



ALBERTA BEEKEEPERS COMMISSION

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



Building a strong Alberta beekeeping industry:
Thriving through sustainability and awareness.



Our Vision

We envision a vibrant, healthy, and growing Alberta beekeeping industry. We will achieve this through: Innovation, Education, Collaboration, and Research.

Our Mission

To develop and implement initiatives, and provide tools supporting Alberta beekeepers, which improve the health of honey bee colonies, promote the quality of our products and services, and expand partnerships, markets and opportunities.






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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

This year's conference theme is "Strengthening the industry through assurance and advocacy". When I think of this theme my immediate thought is how proud I am to be a part of the growth of the Commission these past five years. I remember sitting in my first meeting with government thinking they couldn't care less about our industry. In contrast, the Commission now receives calls from the government on a regular basis inquiring on the health of our industry and to discuss any challenges we are facing. I'll leave my political leanings out as I firmly believe this is a direct result of the hard work the Commission office has done to advocate on behalf of Alberta beekeepers.

With honey prices increasing the work to protect consumer confidence becomes increasingly important. While this has always been a daunting task, I feel that throughout this pandemic Albertans have shown amazing support for local agriculture, something we can all be thankful for.

ABC's Tech Transfer Program (TTP) team has worked hard over the past year, developing training tools and information to support beekeepers, and delivering

valuable Colony Health Management (CHM) and training services to support the health and sustainability of our industry. In addition, the TTP also conducted the first ever virtual Integrated Pest Management (IPM) workshop, where they presented a range of great speakers and covered a number of valuable topics. Please take a moment to review the full highlights and achievements of the TTP over the last 12 months in the separate TTP annual report.

We would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the newest member of the TTP team, Emily Olson. Emily brings a great range of skills and expertise to the team and has helped to grow the capacity of the TTP to meet with beekeepers and deliver the colony health monitoring program.

ABC continues to invest in research. This year the focus has been on funding and advocacy for the new research programs at the University of Lethbridge and University of Alberta as they become established. Overall ABC has made multi-year commitments to four research projects.

I would like to thank out-going ABC Director Bill Termeer, who finished up his six-year term in 2020 as Director for the Peace Region. I would also like to welcome new board member Dan Pala who joined us in 2020 as Director at Large. 2021/2022 will see a few more changes to the ABC board, including the completion of the six-year term for Curtis Miedema, who over the last two years has held a dual role as VP and CHC Delegate. I would like to thank all board members for their contribution to the industry and helping to guide the strategic direction of the ABC.

As I look forward to my final year serving on the board, I am excited to return to the regular networking and meetings which has allowed me to learn so much from the excellent beekeepers we have in this province. I encourage everyone to continue to reach out to board members to discuss any and all concerns that you feel need to be addressed.

Jeremy Olthof



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Chaos and change would certainly describe the past year. The Commission would often hear from the media or government – your industry is resilient. At times I feel like they say this to make themselves feel better.

I love the quote from Marnie McBean, Olympic medalist, world champion rower, and Chef de Mission Tokyo 2020. “Resiliency, it feels a bit passive to me as a word. When I look at it, the root of resilience is adaptation, and that’s what I think this team is just amazing at.”

The Commission is resilient. However, what has made this team amazing over the past 18 months is its ability to adapt and even thrive despite the chaos and change caused by the pandemic.

Following the 2020 AGM, the board met to review and update the Commission’s Strategic Plan. One of the first steps in refining the existing strategic plan was to answer the question: “What’s most important right now?” Answering this question helps to align ABC staff efforts toward the defined goal and helps Directors prioritize competing opportunities. Staff and Directors agreed that the most

important thing ABC can do right now, is work towards a more sustainable industry.

The rallying cry or theme developed is: **Building a strong Alberta beekeeping industry:** *Thriving through sustainability and awareness.*

How are we going to do this?

Strategy 1: Stability and Innovation Through Research and Relationships

- Focus: Hive Health
- Focus: Pollination
- Focus: Maintain and Enhance Existing Markets for Bee Stock and Pollination

Strategy 2: Promotion and Education to Increase Honey Consumption and Awareness of Beekeeping Benefits

- Focus: Promote Honey Consumption
- Focus: Expand Market Opportunities for Alberta Honey and Hive Products

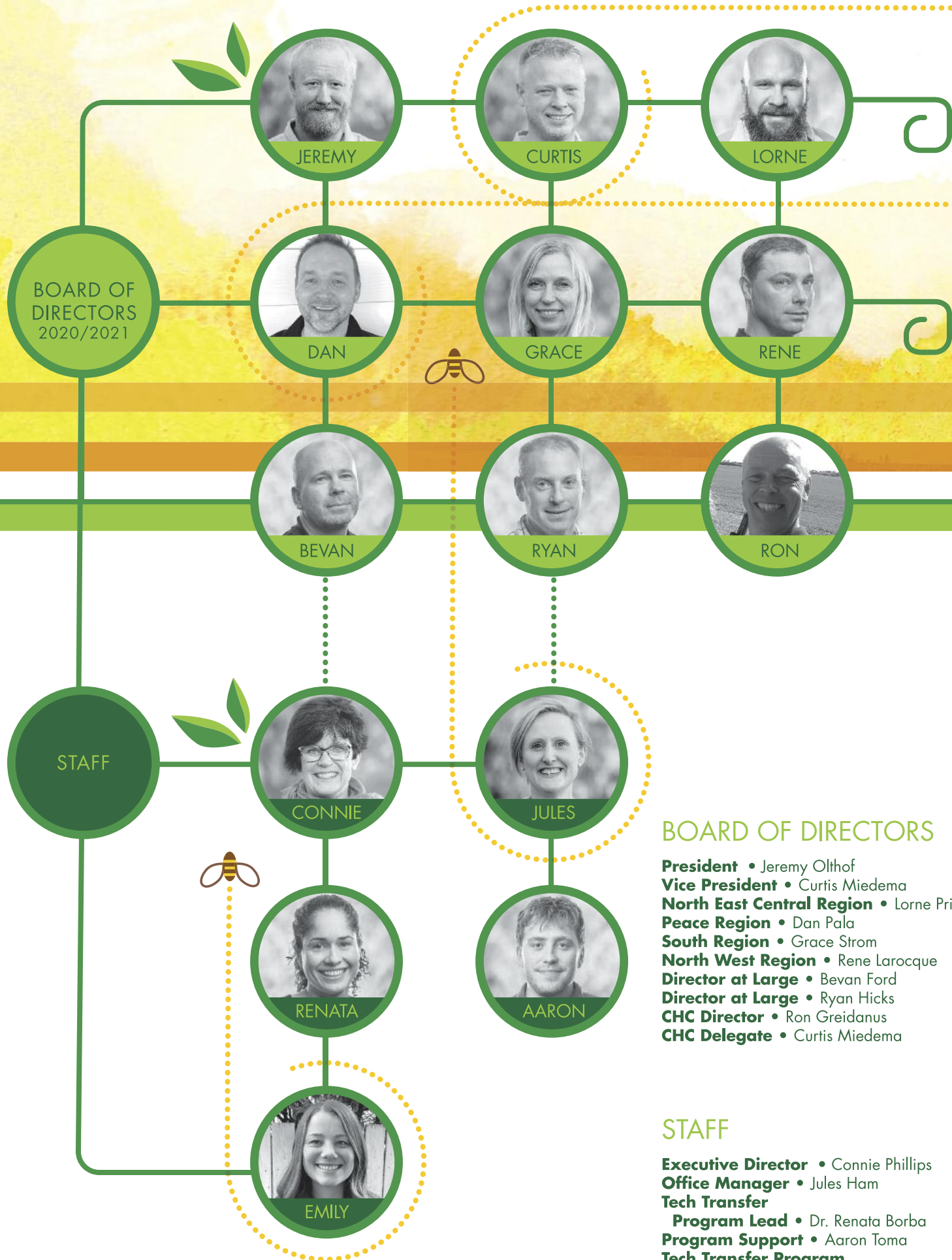
Strategy 3: Effective Stakeholder Relationships and Value for ABC Eligible Producers

- Focus: Active Industry Advocacy
- Focus: Communication and Education for Beekeepers

Each of these focus areas have objectives to be achieved and tactics on how to achieve the objectives. Together these, along with the resolutions, form the new ABC Operations Plan. Despite the best laid plans – there is always chaos and change. Commission board and staff continue to respond as needed to the many unforeseen issues, challenges and opportunities that arise throughout the year.

The new strategic plan can be found at www.albertabeekeepers.ca/about/.

Connie Phillips



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President • Jeremy Olthof
Vice President • Curtis Miedema
North East Central Region • Lorne Prins
Peace Region • Dan Pala
South Region • Grace Strom
North West Region • Rene Larocque
Director at Large • Bevan Ford
Director at Large • Ryan Hicks
CHC Director • Ron Greidanus
CHC Delegate • Curtis Miedema

STAFF

Executive Director • Connie Phillips
Office Manager • Jules Ham
Tech Transfer
Program Lead • Dr. Renata Borba
Program Support • Aaron Toma
Tech Transfer Program
Technician • Emily Olson



STRATEGY ONE: STABILITY & INNOVATION THROUGH RESEARCH AND RELATIONSHIPS

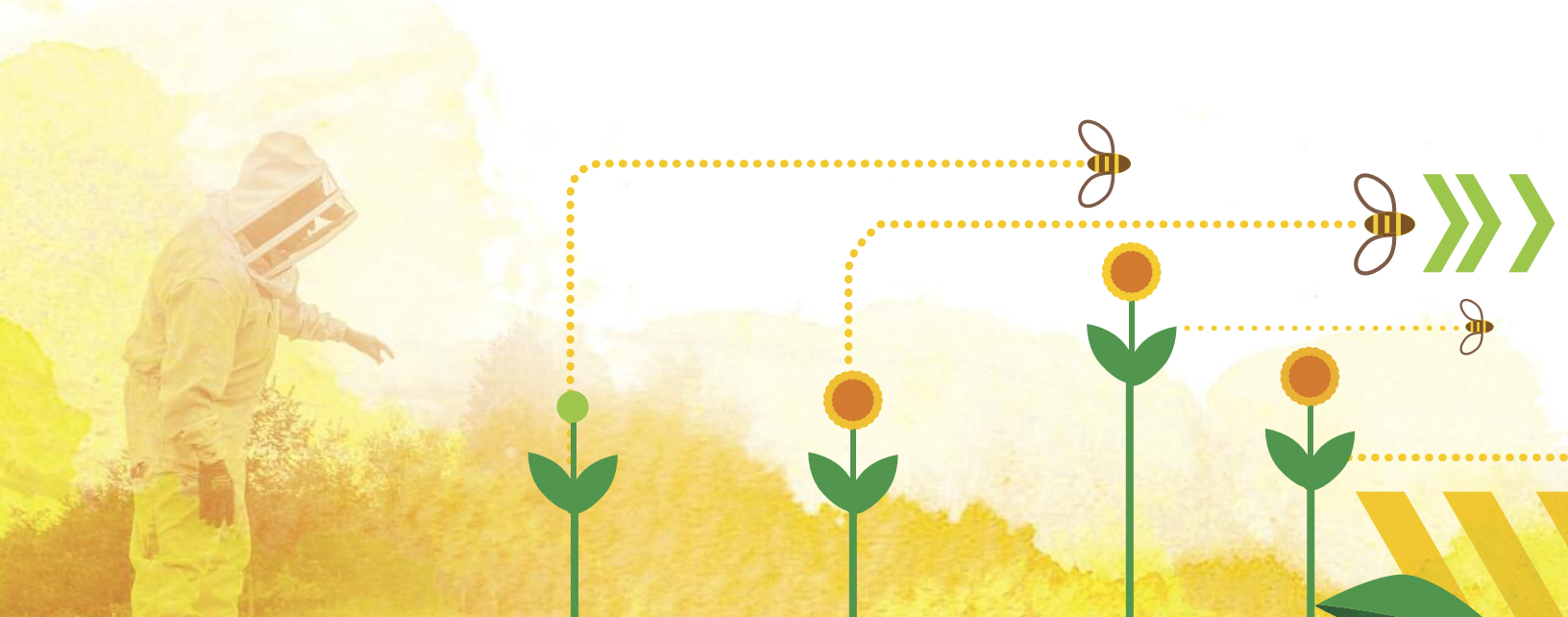
STRATEGY ONE is focused on three areas: Hive Health, Pollination, and Maintaining and Enhancing Existing Markets for Bee Stock and Pollination.

With the funding agency, Results Driven Agriculture Research (RDAR) established and two new bee research programs underway at University of Lethbridge and University of Alberta, the Commission focused on advocating within the funding agency as

well as providing direct support to the research programs to ensure a strong start to the new programs.

The Commission continued to work with government, universities, and industry partners to support the development of innovative beekeeping solutions throughout 2020/2021 and was an active member on the RDAR advisory board and Agriculture Funding Consortium.

PROJECT	RESEARCHER/TEAM	ORGANIZATION	FUNDER	STATUS
Establishing a honey bee research lab	Dr. Olav Rueppell	University of Alberta	ABC	Active
The Royal Treatment: Improving honey bee queen health as the basis of integrated colony health	Dr. Shelley Hoover	University of Lethbridge	ABC RDAR	Active
Mass Storage of Summer Mated Queens	Dr. Renata Borba Dr. Shelley Hoover	TTP, University of Lethbridge	ABC CAP CHC	Active
Promoting Alberta's beekeeping industry sustainable growth through the expansion of the Tech Transfer Program	Dr. Renata Borba Emily Olson	ABC/TTP	Project ApisM	Active
Alberta Tech Transfer Program	Dr. Renata Borba Emily Olson Nicole McCormick Kara Beinert	ABC/TTP	ABC CAP	Active



PROJECT	RESEARCHER/TEAM	ORGANIZATION	FUNDER	STATUS
Development of BioSecurity Training Tools for Beekeepers	Dr. Melissa Moggy Rosanna Punko Dr. Renata Borba Dr. Stephen Pernal Dr. Shelley Hoover Dr. Olav Rueppell Ron Miksha Connie Phillips	Alberta Farmed Animal Care	CAP ABC	Active
A Study of Foulbrood in Canadian Apiaries	Dr. Patricia Wolfe-Veiga	NBDC GPCRC	ABC	Active
Honey Spray Drying & Plastic Recycling	Bioprocessing Innovation Centre	Alberta Agriculture & Forestry	ABC	Completed
Field Trials of a New Acaricidal Compound Against Varroa destructor in Honey Bee Colonies	Dr. Stephen Pernal Dr. Erika Plettner	Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, Simon Fraser University	ABC CBRF BeeMaid ApisM	Approved
Setup and testing of a commercial HPTLC instrument to assess adulteration of sugars in commercial honey samples as well as the regional determination of commercial honey products.	Bioprocessing Innovation Centre CAMAG	Alberta Agriculture & Forestry CAMAG	ABC RDAR	Approved
Design Top Feeder Insert from Recycled foundation	4th Year Mech Eng Design Team	University of Alberta ABC HRC Tool & Die	Student Project	Completed
Redesigning Queen Shipping/Battery Box	4th Year Mech Eng Design Team, Masters of Engineering	University of Alberta ABC TTP University of Lethbridge	Student Project	Completed
Automation of an extraction line	4th Year Mech Eng Design Team	University of Alberta ABC	Student Project	Completed



STRATEGY TWO: PROMOTION AND EDUCATION TO INCREASE HONEY CONSUMPTION AND AWARENESS OF BEEKEEPING BENEFITS.

STRATEGY 2: is focused on two main areas: Promoting honey consumption and expanding market opportunities for Alberta honey and hive products.

In 2020/2021, the Commission focused its efforts on driving demand for honey by highlighting honey's unique journey, characteristics and health benefits that are crafted in nature, by experienced, talented, and skilled Alberta beekeepers. Through a series of external communications, activities and collaborations, the Commission highlighted the stories of local honey producers and the care and dedication that goes into producing pure Alberta honey.

Highlights:

- Featured a series of local beekeeper profiles in the Alberta Bee News Magazine and online as part of the 'Year of the Beekeeper' campaign.
- Developed a new 'ABC Blog' to communicate benefits and value of beekeeping industry and promote benefits of pure Alberta honey.
- Increased the reach of the Alberta Bee News Magazine through establishing free online access to bi-monthly digital editions.
- Actively communicated the benefits of pure Alberta honey and grew the awareness of beekeeping in the community through social media channels:
 - Facebook: Total page likes: 1,174
 - Instagram: Total followers: 875
 - Twitter: Total followers 253
- Communicated the benefits and value of honey bees to Alberta's biodiversity and crop pollination industries through multiple media releases and gained earned media.
- Commenced work on creating an Alberta honey assurance program and the development of an Alberta 'Green Bee' mark to enable consumers to identify pure Alberta honey and build public trust around honey produced in Alberta.
- Collaborated with five Alberta crop sector groups to advocate for the inclusion of agriculture (including apiculture) in Alberta's school curriculum and programs of studies.
- Contributed to Ag for Life initiative in the development of a unique Virtual Reality experience that uses a honey bee to allow students to explore the areas of a virtual, mixed family farm, including a crop field, barn, pasture, chicken coop, and apiary operation.
- Sponsored and participated in the annual Alberta on the Plate initiative and connected local honey producers to local Alberta restaurants where pure Alberta honey was featured on the menu.



STRATEGY 3: EFFECTIVE STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS AND VALUE FOR ABC ELIGIBLE PRODUCERS

- Partnered with eight Alberta commodity groups to host the annual Chops & Crops event for the Alberta Government where ABC board members participated in open dialogue about beekeeping and the honey industry with the Minister of Agriculture.
- Explored the vital role honey bees play in our environment and global food supply in relation to the UN's Sustainability Goals.
- Supported the educational advancement of three individuals in the beekeeping and honey production industry through the awarding of three \$1000 educational bursaries.
- Shared promotional resources including bee pins, post cards, and other merchandise with beekeepers to help promote the story of beekeeping in Alberta.

STRATEGY THREE is focused on three main areas: Active industry advocacy, communication and education for beekeepers, and effective administration and governance.

With no shortage of challenges in 2021, ABC continued to promote and advocate for the interests of beekeepers, pollinators, and honey producers at the local, provincial, and national levels.

The Alberta Beekeepers Commission continues to build strong relationships with the provincial government through regular engagement on a number of issues. The Commission was involved in several consultation activities this year.

Provincial Engagement:

- Registration of ABC as an official lobbyist with the Ethics Commissioner in Alberta.
- Continued to work with Marketing Council on the review and update of the three regulations governing the Commission.

- Worked with agriculture industry sectors and the provincial government to accept the federal government's proposed changes to AgriStability.
- Reviewed and provided comments on Agriculture and Forestry's proposed whole farm insurance program.
- Continued to lobby Alberta Health to provide health care cards for seasonal workers.
- Participated on the Ag Minister's Agriculture Industry Working Group on labour.
- Worked with Agricultural Financial Services Corporation (AFSC) to improve administrative functions and expand product offerings to beekeepers, honey producers and pollinators.
- Prepared a package of information for both the federal and provincial level government to ensure beekeepers are included in AgriRecovery.



- Partnered with BeeMaid to ensure the Safe Handling Production Practices (SHPP) templates were updated and shared with producers.

National Engagement:

- Continued participation on the Agriculture and Agri-food Canada Roundtable COVID-19 stakeholder conference calls.
- Together with Service Canada, ABC developed a position description of year-round work for apiary workers so that Ag Stream workers could have contracts extended and also so that SAWP workers could be shifted to Ag Stream.
- Participated on the Canadian Food Policy Advisory Council's inaugural meeting.
- Participated in a roundtable discussion on a range of topics including labour, stock replacement, and adulteration with Leanne Rood MP Shadow Critic for Agriculture and Forestry.
- Two meetings were held with CFIA, briefings prepared and submitted to CFIA with request and rationale for an emergency exemption to allow packages from Northern California and requesting a new updated and accurate risk assessment.
- Participated in and prepared a response to the consultation on Regulations Amending the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations (Temporary Foreign Workers) held by IRCC and ESDC.
- CAHRC: ABC participated in the initial survey and presentation of the Labour Market Impact Assessment. ABC worked with CAHRC to launch the HUB Connect app.
- A new monthly Eligible Producer e-newsletter was created to provide producers with timely updates on changes to industry regulations, news, bee health, and TTP services and resources.
- ABC partnered with Results Driven Agriculture Research (RDAR) and AGvisorPRO to pilot the new AGvisorPRO app and provide beekeepers with instant access to the latest in research outcomes, information, and virtual support from industry experts.
- Developed and launched the HUB Connect app to support apiary workers with access to local support information and recourses in both English and Spanish language.

Producer engagement:

- In 2020/2021 the Alberta Tech Transfer Program (TTP) increased the capacity and scope of services and resources available to support eligible producers including Colony Health Monitoring (CHM), IPM training, research, and knowledge transfer. Discover all the highlights of the TTP in the 2021 TTP Annual Report.

Partnerships and Collaborations:

Honey Bee Health Coalition

The Honey Bee Health Coalition (HBHC) was formed to bring together beekeepers, growers, researchers, government agencies, agribusinesses, conservation groups, manufacturers, and consumer brands to improve the health of honey bees in general and specifically around



production agriculture. The HBHC takes collaborative action to improve honey bee health by addressing multiple factors influencing bee health, including hive pests and disease, forage and nutrition, and exposure to crop pesticides.

Crop Sector Working Group

The Crop Sector Working Group (CSWG) continued to provide a forum for the nine organizations to work together on environmental issues and public trust. For those outside of agriculture, the CSWG provides a one-stop shop to the crop sector, and it has allowed the crop sector to be represented in multi-stakeholder policy conversations (e.g. Alberta Water

Council) that can have long-term impacts on agriculture and land owners. The CSWG will be merged into Team Alberta.

Alberta Farmed Animal Care

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.

Agriculture for Life

Agriculture for Life (Ag for Life) is dedicated to building a greater understanding and appreciation of agriculture and its fundamental

connection to life in schools.

Alberta on the Plate

Alberta on the Plate is a province-wide celebration of the incredible bounty grown and produced across our beautiful province.

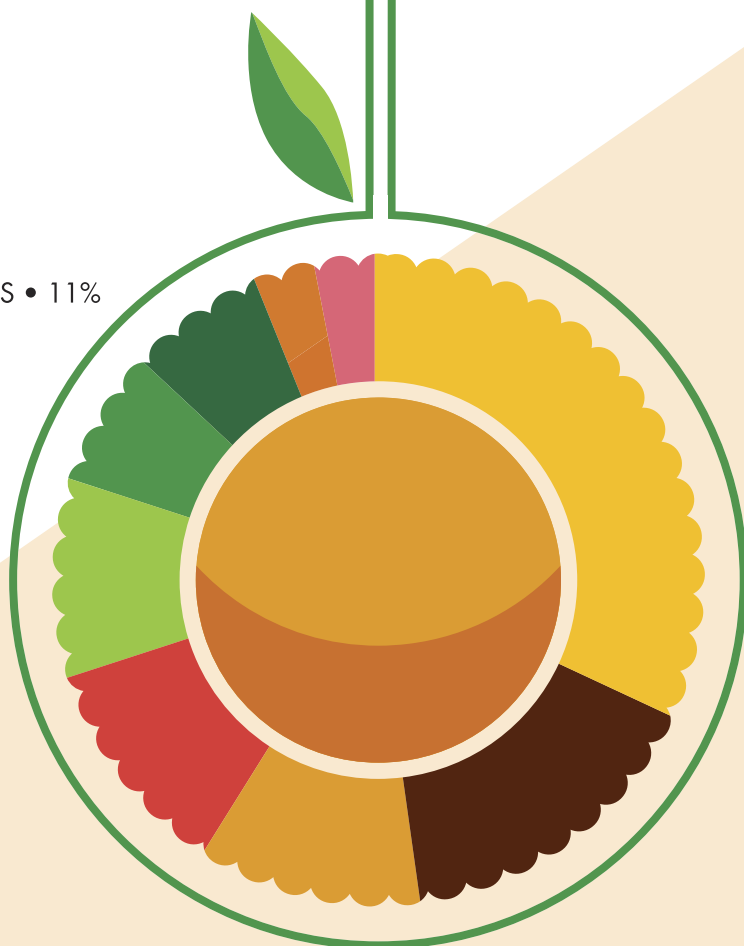
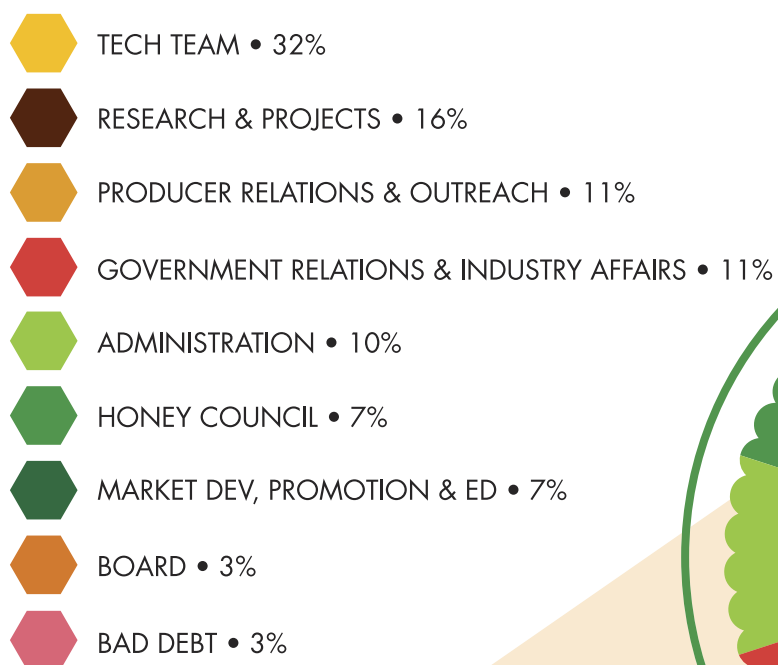
AgSafe Alberta

AgSafe Alberta has continued its work on behalf of farms and ranches to communicate information and create awareness of farm safety issues, changes in legislation and support farms and ranches in growing their culture of safety.

PROJECT	TEAM	FUNDER	STATUS
Working with EIA air cargo to establish protocols for shipping packages and queens. Trials with both packages and queens were conducted in the spring.	ABC EIA ACAMP	N/A	Active
Green Certificate Program. Working with Agriculture and Forestry to update the Green Certificate program.	AF ABC	N/A	Pending
Working with ABC Bees and NAIT to establish an apiary technician course at NAIT. First online course was offered in the spring.	ABC ABC Bees NAIT	N/A	Active
Development of a commercial beekeepers course at Olds College.	ABC Olds College		Beginning Stages
Working with Olds and Lakeland Colleges, ABC will develop a bee module for applicator certification.	ABC Olds College Lakeland College		Beginning Stages
Development of a bee module for the Environmental Farm Plan.	ABC ARECA	N/A	Active
Working with FarmEd Advisory Committee to have bees included in rural ag education.	ABC FarmEd	N/A	Active



ALBERTA BEEKEEPERS COMMISSION 2020/2021 EXPENDITURES





2020 RESOLUTIONS

1. **Open the U.S. Border to Alberta for package bee imports from Northern California.**

**Carried
Complete**

ABC met with CFIA in December to request:

- 1) An emergency exemption allowing packages from northern California under extraordinary circumstance, and
 - 2) To allow Alberta to run a pilot of the safety and performance of packages from northern California.
- CFIA declined both requests. CFIA did suggest that if ABC is aware of advances in scientific knowledge related to the risks identified in 2013 that ABC is welcome to present that information to CFIA for consideration. Following a number of meetings with scientists and vets, as well as reviewing past communications and documents, ABC prepared a brief which was submitted to CFIA, shared with the DPMO & AAFC Minister. There has been no response. It was suggested by the DPMO office to 'simply' conduct a new risk assessment. The three prairie province boards

would support a new risk assessment. CFIA has refused and the CHC board has declined to support.

2. **Lobby AAF's Agri-food laboratories to expand and establish appropriate analytical tools and testing protocols which can accurately identify/verify all sources and types of sugars in honey.**

**Carried
Complete**

ABC met with the Executive Director for Agri-food Laboratories who indicated following staff reductions that the lab is not in a position to take on any new work.

3. **ABC work with the multiple ag organizations to research and develop a plan to create an organization similar to WALI and/or FARMS**

**Carried
Complete**

A scan of the existing organizations; WALI, FARMS, FERMs has been undertaken to determine range of services and pricing offered. From the information collected a survey has been developed and sent out to

Beekeepers and other agriculture sectors who utilize temporary foreign workers to determine interest. This project is ongoing

4. **Reduce the amount of monthly printed Alberta Bee News magazine publications to 6 editions per year and introduce a digital publication for the other 6 months.**

**Carried
Complete.**

5. **Formalize resolution process for ABC Annual General Meetings.**

Carried

A proposed policy and process for resolutions was presented at the August ABC board meeting for review and comment. The resolution process will be presented to producers at 2021 AGM for a voting on by members.

6. **Future office, storage, and work space requirements of the Commission**

**Carried
Complete.**

Secured new three-year lease at the existing office premises.



NOTES
