

# Association of Manitoba Community Pastures Wins 2024 Manitoba TESA Award

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Since it was first awarded in 1996, Manitoba Beef Producers' local awarding of The Environmental Stewardship Award (TESA) has gone to a cattle producer in the province. This year, there was a break with tradition as the TESA was presented to the Association of Manitoba Community Pastures (AMCP) at MBP's 45<sup>th</sup> AGM on February 8 in Brandon.

TESA recognizes producers for their conservation practices, and who set a positive example for other producers and the public.

In nominating AMCP for the award, beef producer Alvin Stewart, who is a Gardenton-Pansy Community

Pastures patron said "AMCP clearly takes its commitment to environmental stewardship seriously and has attracted over \$1.5 million in grant funded projects over the past few years. This funding helps all producers using the community pastures as well as the long-term sustainability and protection of pasture lands."

#### Celebrating its 10-year anniversary

The AMCP, which is celebrating its 10-year anniversary in 2024, is committed to enhancing and supporting the livestock industry by providing high quality grazing from May to October every year, balanced with sustainable rangeland stewardship. All AMCP community pastures have certified Environmental Farm Plans in place.

With a mandate to sustainably manage productive and biodiverse rangelands enhanced by livestock production, AMCP's success over the last decade has been driven by:

- Support from over 350 livestock producers (pasture patrons), who bring over 40,000 head of livestock to graze the Community Pastures every year.
- More than 40 onsite pasture managers and riders ensure animal care, cattle rotations and range management.
- Democratic governance by livestock producers with firsthand knowledge of the industry.

New partnerships with Manitoba conservation organizations to strengthen the grazing management systems of the community pastures and deliver new environmental projects on private or leased pasture lands in Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

The community pasture program is available to all producers and prioritizes access for new and young producers.

"Thanks to strong rangeland management practices, AMCP community pastures sustain numerous environmental benefits as well as contribute to the fabric of rural communities," said Barry Ross, AMCP General Manager, in the nomination application. "The community pastures are well used for scientific research, birding and other wildlife surveys, recreation and hunting."

In May 2018, the Province of Manitoba also awarded AMCP the 2017 Manitoba Excellence in Sustainability Award for Water and Natural Areas Stewardship in recognition of its range management practices, the environmental benefits of the community pasture program, and its support for Manitoba's cattle industry and rural communities.

#### Much achieved in 10 years

AMCP community pastures comprise of more than 350,000 acres of intact prairie lands, where it uses management tools such as managed livestock grazing systems (rotational grazing supported by sustainable stocking rates and improved livestock distribution) and prescribed burns to preserve and enhance the ecosystem services of these lands.

The Association has secured grant funding over the past three years for major projects in support of its grazing management objectives such as brush management controls, the installation of 20 miles of new fencing to improve rotational grazing, improvement of 70 water sources and the building of 40 livestock crossings. It also installed 37 new solar watering systems for pasture patrons in 2023 in partnership with the Nature Conservancy of Canada and funding provided through the Weston Family Prairie Grasslands Stewardship Investment Program.

As part of Conservation Trust project works, AMCP also partners with Manitoba Fisheries & Wildlife Branch to do annual bird surveys that demonstrate the importance of Community Pastures as wildlife habitats that supports many avian species-at-risk.

As it celebrates a decade of supporting the beef industry in Manitoba while providing important ecosystem services including wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration, and water retention and filtration, the AMCP still has many environmental goals for the future. They include continuing to recruit and retain staff dedicated to livestock care and the needs of the industry and to provide grazing services for producers across the province, with a view to long-term stocking rate increases, so producers can increase herd sizes with the reliability they need. AMCP will continue to invest in sustainable best management practices, such as fencing and watering and new projects that foster a healthy livestock industry.

AMCP will compete with the other provincial TESA winners for the National TESA award that will be presented by the Canadian Cattle Association at the Canadian Beef Industry Conference in Saskatoon this August.



General Manager Carson Callum and Barry Ross, Association of Manitoba Community Pastures at the MBP 45<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting in Brandon. (Photo credit: Jennifer Patryluk/MBP)