

March 4, 2024

ALBERTA COOPERATIVE
AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION
DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION
FRAMEWORK

WHY WE ARE HERE

In 2022, the Alberta Extension Taskforce (ETF) defined the end-state for **cooperative agricultural extension** as: 'a networked system focused on identifying and facilitating the application of technologies, practices, and knowledge in the pursuit of continuous improvement in the production of agricultural products.'

This Working Group will take the next steps to drive design and implementation of the Cooperative Extension Model. Industry must have joint commitment and ultimate ownership for successful long-term accountability and sustainability.

Our objectives are:

1. **Define the Cooperative Extension Execution Model and Success Measures**
2. **Define the Cooperative Extension Model's Implementation Requirements**
3. **Define an initial Pilot Program to prove out the agreed Cooperative Extension Model**

Following is the Working Group's proposed design and implementation plan to enable a built-in-Alberta, world-class Cooperative Agricultural Extension system, focused on improving Producer productivity, profitability, and sustainability.





WHO IS INVOLVED

- Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (AGI) - Sponsor
- Agricultural Research and Extension Council of Alberta (ARECA) – host coordinator
- Results Driven Agriculture Research (RDAR)
- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (Ag Canada)
- Agriculture Research Associations (ARAs)
- Crop & Livestock Commissions (Commissions)
- Agriculture Service Boards (ASBs)
- Post Secondary Institutes (PSI's, represented by Universities and Colleges)
- Private Sector

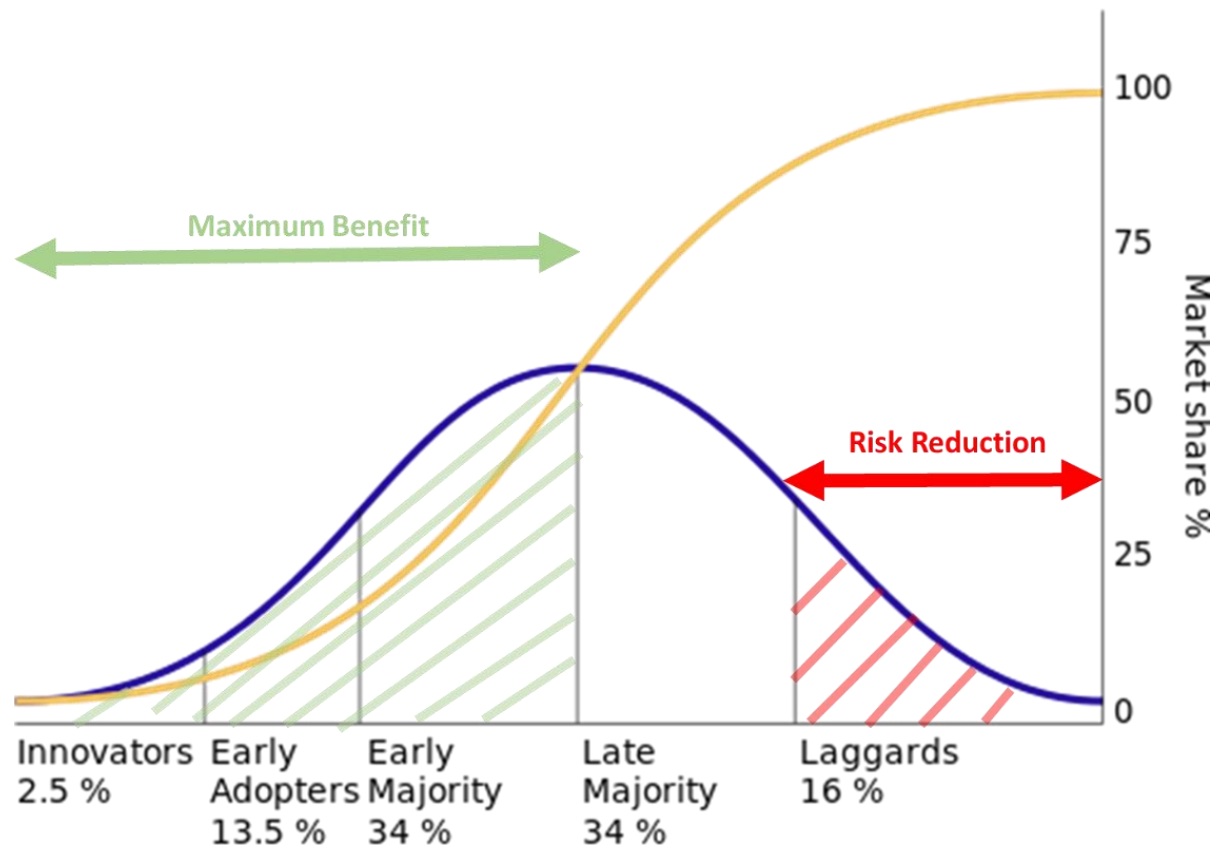


DESIGN PRINCIPLES

1. Timely, Responsive & Agile
2. Evidence-Based
3. Outcome-Based
4. Easy to Consume, in Desired Formats
5. Affordable, Sustainable & Resilient
6. Easily Scalable & Adaptable
7. Optimize, not Duplicate
8. Respect & Protect Member Brand & Autonomy
9. Provide a Win-Win for Member Organizations
10. Address Critical Cross-Industry Gaps

Our mandate is to design the overall system, with industry agreement in principle. The initial system will serve a strong foundation on which to grow, evolve and adapt to meet producer and industry needs. The ability to easily integrate additional extension parties, such as poultry, lamb, or greenhouses is key.

THE PRODUCER IS THE ULTIMATE BENEFICIARY!



Primary engagement to drive maximum value:

- Innovators
- Early Adopters
- Early Majority

Engaging innovators and early adopters amplifies producer peer-to-peer learning, which amplifies adoption.

Laggards cannot be overlooked as a risk to fellow producers and industry at large. The system needs to be flexible and evolve in tandem with ever-changing producer needs.

COMMUNITIES OF EXTENSION

A critical gap is a lack of Specialists to support existing Boots on the Ground Extension Agents with expertise and consumable resources to meet producer short, medium & long-term needs.

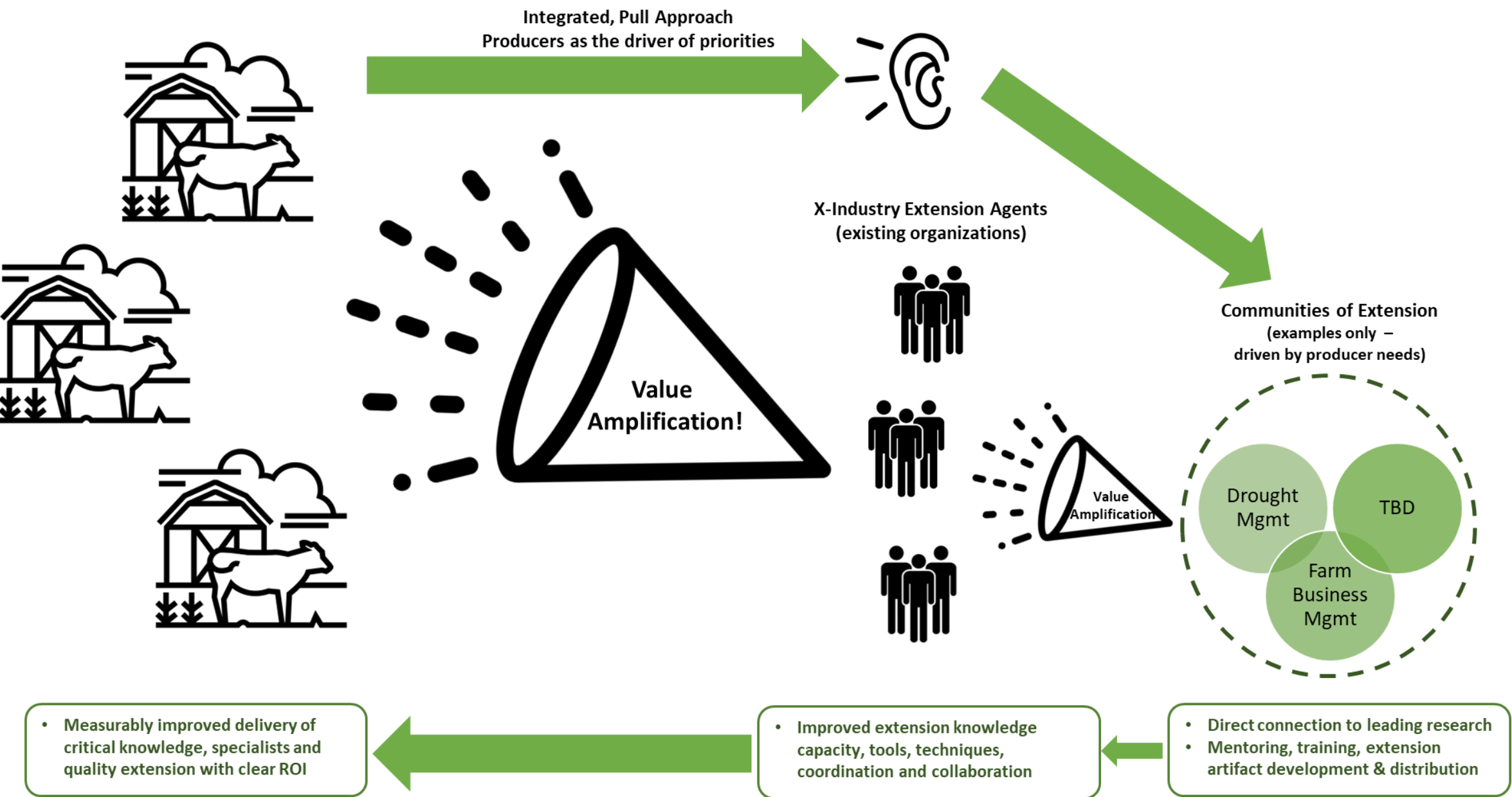
Cooperative Agricultural Extension will establish Communities of Extension, whose core objectives are to:

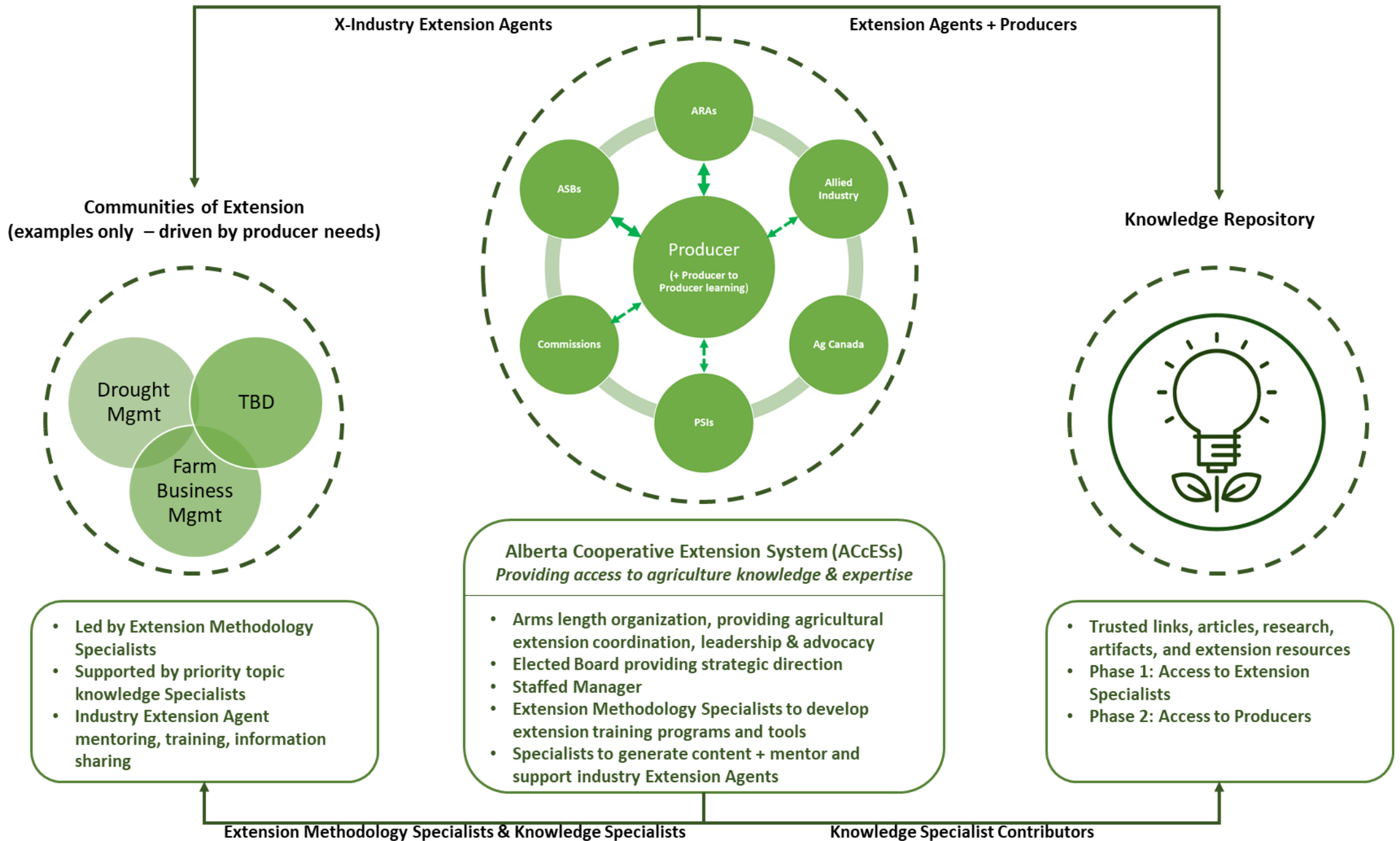
1. Identify top producer challenges for a focused knowledge area and develop intentional extension strategies to address
2. Provide a coordinated feedback loop from x-industry Extension Agents \leftrightarrow producers
3. Share leading knowledge and research, which is data-informed with lived experience
4. Provide effective extension tools, techniques and outcome-driven direction
5. Develop and distribute knowledge artifacts and extension resources to leverage throughout the extension ecosystem
6. Coordinate webinars and conferences, both for Extension Agents and producers
7. Provide Extension Agent networking, mentorship, and a safe space for testing ideas

CoEs are a knowledge amplifier, coordinating existing x-industry Extension Agent development and delivering intentional information to producers



Key Beneficiary: Alberta Producers!







IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE




- A 12-month pilot will confirm how the model will operate, identify areas for improvement, confirm implementation requirements, and test anticipated benefits.
- This will be followed by a 12-month 'Year 1' implementation to build out the formal organization.
- Rather than delay implementation to match government long-term funding cycles, a 28-month Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (SCAP) application will be submitted to cover:
 - Initial project ramp-up (April – July 2024)
 - Pilot execution (August 2024 – August 2025)
 - 'Year 1' Implementation (August 2025 – August 2026)
- The goal is to have long-term funding in place by April 2026, at which time the program would switch from SCAP funding to long-term funding.

THE PILOT WILL:

- Confirm how the model will operate;
- Identify areas for improvement;
- Confirm implementation resource & budget requirements; and
- Test the value proposition.

	Goals	Scope
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Test Drive the Car• Confirm Anticipated Benefits• Create Buy-in & Excitement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify & select CoE priority areas• Recruit & Onboard Manager• Recruit & Onboard Specialists• Recruit & Onboard Extension Methodology Specialist• Establish CoE(s) with Extension Agents• Establish Extension Agent Training Program• Establish & Populate Knowledge Repository• Measure Impact, Communicate, and Adjust• Prepare for Full Implementation
Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 12 months, targeted for August 2024 – August 2025	
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SCAP for pilot, long-term funding application to occur in parallel• ARECA continue to serve as financial administrator for pilot. To reduce conflict of interest, ARECA agrees to be a non-voting, ex officio Working Group member. Financial administration will transition when the new formal organization are in place.	
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working Group will serve as interim Board, under a revised Terms of Reference, with clear leadership responsibilities and voting structure.• Consultants currently facilitating the design process will be phased out and/or retained on a fractional basis as needed to aid with the pilot launch.• Formal governance will transition to a member-elected Board when long-term funding is in place and the formal organization is established.	

BENEFITS

 Extension System Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increased capacity & resilience ✓ Increased capability / expertise & resilience ✓ Increased cohesion, between Extension Agents and across commodity specialty areas ✓ Broader 'systems view' and ability to respond to industry issues in a coordinated manner
 Extension Resource Optimization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increased leverage of existing Extension Agents (focus and collaboration) ✓ Reduced fragmentation / duplication ✓ Increased resource engagement and retention (education / growth opportunities) ✓ Increased connections / networking – strengthening extension community members ✓ Addressed critical Specialist resource gaps; improved efficiency & effectiveness
 Producer Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ More trusted and timely information ✓ Reduced fragmentation / confusion / frustration ✓ Increased producer support and trust, leading to increased innovation uptake / adoption ✓ Improved two-way producer / Extension Agent communication

LONG TERM EXTENSION SUCCESS MEASUREMENT

	Extension Project Delivery Effectiveness	Extension Impact / Outcomes	Cooperative Agricultural Extension Effectiveness
What	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of proposal (extension component) Quality of delivery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget adherence Schedule adherence Quality of outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actual v. planned outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved profitability Decreased risk Improved environmental, social, governance (ESG) Ultimately, Benefit Cost Ratio attributed to on-farm practice change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of increased collaboration/integration Evidence of reduced regional and subject matter access gaps Increased extension consistency and quality Evidence of increased data-driven decisions Improved producer profitability, productivity, and sustainability (data provided by third-party)
Who	RDAR Leads	AGI Leads (leveraging third-party expert + referencing RDAR's Economic Advisor)	Cooperative Agricultural Extension Group Leads
When	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project completion with annual rollup 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every 3-5 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annually, with report to Stakeholders

Agricultural Extension Effectiveness measurement design and execution will be led by a staffed Extension Methodology Specialist, who will work in close contact with AGI's contracted third party and RDAR's funded Economic Advisor to confirm data coordination and measurement alignment.

The Cooperative Agricultural Extension Group to host regular checkpoints with RDAR & AGI to review holistic results across all three bands, to inform Extension Agent training program priorities.

NEXT STEPS

- Continue to refine proposed model
- Present to Minister for endorsement by end-March
- Upon endorsement, complete SCAP application
- Complete priority scan + Specialist target list
- Prepare for August 2024 pilot launch



Q & A

