through speaker presentations across industry research, ag support organizations, and producers. More information can be found in the Livestock Care Conference Report.

Continuing the work started in 2020, successful public programs like the monthly ‘Questions from the Coop’ began again in the spring. Online Urban Hen workshops resumed with a January Overwintering Check-in, then spring and summer brought Introduction to Backyard Chickens, coop building, diseases, and overwintering. Several partnerships were launched with municipalities piloting their first backyard chicken permitting programs, such as City of Cold Lake.

A partnership with Alberta Pork brought a Small-Scale Swine webinar series in the fall and winter of 2021. Interest in this program was overwhelming with over 320 registrants across four webinars. A great thank-you to Javier Barhamon and Cristina Neva with Alberta Pork and Dr. Kelsey Gray with Prairie Swine Health, who developed this program with us.

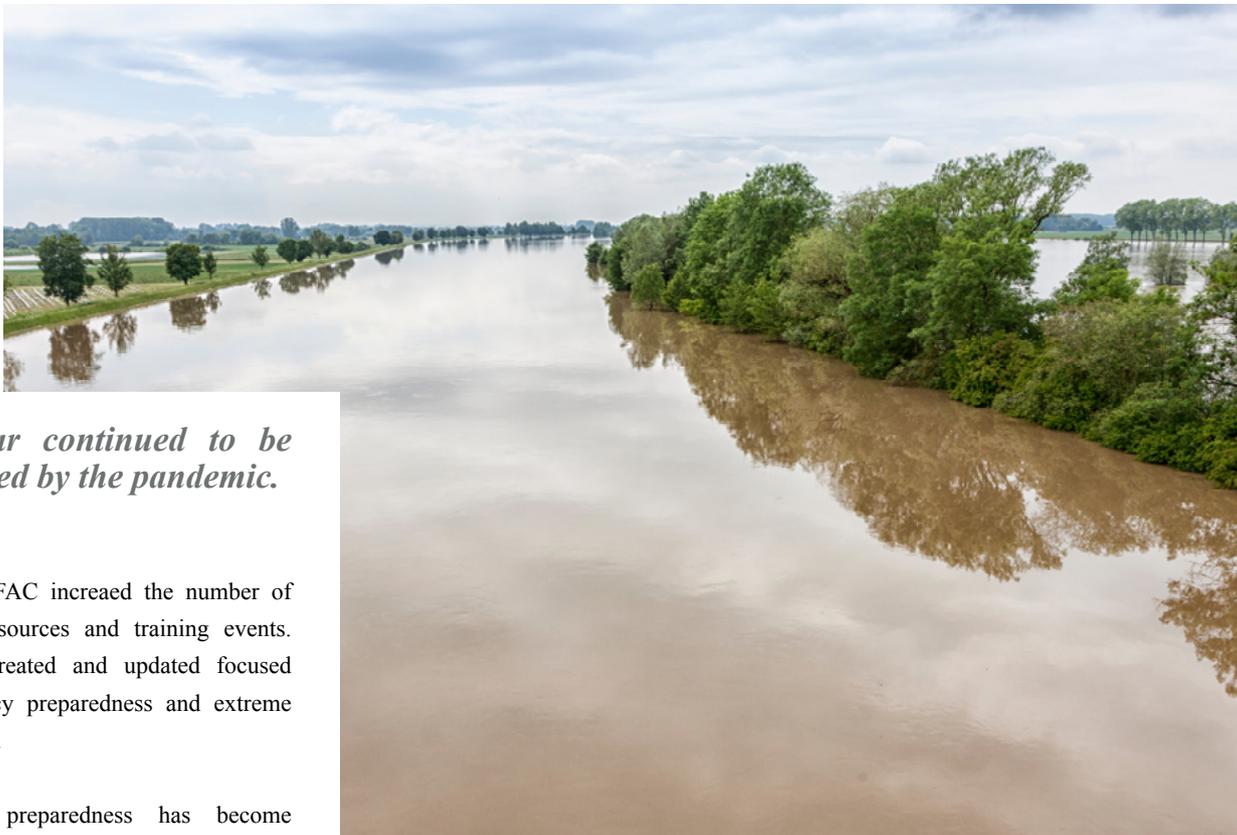


## 320 + registrants across 4 webinars



Various funding enabled AFAC to have two summer interns. Diana Chung and Katiesue Ross’s work resulted in updates to resources such as Fact Sheets, vet contact lists, and infographics. AFAC welcomed Katiesue as a permanent team member and had Makayla Wowk join as the new social media lead in the fall. With 2022 bringing still more hurdles for communications, the AFAC team is ready for the challenge.

# Extention Report



*This year continued to be challenged by the pandemic.*

However, AFAC increased the number of extension resources and training events. Resources created and updated focused on emergency preparedness and extreme temperatures.

Emergency preparedness has become a significant focus for AFAC. We were even invited to speak on livestock emergency preparedness on the Emergency Preparedness in Canada Podcast.

The Insights e-publication released two issues in 2021. Each Insights issue highlights new animal care and welfare research or information on a current issue. The ultimate goal of the insights e-publication is to connect producers with research, changes and issues facing their industry.

Training events continued to be offered virtually throughout the year. AFAC also expanded its small lot training events by offering webinars on chicken and swine care. We are so grateful to work with the CFIA, Alberta Goat Association, Alberta Lamb Producers, Prairie Livestock Veterinarians, and Jungle Out There Pet Services to offer these events.

Work on the Alberta Beekeepers Education and Enhancement Program continued. This project aims to create an Alberta Beekeepers Handbook, task lists, training videos, and training workshops. This project is funded in part by the Government of Canada and the Government of Alberta through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership. Funding for the project is also contributed by Alberta Beekeepers Commission and Peavey Industries LP.

*“Emergency preparedness has become a significant focus for AFAC.”*

**Check out the Insights articles!**



# 2021 Livestock Care Conference

After a chaotic year, the theme “Are We There Yet?” fit for the 2021 Livestock Care conference (LCC) and returned to a virtual platform.

The conference opened with Dr. Jody Carrington’s presentation on resiliency and the importance of leaning into your team. Then, speakers over the month of March shared updates such as the Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef and innovative programs.

Do More Ag gave a workshop on the mental struggles faced by the ag community and coping strategies. Becky Taylor and Lindsey Anderson came together to share communication skills, legal rights, and techniques for dealing with difficult conversations and situations, such as trespassing.

A producers panel discussed how focuses and approaches have changed over the years. A media panel that included Barbara Duckworth and Dianne Finsted also shared their perspectives on how the livestock welfare discussion has evolved.

Both industry and ag students welcomed a small ‘Meet the Experts’ session. A special thanks to the conference and student sponsors for their support.



Top left: Chatsworth Farm  
Right: Kendra Donnelly  
Bottom: Water Box

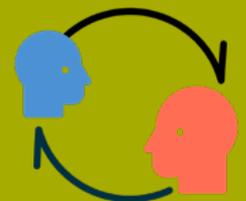
## Award of Distinction for Innovation

Lee Smith with the Water Box



## Award of Distinction for Communications

Chatsworth Farm



## Award of Distinction for Industry Leadership

Kendra Donnelly

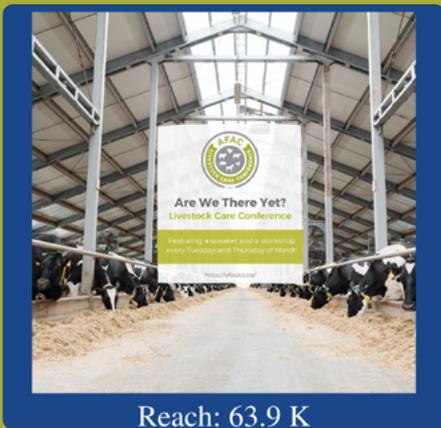


# Telling Our Story

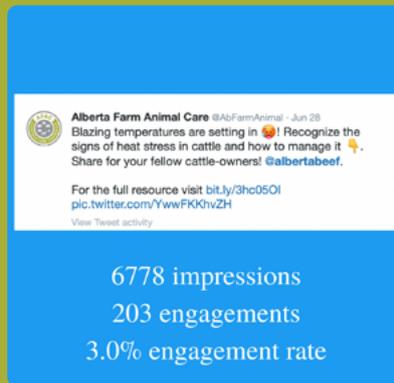
## Facebook

2800 + followers

Reach increased 31.6% in 2021



## Twitter

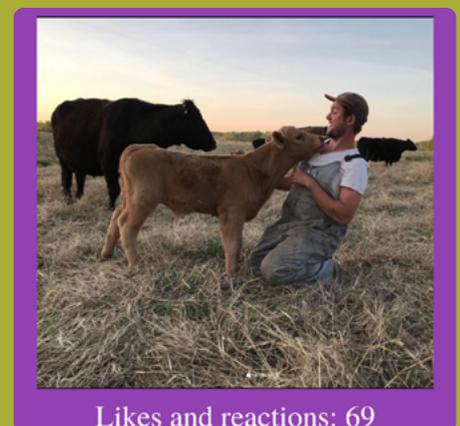


2200 + followers

## Instagram

1200 + followers

Reach increased 55.6% in 2021





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# Post-Secondary Speaking

**The post-secondary tour is one of the most important outreach efforts conducted by AFAC each year.**

We continued to reach post-secondary agriculture students using a virtual format.

The presentation was updated and focused more on the ALERT Line, the Emergency Livestock Handling Trailers, and assessing animal welfare. Professors were invited to request specific topics such as the Codes of Practice. We also used this opportunity to promote the Livestock Care Conference student scholarships.



Grande Prairie Regional College:  
Fairview Campus



University of Calgary: Faculty of  
Veterinary Medicine



Lethbridge College



Lakeland College



University of Alberta



Northern Alberta Institute of  
Technology

# Industry Events

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AFAC was invited to speak at 2 conferences (Global Animal Disaster Management Conference and the National Animal Welfare Conference) and 1 podcast.

AFAC was invited to help moderate at the Can-West conference.

AFAC representatives participated in 21 industry events on various topics, including mental health, honey bees, social license, communications, One Health, feed testing, and the Video Ante-Mortem Inspection program.

1 M. ovi awareness webinar



1 Animal Health  
Emergency  
Management  
Webinar



8 Small lot chicken virtual  
events and 7 questions from  
the coop



2 CFIA transport  
regulation webinars



4 small scale swine  
webinar series



1 on-farm slaughter webinar



## Public Events

AFAC continued to reach out to the public through our social media channels during a time when face-to-face interactions were not possible. Speaking to primary students was also challenging during this time. We continued to collaborate with the Calgary Public Library to present to 6-8 and 9-12-year-olds. The Library invited AFAC to present twice in 2021.

AFAC also had a booth at the Calgary Stampede in the agriculture pavilion.



# Industry Resources

Trailer card update

Resources for livestock during emergencies in Alberta, Canada.

Extreme Heat Resources to Assist with Animal Care

ABP magazine article for November on cold stress

Insights e-Newsletter. Two publications with articles focusing on:

- Swine transport
- Preconditioning beef calves
- Rocky View School students program The Farm
- Equine sleep
- NSAIDs at calving
- 2021 National Survey of Farmer Mental health

**IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY**

**CALL 911** and request the **Emergency Livestock Handling Equipment Trailers**

In the rare event that 911 cannot connect you to the Emergency Livestock Handling Equipment Trailers, please contact our ALERT Line at **1-800-506-2273**

**Locations of Emergency Livestock Handling Equipment Trailers in Alberta**

1. Lethbridge County (Horseshoe Bend)
2. Lethbridge County (Horseshoe Bend)
3. Didsbury (Horseshoe Bend)
4. New Spenlow (Horseshoe Bend)
5. Provincial County (Horseshoe Bend)
6. Rocky Mountain House (Horseshoe Bend)
7. Red Deer (Horseshoe Bend)
8. Spruce Grove (Horseshoe Bend)
9. Fort McMurray (Horseshoe Bend)
10. Medicine Hat (Horseshoe Bend)
11. Lacombe County (Horseshoe Bend)
12. Wetaskiwin County (Horseshoe Bend)
13. Camrose County (Horseshoe Bend)
14. Peace River (Horseshoe Bend)
15. Grande Prairie (Horseshoe Bend)
16. Edmonton (Horseshoe Bend)

**Resources for livestock during emergencies in Alberta, Canada**

Alberta Journal of Emergency Management July 2021 edition

Thousands of farm animals live in and are transported throughout Alberta. Canada's emergency response to help reduce the risk of injury or death to these animals, a number of livestock emergency resources have been created.

Alberta has excellent emergency resources such as police and fire services and the Alberta Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) Canada. However, additional services were needed to help livestock owners protect animals and their livelihoods, particularly during Alberta's extreme weather conditions.

**ALERT Line**

The ALERT Line is a 24/7 phone line where farmers help farmers. The service was created in 1993 and anyone can call emergency for help with or report animal welfare concerns. While the ALERT Line does not have regulatory authority, it works closely with other units like the Alberta SPCA and the Legal Companion Program (LCP).

Publication: July 2021  
Author(s): Dr. Melissa Phillips, Katherine M. Williams  
Publisher: Alberta Farm Animal Care  
Peer-reviewed: No

**Insights Archives**

**The Welfare Implications of Equine Sleep**  
By Linda Brunning, Marjorie Okamoto  
Sleep reportedly regulates a range of internal processes, plays a part in memory consolidation, and is governed by hormonal and circadian processes. Thick sleep is considered a critically important part of both mental and physical wellbeing for all mammals, with sleep ability occurring when an individual fails to achieve an optimal amount of sleep. The horse is no exception. Described as a polyphasic sleeper, the horse on average engages in several short sessions of sleep interspersed with longer periods of wakefulness resulting in a total of 18 hours sleep per 24 hours. Most commonly, equine sleep is observed between midnight and dawn, which is considered an evolutionary adaptation for reducing the risk of attack or to time when the horse is most vulnerable. In a recent questionnaire-based study of nearly 600 horse owners, 28% reported major concerns regarding the amount of sleep their horses achieved, suggesting consideration of equine sleep may be an under-recognized when evaluating equine welfare within normal husbandry practices.  
(more...)  
# In My Hoop | #Equine | #Horse | #Equine

**2021 National Survey of Farmer Mental Health**  
The Welfare Implications of Equine Sleep  
April 11, 2021

**2021 National Survey of Farmer Mental Health**  
A new survey is being performed at the University of Guelph to investigate stress, depression, anxiety, burnout, suicide ideation, substance use, resilience and coping in farmers across Canada. The survey takes about 20 minutes to complete and will be open until **May 31st**. Participants will also have the opportunity to enter their name in a draw of **\$1,000 for ASPCA**. The revenues of winning one of the three prizes are approximately \$1,000.  
(more...)  
# In My Hoop | #Equine | #Horse | #Equine

**Use of NSAIDs (Pain Killers) at Calving**  
By Dr. Agnieszka Chik  
We veterinarians are using more and more non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). One of the big ones to focus on is the pain associated with calving. You, together with your veterinarian, should develop a plan for when it comes to calving this spring. There are several choices out there in the ingredients and just your veterinarian to consult.  
(more...)

**HEAT STRESS IN BEEF CATTLE**

Heat stress can occur in the early summer months of during heat waves in the summer or fall when both temperature and humidity are high.

**WHAT IS HEAT STRESS?**

Heat stress occurs when the heat an animal is exposed to is greater than their body's ability to regulate. High temperatures and humidity play a large role in increasing body temperature. Heat stress also occurs in barned facilities that are not moving, even at low temperatures. Heat stress can cause cattle to eat less, lose weight, produce less milk, and can negatively affect reproductive performance. Severe heat stress may result in illness and death.

**WHAT ARE THE SIGNS?**

- Open mouthed panting with the tongue protruding
- Laboured breathing
- Drooling on both sides of the mouth

**WHAT CAN I DO?**

- Provide shade
- Provide lots of water
- Avoid handling
- Feed at dusk / dawn
- Wet ground in part of the pen
- Sprinkle the cattle

**LEARN MORE!**

**NATIONAL FARM ANIMAL CARE COUNCIL**  
CONSEIL NATIONAL POUR LES SOINS AUX ANIMAUX D'ÉLEVAGE

The Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Beef Cattle  
1.1 Protection from Extreme Weather - Page 7

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# ALERT Line

In 2021 there were 116 calls to the ALERT Line, assisting approximately 1,793 animals helped. Of those calls, 10 were information calls, one was about the Emergency Livestock Handling Equipment Trailers, and 105 were cases that needed further action.

Fifteen cases were forwarded to the Alberta SPCA and 46 to the RCMP. Only two case calls were determined to be unfounded. Seven calls are pending or being monitored for improvement, and the remaining have been resolved.

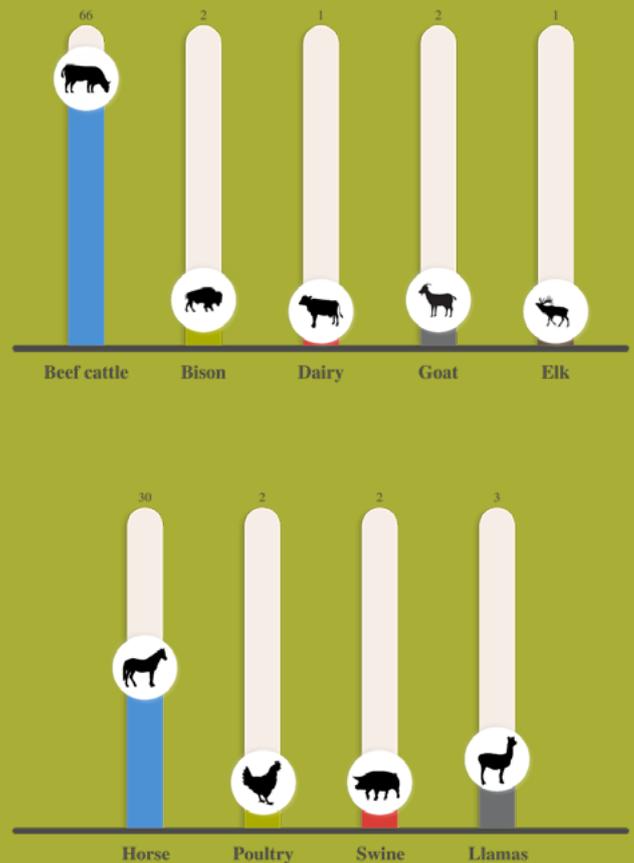


The ALERT Line would not be possible without numerous regional volunteers, the Alberta SPCA and the RCMP Livestock Investigators, who go above and beyond to make this program successful.

Anyone interested in volunteering for the ALERT Line can contact AFAC at [alert@afac.ab.ca](mailto:alert@afac.ab.ca).

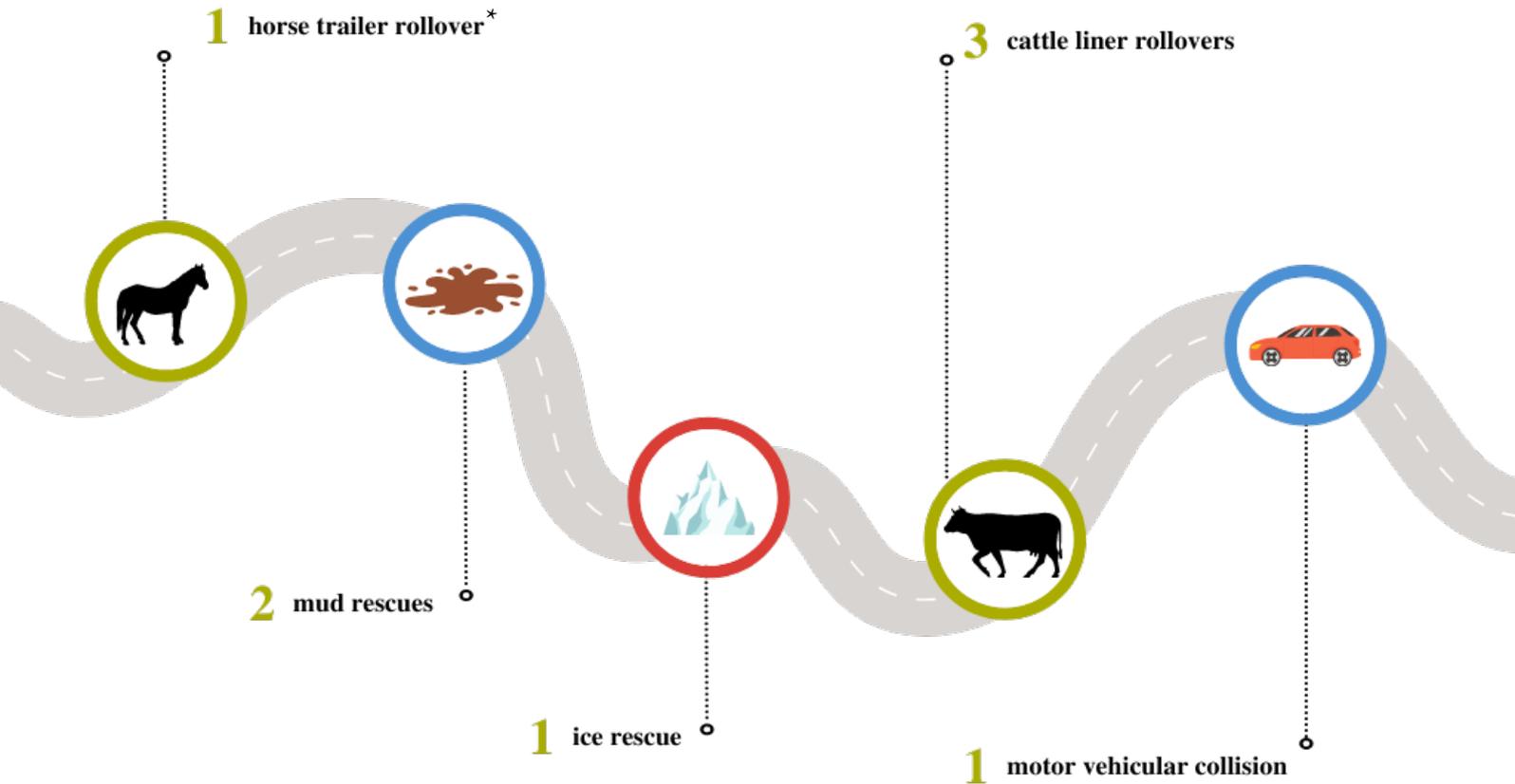
In 2021 there were 116 calls to the ALERT Line, approximately **1,793 animals helped**.

Below is the number of cases, broken down by each different livestock species:



The most common concerns were animals at large, neglect, and lack of food and water.

# Emergency Livestock Handling Equipment Trailers



Alberta Farm Animal Care is very proud of the role it played in launching the first few trailers but this program continues to grow and flourish because of the dedication of our communities. Thank you for your commitment to emergency planning and preparedness.

The special trailer housed with the Alberta SPCA, which is specifically used for scenarios that require livestock seizures, was used to seize 550 cattle, 33 horses, one donkey, and 20 sheep.

*\*The horse trailer incident was called off due to the issue being resolved prior to arrival.*

The emergency livestock handling trailers and training program were rolled out in November 2012. As of 2021, there are 19 Emergency Livestock Handling Equipment Trailers at the following locations:

- County of Grande Prairie
- M.D. of Greenview (2 Trailers)
- M.D. of Greenview
- Leduc County
- Ponoka County
- Clearwater County
- Red Deer County
- Foothills County
- M.D. of Willow Creek
- Westlock County
- Lamont County
- County of Vermilion River
- County of Paintearth
- Special Area No. 2
- County of Newell
- Cypress County
- M.D. of Taber
- Lethbridge County



## Thank you to our 2021 members and supporters

### Commodity Members

Alberta Beef Producers  
 Alberta Goat Association  
 Alberta Hatching Egg Producers  
 Alberta Lamb Producers  
 Alberta Milk  
 Alberta Pork Producers

### Platinum Level

Alberta Veterinary Medical Association (ABVMA)

### Gold Level

Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association  
 Cargill Foods  
 Lac Ste. Anne County  
 MD of Greenview No. 16  
 Alberta Veterinary Laboratories

### Silver Level

Calgary Stampede  
 Can/AB Livestock Research Trust  
 GPRC AHT Program  
 Horse Racing Alberta  
 Lakeland College  
 Olds College  
 Sofina Lilydale foods  
 United Farmers of AB. Co-operative Ltd.  
 University of Alberta ALES  
 University of Calgary Veterinary Medicine  
 Western Stock Growers Association

### Bronze Level

Alberta Auction Markets Assoc  
 Alberta Beekeepers Commission  
 Alberta Equestrian Federation  
 Alberta Veterinary Technologist Assoc  
 Bison Producers of AB  
 Boehringer Ingelheim  
 Bouvry Exports Calgary Ltd.  
 Clearwater County  
 County of Newell No. 4  
 County of Two Hills No. 21  
 County of Vermilion River  
 Cypress County  
 Egg Farmers of Alberta  
 Feeder Assoc. of Alberta Ltd.  
 Telus Agriculture Solutions (formerly Feedlot Health Management)  
 Flagstaff County  
 Gateway Carriers  
 Grey Wooded Forage Association  
 Leduc County  
 MD of Lesser Slave River No. 124  
 MD of Ranchland  
 MD of Taber  
 Olymel  
 Red Deer County  
 Rocky View County  
 Saddle Hills County  
 Starland County  
 Strathcona County  
 Sunterra Farms Ltd.  
 Vulcan County  
 Walbern Agri-Systems  
 Western Hog Exchange  
 Wheatland County

### Producer Level

Liz Munro, All in One  
 Arco Poultry Ltd.  
 Chinook Ranch  
 Deerview Meats  
 Diamond 7 Ranch Ltd.  
 Durward Land & Cattle Ltd.  
 Gil Hegel (on behalf of GWFA)  
 Highland Feeders  
 Shipwheel Cattle Feeders Ltd.  
 Silverado Horse Center  
 Stettler Veterinary Clinic No. 3  
 Stockyards Veterinary Services Ltd.  
 Strangmuir Farms  
 STS Farms Ltd.  
 Sundgaard Poultry Farm Ltd.  
 Sylvia Checkley  
 Wowk Ranch

### Supporters

Annemarie Pedersen  
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 Cassandra Kirkpatrick  
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 Erika Voogd  
 Heather Van Esch  
 Sharron Johannesen  
 Trails End