



farm landscapes AND human activities

A Variety of Landscapes

Alberta has a wide variety of natural environments and landscapes. Plants and animals live in these environments. People use the land and resources in these environments to meet their needs – including the needs that products from **agriculture** can provide.

Agriculture refers to the practices involved in growing crops and feeding and raising livestock for food and other products.

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On what types of landscapes would you expect to find farms? Why do you think this?

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How many different types of landscapes and features can you identify in the photos on the following pages? Make a list of descriptive words.

The **Boreal forest** is the biggest natural area in Alberta. The land is different in many places.

Some areas are flat and have meadows, while other areas have hills made by glaciers a long time ago.

In the low, flat areas, you can find mixed forests and wetlands. On the hills and in the northern parts, there are **coniferous** forests, which have trees that grow needles instead of leaves and cones instead of flowers.



The **Rocky Mountains** also include high foothills and deep valleys that were made by glaciers. Forests cover large areas of the mountains.

However, only shrubs and herbs will grow in the highest parts of the mountains. Patches of grassland can be found along the bottom of the valleys.



The **foothills** are found along the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains.

The land has smooth rounded hills. There are also plateaus in some areas. A **plateau** is a large, flat area of land that is higher than the land around it.

Steeper hills are closer to the mountains.

Most of the foothills are covered by forests.



Grasslands in Alberta include flat to rolling landscapes.

Parts of this area has wide river valleys. These valleys were formed by **runoff**, or water that flowed away from the melting glaciers.

Shrubs and tress can be found in places with more water, like the river valleys.



Alberta's **parkland** area is found between the grassland and boreal forest areas.

Edmonton, Calgary and Red Deer are located in the parkland area.

The landscape is mostly flat to rolling.

Some parts of the parkland have groups or forests of aspen trees.



Alberta has a small part of the enormous **Canadian Shield**.

This area has exposed rock and hundreds of small lakes.

Lichens cover the rock. **Lichens** are tiny organisms that look like moss. However, they are actually formed from fungus and algae.

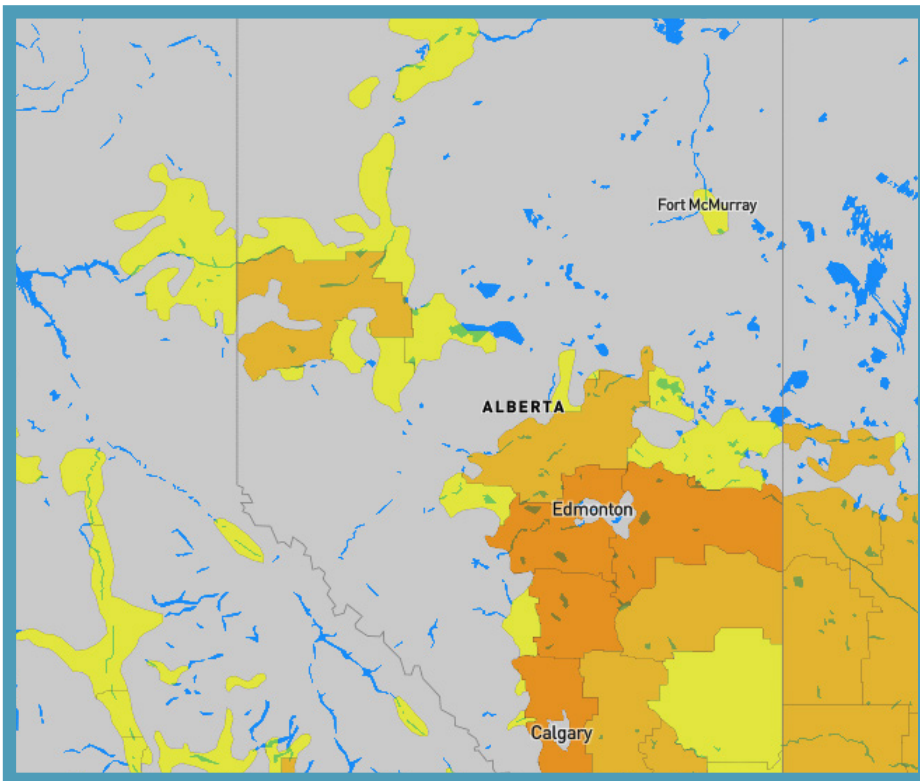
Small jack pine forests can also be found on the Shield.



Agricultural Landscapes

Farms are an important part of Alberta's environments and landscapes. Without farmland, people would not eat. Farms and ranches make up **agricultural landscapes**. Crops are grown and livestock are raised on these landscapes.

Agricultural landscapes also provide habitats for animals and plants. When water sources and the soil are properly cared for, agricultural landscapes can provide farmland that can grow more crops and support more livestock.



Areas with 21 to 38 farm(s) per 100 square kilometres Areas with 7 to 21 farm(s) per 100 square kilometres Areas with 0 to 7 farm(s) per 100 square kilometres

This map is from **Statistics Canada** and shows data from the **2021 Census of Agriculture**.



DID YOU KNOW that there are more than 43 000 farms and ranches of various sizes and types in Alberta.

The map shows the areas of Alberta in which farms are found. Use the legend to examine the parts of Alberta with farms. Think about 100 square km by imagining a giant square that is 10 kilometers long on each side. That's as long as about 100 big soccer fields lined up.

These farms provide products like chickens and turkey, dairy, eggs, wheat, canola and **pulses** – the dry edible seeds of legume plants.



What features do you see in the farm photos on the following pages? Make a list of descriptive words.

Farms and ranches are found in parts of the foothills. Most of the farms or ranches found in the foothills are cattle ranches. Some farms grow grains, oilseeds and pulses.



Farms can be found among forests, lakes, and wetlands of the Boreal forest area. Most of the lowlands along the Peace River north of Grande Prairie are used for agriculture.

Some farms grow grains and raise livestock for meat, eggs and dairy. Some farms grow specialty crops such as wild rice, cranberries, or other berries that grow well in wetland or forest environments.



Much of the natural parkland area in Alberta has been affected by farming.

Dairy and poultry farms as well as grain and pulse farms can be found here. **Pulses** are the dry edible seeds of legumes, like field peas, dry bean, lentil, chickpea and faba bean. This photo shows a soybean field on a farm.



Much of Alberta's grasslands area has also been affected by farming.

Farms grow cereal grains such as wheat, barley and oats, and oilseeds like canola.

Some farms raise cattle, pigs and sheep for meat as well as cows for dairy.

Mixed farms combine crops with livestock. The photo shows cows on a dairy farm in the grasslands region. Hay and other grains are grown on the farm to feed the animals.



Farm Activities

The food we eat is one important way we are connected to our communities.

A glass of milk, an egg sandwich, a cup of split pea soup, a plate of fried chicken, a turkey dinner – all of these foods connect you to people who live and work in rural and urban communities.

You might be surprised to learn how many people it takes to get food from a farm to your table.

Over 278 000 people in Canada work directly on farms. Over 2.3 million Canadians rely on agriculture to make a living.

This means that 1 in 9 jobs are related to agriculture and food processing. These people include farmers, veterinarians, nutritionists, researchers, professors, salesmen, truck drivers, store employees and processing plant workers.

A LOOK AT AGRICULTURAL WORKERS IN 2022

In 2022, 278,373 people were employed in the Canadian agriculture sector, up 0.5% from 2021 (276,977).

Ontario had the most workers, followed by Quebec, Alberta and British Columbia.



Information and the infographic is from **Statistics Canada** and **Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada**.



Read the farm family stories on the carousel

slide found at www.projectagriculture.ca/topic-item/how-do-human-activities-create-agricultural-landscapes/.



Use the descriptive words you made to write your own definition of a farm environment.