



## **ABP OH&S Farm and Ranch Safety Briefing Note**

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### **Background**

The Alberta Agriculture Farm and Ranch Safety Coalition (AgCoalition) was formed to respond to government legislation affecting farm and ranch workers, specifically Bill 6, *The Enhanced Protection for Farm and Ranch Workers Act*. On January 22nd, 2016, producer groups from across the crop and livestock sector met to develop a unified approach to this bill and other pending legislation on employment standards and labour relations. The AgCoalition is producer driven and has 29 member organizations representing over 97% of the agriculture industry in Alberta.

All of the groups in the AgCoalition share the common goal of developing a culture of safety on farms and ranches in Alberta, but were concerned that the legislation would impose onerous and impractical requirements on farms and ranches without actually making the work places safer. The AgCoalition coordinated industry participation in the six Technical Working Groups established under Bill 6 to address Occupational Health and Safety, employment standards, labour relations, education, and training.

### **Guiding Principles and Decision Making Process of the AgCoalition**

- The AgCoalition strongly believes in safe and healthy farms.
- The AgCoalition is willing to innovate and apply safety improvement practices that are informed by agricultural experience and proven safety methods.
- Agricultural producers are accountable for our safety performance, and support tracking agriculture industry safety performance using simple, practical and objective methodologies.
- The AgCoalition will be transparent in our communication of values, goals, procedures and safety performance.

### **Recent activity:**

- The agriculture community has created an industry led farm and ranch safety association known as the AgSafe Alberta Society to coordinate the delivery of awareness, education and training programs that will build a culture of safety on Alberta farms and ranches. One of the tasks for AgSafe Alberta will be educating and helping producers implement safety practices and protocols as outlined in the OHS guidelines developed. AgSafe will incorporate the OHS guidelines into its awareness and education messaging going forward.
- The AgCoalition OH&S working group translated a large inventory of TWG (GOA Technical Working Group) recommendations (142 recommendations) that cite multiple legislative references and applicable sections of the code itself, into guidelines that meet legislative intent while providing practices that make sense at the farm and ranch level.



- The Government of Alberta has finalized recommendations for OH&S Code revisions that reflect the unique aspects of the agriculture industry. Provincial cabinet has approved the revisions and guidelines has legislated the incorporation of these new code requirements with other amendments and/or exemptions. They come into effect December 1, 2018. See <https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/ohs-farm-ranch-highlights.PDF>
- Guidelines within the new regulations will be shared with producers through AgSafe who will help farmers incorporate practices and protocols that will meet the requirements of the legislation

**Recommendation:**

- **ABP is very supportive of the new OH&S Guidelines developed for farm and ranch safety, as well as the development of the AgSafe Society.**
- **As such, ABP recommends that any changes in government policy regarding Bill 6 does not lose the work that has been done by the AgCoalition which includes the new agricultural code requirements and amendments, as well as the formation of the AgSafe Society.**

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