

Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture Practices

Lethbridge Public Opinion Study – Winter 2018

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Methodology

Population The city of Lethbridge has a total population of 98,198 residents (2017 census) approximately 80% of which are 18 years of age or older (78,500). A total of 48,173 Lethbridge residents are male (49.1%) while 50,002 are female (50.9%). South Lethbridge is home to 31,660 residents (32.2%) while the rapidly expanding west side is now home to 39,085 residents (39.8%). There are 27,453 north Lethbridge residents (28.0%).

Sample Data Collected by Lethbridge College students enrolled in 9 sections of 6 courses in a variety of Lethbridge College programs in the winter of 2018. Students interviewed 1,288 randomly selected adult Lethbridge residents by telephone from February 10-15, 2018 under the supervision of CSRL Research Chair, Dr. Faron Ellis. We sincerely appreciate and thank all those who took time to respond to our survey. Full methodological notes and results from previous Lethbridge and Alberta Public Opinion Studies can be accessed by visiting the CSRL web pages at: <https://lethbridgecollege.ca/departments/citizen-society-research-lab>.

Representativeness Analysis of the demographic data indicates that, within acceptable limits, the sample accurately represents the demographic distribution of the adult population within the city of Lethbridge. The sample has been statistically weighted to even better reflect that of the population (sex, age, and area of the city of Lethbridge).

Confidence The sample yields a margin of error of ± 2.7 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error increases when analyzing sub-samples of the data.

IB Commons Call Centre The CSRL operates as a division of the Centre for Applied Arts and Sciences. Students conducted interviews using the facilities of the Lethbridge College IB Commons Call Centre with support from the Lethbridge College Facility Management, Instructional Technology, and Audio Visual teams.

Sponsorship These data are part of a larger study of the opinions and attitudes of Lethbridge residents conducted by the Citizen Society Research Lab at Lethbridge College. This particular set of questions was derived from student, faculty and community interest in the topic.

Agriculture and the Environment – Summary

Primary responsibility for ensuring environmentally sustainable agriculture practices

Understanding that everyone has a role to play in ensuring Alberta agricultural practices are environmentally sustainable, when asked to choose who should be primarily responsible almost half of all Lethbridge residents (47.5%) chose Alberta farmers. Nearly as many believe one or the other levels of government should be primarily responsible, with more than twice as many siding with the provincial government (31.1%) than the federal government (14.9%). Very few Lethbridge residents (6.6%) believe non-governmental environment groups should be primarily responsible.

Humane treatment of livestock

The vast majority of Lethbridge residents (88.4%) agree that livestock are treated humanely on Alberta farms. Nearly half strongly agree (49.6%) while a further 38.8% somewhat agree.

Water Use

Most Lethbridge residents (85.0%) also agree that Alberta livestock producers are using water responsibly. More than one-third strongly agree (36.7%) while nearly half (48.3%) somewhat agree.

Livestock manure recycling

Almost nine of every ten Lethbridge residents (89.9%) agrees that recycling livestock manure by spreading it on crop fields is an acceptable practice. A clear majority (55.6%) strongly agree while a further one-third (34.2%) somewhat agree.

Growth hormones

A clear majority of Lethbridge residents (62.9%) disagree with the practice of using growth hormones in livestock production. Two of every five residents (40.9%) strongly disagree while slightly more than one in five (22.0%) somewhat disagree.

Agriculture and the Environment (%)

Primary responsibility for ensuring sustainable agriculture practices			
Federal Government	14.9		
Provincial Government	31.1		
NGO Environment Groups	6.6		
Alberta Farmers	47.5		
Livestock treated humanely			
Agree	88.4	Strongly agree	49.6
Disagree	11.6	Somewhat agree	38.8
		Somewhat disagree	7.3
		Strongly disagree	4.3
Water use			
Agree	85.0	Strongly agree	36.7
Disagree	15.0	Somewhat agree	48.3
		Somewhat disagree	10.6
		Strongly disagree	4.4
Manure spreading			
Agree	89.9	Strongly agree	55.6
Disagree	10.1	Somewhat agree	34.2
		Somewhat disagree	6.2
		Strongly disagree	4.0
Growth hormones			
Agree	37.1	Strongly agree	15.1
Disagree	62.9	Somewhat agree	22.0
		Somewhat disagree	22.0
		Strongly disagree	40.9

Note: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%

Don't know responses removed from tables

- Responsibility 8%
- Humane treatment of livestock 7.2%
- Water use 14.0%
- Manure 5.8%
- Growth hormones 4.8%

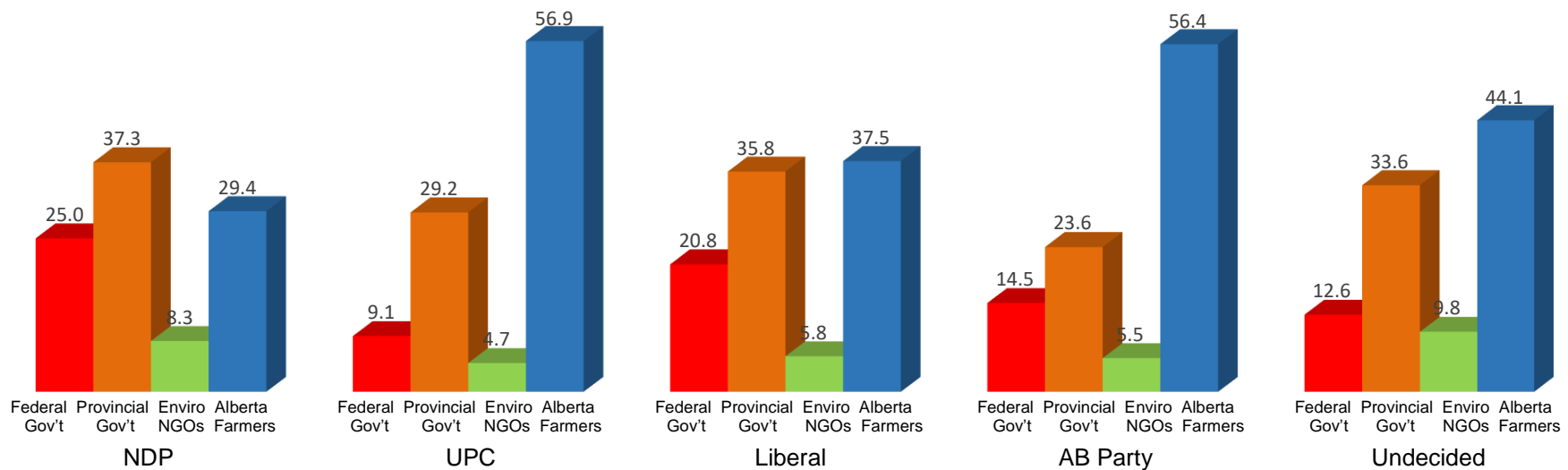
Primary responsibility for ensuring environmentally sustainable agriculture practices

Opinions about who should hold primary responsibility for ensuring an environmentally sustainable agriculture industry in Alberta are not significantly impacted by the gender, income or the area of Lethbridge within which residents live. Opinion is significantly impacted by education levels, age and, most importantly, political partisanship.

Although residents in all education categories are most likely to select Alberta farmers as the group that should be primarily responsible for ensuring environmentally sustainable agriculture practices, university graduates (39.7%) and those with some post-secondary education (42.0%) are less likely to believe farmers should hold primary responsibility than are those with high-school education or less (58.1%) and college-tech-trade graduates (52.2%). Majorities of university graduates and those with some post-secondary education prefer a government, with twice as many choosing the provincial government over the federal government.

Lethbridge residents of all ages are most likely to side with farmers over other groups, but support for Alberta farmers increases with age, and majorities of younger residents choose one or the other governments over farmers.

Most significantly, sharp political differences in opinion are evident. Provincial NDP voters are least supportive of Alberta farmers being primarily responsible (29.4%). In fact, NDP voters prefer the provincial government (37.3%) over farmers (29.4%). Nearly as many NDP voters prefer the federal government (25.0%) as farmers. Provincial Liberal voters' opinion preferences are similar, although farmers (37.5%) edge out provincial governments (35.8%) amongst Liberal partisans. Conversely, clear majorities of UCP voters (56.9%) and Alberta Party supporters (56.4%) side with Alberta farmers. UCP voters are least likely to side with the federal government (9.1%) and NGOs (4.7%).



Primary responsibility for ensuring environmentally sustainable agriculture practices (February 2018) (%)

Gender	Male	Female	Lethbridge
Federal Government	16.0	13.8	14.9
Provincial Government	31.5	30.9	31.1
NGO Enviro Groups	7.3	5.9	6.6
Alberta Farmers	45.2	49.5	47.5

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Federal Government	14.1	18.1	14.6
Provincial Government	31.5	25.0	34.7
NGO Enviro Groups	5.0	6.6	8.3
Alberta Farmers	49.4	50.3	42.4

Household Income	Under \$40,000	\$40,001 to \$100,000	Over \$100,000
Federal Government	17.6	12.3	17.8
Provincial Government	33.5	31.0	33.1
NGO Enviro Groups	6.1	5.7	8.5
Alberta Farmers	42.8	50.9	40.7

Education*	High School or less	Some Post-secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Federal Government	10.7	15.5	14.7	17.5
Provincial Government	24.2	36.7	28.2	33.2
NGO Enviro Groups	7.0	5.7	4.8	9.5
Alberta Farmers	58.1	42.0	52.2	39.7

Age*	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Federal Government	13.0	18.9	16.2	12.6
Provincial Government	38.5	31.6	29.2	28.0
NGO Enviro Groups	5.9	7.1	8.0	5.9
Alberta Farmers	42.6	42.5	46.7	53.5

Provincial Vote*	NDP	UCP	Liberal	AB Party	Undecided
Federal Government	25.0	9.1	20.8	14.5	12.6
Provincial Government	37.3	29.2	35.8	23.6	33.6
NGO Enviro Groups	8.3	4.7	5.8	5.5	9.8
Alberta Farmers	29.4	56.9	37.5	56.4	44.1

Notes: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%; * sig < 0.05

Livestock Treated Humanely on Alberta Farms (February 2018) (%)

No significant differences of opinion are measured between demographic groups when considering whether livestock are treated humanely on Alberta farms. Substantial majorities of all demographic groups believe livestock on Alberta farms are being treated humanely.

Gender	Male	Female	Lethbridge
Agree	90.4	86.8	88.4
Disagree	9.6	13.2	11.6

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	87.0	88.2	88.7
Disagree	13.0	11.8	11.3

Household Income	Under \$40,000	\$40,001 to \$100,000	Over \$100,000
Agree	87.9	88.8	88.9
Disagree	12.1	11.2	11.1

Education	High School or less	Some Post-secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	89.5	86.0	91.4	86.9
Disagree	10.5	14.0	8.6	13.1

Age	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	88.0	86.8	88.1	90.0
Disagree	12.0	13.2	11.9	10.0

Provincial Vote	NDP	UCP	Liberal	AB Party	Undecided
Agree	80.8	95.2	84.6	87.5	84.6
Disagree	19.2	4.8	15.4	12.5	15.4

Notes: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%; * sig < 0.05

Responsible Water Use by Alberta Livestock Producers (February 2018) (%)

No significant differences of opinion are measured between demographic groups when considering the water use practices of Alberta livestock producers. Substantial majorities of all demographic groups believe Alberta livestock producers are using water responsibly.

Gender	Male	Female	Lethbridge
Agree	85.5	85.1	85.0
Disagree	14.5	14.9	15.0

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	81.2	88.3	84.9
Disagree	18.8	11.7	15.1

Household Income	Under \$40,000	\$40,001 to \$100,000	Over \$100,000
Agree	84.0	86.7	83.6
Disagree	16.0	13.3	16.4

Education	High School or less	Some Post-secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	84.4	84.2	87.4	83.3
Disagree	15.6	15.8	12.6	16.7

Age	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	84.7	81.7	83.8	87.9
Disagree	15.3	18.3	16.2	12.1

Provincial Vote	NDP	UCP	Liberal	AB Party	Undecided
Agree	78.7	92.1	75.0	71.4	83.1
Disagree	21.3	7.9	25.0	28.6	16.9

Notes: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%; * sig < 0.05

Recycling Livestock Manure by Spreading on Crop Fields (February 2018) (%)

Few significant differences of opinion are measured between demographic groups when considering the practice of recycling livestock manure by spreading it on crop fields. Substantial majorities of all demographic groups believe livestock manure spreading is an acceptable practice. Slight difference of opinion are measured between age groups with younger residents slightly more supportive than older residents.

Gender	Male	Female	Lethbridge
Agree	90.5	89.4	89.9
Disagree	9.5	10.6	10.1

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	89.5	88.9	90.9
Disagree	10.5	11.1	9.1

Household Income	Under \$40,000	\$40,001 to \$100,000	Over \$100,000
Agree	91.5	90.4	89.4
Disagree	8.5	9.6	10.6

Education	High School or less	Some Post-secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	88.2	93.0	90.5	88.2
Disagree	11.8	7.0	9.5	11.8

Age*	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	94.3	93.1	85.3	90.7
Disagree	5.7	6.9	14.7	9.3

Provincial Vote	NDP	UCP	Liberal	AB Party	Undecided
Agree	87.0	92.1	89.1	83.6	89.9
Disagree	13.0	7.9	10.9	16.4	10.1

Notes: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%; * sig < 0.05

Growth Hormone Use in Livestock Production is Acceptable (February 2018) (%)

Opinion is much more divided when Lethbridge residents consider the use of growth hormones in livestock production.

- Men are much more evenly split on the issue, 51.5% disagree but 48.5% agree, than are women where nearly three-quarters are opposed (74.7%).
- West Lethbridge residents are less opposed (57.1%) than are south (69.1%) and north (67.2%) Lethbridge residents.
- Opposition to the use of growth hormones increases with age. In fact, a clear majority of young Lethbridge residents (62.2%) are supportive of the use of growth hormones, while seniors are most opposed (78.8%).
- Provincial NDP voters are most opposed to the use of growth hormones (71.1%), while a majority of Alberta Party voters are supportive (55.9%). Majorities of UCP (57.1%) and provincial Liberal (61.2%) voters are opposed, but less opposed than are their NDP counterparts.

Gender*	Male	Female	Lethbridge		
Agree	48.5	25.3	37.1		
Disagree	51.5	74.7	62.9		
Area*	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge		
Agree	30.9	32.8	42.9		
Disagree	69.1	67.2	57.1		
Household Income	Under \$40,000	\$40,001 to \$100,000	Over \$100,000		
Agree	41.0	36.2	38.3		
Disagree	59.0	63.8	61.7		
Education	High School or less	Some Post-secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad	
Agree	35.8	40.1	38.1	35.5	
Disagree	64.2	59.9	61.9	64.5	
Age*	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older	
Agree	62.2	41.2	29.0	21.2	
Disagree	37.8	58.8	71.0	78.8	
Provincial Vote*	NDP	UCP	Liberal	AB Party	Undecided
Agree	28.9	42.9	38.8	55.9	29.9
Disagree	71.1	57.1	61.2	44.1	70.1

Notes: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%; * sig < 0.05

Demographics

Area of City (%)		Gender (%)		Income (%)		Education (%)		Age (%)	
South	32.0	Male	49.0	Under \$40,000	29.4	H-School/less	18.3	18-29	23.8
North	27.7	Female	50.3	\$40-100,000	45.8	Some P-Sec.	24.9	30-44	19.7
West	40.3	Other	0.7	Over \$100,000	24.8	Col-Tech-Grad	28.2	45-64	33.7
						University Grad	28.7	65 or older	22.7

Note: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%

Questions

Thinking for a moment about agriculture in Alberta, understanding that everyone has a role to play in ensuring Alberta's agriculture industry is operated in an environmentally sustainable way, which of the following groups do you think should be primarily responsible for ensuring environmentally sustainable agricultural practices?

- The federal government
- The provincial government
- Non-governmental environmental groups
- Alberta farmers

Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements about agriculture in Alberta.

- Livestock on Alberta farms are treated humanely.
- The use of growth hormones in livestock production is an acceptable practice.
- Alberta livestock producers are using water resources responsibly.
- Recycling livestock manure by spreading it on crop fields is an acceptable practice.
 - Strongly agree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Don't know (unprompted)
 - Refused (unprompted)