



Building a More Resilient Agricultural Future with the Aspen Parkland Agricultural Initiative Collaborative

Agriculture is facing rising input costs, unpredictable weather, and market pressures. Building a resilient agricultural sector means coordinating and aligning supply chain strategies and policies that make it easier for producers to adopt practical, sustainable practices that strengthen farm economics, protect natural systems and help farms adapt to changing conditions.

No single organization, program or sector can remove these barriers alone. Many current sustainability efforts are isolated, insufficiently tailored to regional realities or disconnected across the value chain. This can create duplication, confusion and a natural ceiling on what individual efforts can achieve. The Aspen Parkland Agricultural Initiative (APAI) responds through a landscape approach that aligns knowledge, support and investment across the agricultural system.

A key pillar of this is the APAI Collaborative, a space where producers, companies, value chain partners, organizations that support producers and Indigenous representatives identify shared challenges, learn from one another and co-develop solutions grounded in real-world agricultural and market conditions.

A LANDSCAPE APPROACH IS KEY TO SUCCESS

In order to scale the adoption of sustainable agriculture, we must all drive support and investment across the entire agricultural system. Leaders must be challenged to act in a coordinated way that moves beyond a farm-by-farm approach, working across multiple supply chains, and mobilizing system levers such as training and policy. To achieve this the APAI has adopted a Landscape Approach, defined as “a management approach focused on multi-stakeholder collaboration to advance shared sustainability goals and build resilience at landscape scale.”¹ This approach provides a framework through which cross-sectoral actors can engage to develop collective goals, invest in collaborative solutions, monitor and evaluate the impact of broad adoption of sustainable agriculture practices across multiple environmental outcomes, and create a mechanism for making claims about their contribution to collective action.

¹ISEAL Alliance. Core Criteria for Mature Landscape Initiatives, 2024. [Core Criteria for Mature Landscape Initiatives \(2024\)](#) ISEAL Alliance

What is the APAI Collaborative?

The APAI Collaborative is a core component of APAI. It moves beyond siloed, top-down and program-by-program efforts by bringing participants together around two durable themes: scalable local partnerships and viable farm economics. Specific work under these themes can evolve as evidence, relationships and solutions develop.

The Collaborative identifies shared barriers that limit the adoption of sustainable agriculture across the Aspen Parkland:

- Builds shared understanding through co-learning, comparison of approaches and identification of knowledge gaps.
- Co-develops practical, evidence-based solutions that account for real farm conditions, market realities and perspectives across the agricultural system.
- Improves alignment among programs and partners to reduce duplication, make better use of resources and create clearer pathways to support.
- Strengthens the economic case for adoption by advancing credible evidence and more durable financial mechanisms.
- Connects learning to APAI farmer-facing programs, including the Model Farm Network and Trusted Advisor programming, so promising approaches can be tested, refined and scaled.

WHY THE ASPEN PARKLAND?

The Aspen Parkland ecoregion has the potential to have significant agricultural impact for people and nature. This area of high agricultural productivity spans 17.3M hectares across Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta and includes high value crops such as canola, wheat, oats, and pulses. In addition to high productivity, these soils are also able to store vast amounts of carbon with significant implications for climate change mitigation. This region also contains a large amount of remnant, fragmented natural habitat, offering opportunities to rebuild biodiversity.

What participants gain

Participating in the APAI Collaborative offers a unique opportunity to be at the forefront of sustainable agriculture innovation in Canada. Participants:

- Co-create strategies that address critical agronomic, economic, and social barriers to sustainable agriculture adoption
- Increase coordination and efficiency in scaling sustainable practices, share investment, and contribute to multiple environmental and socioeconomic outcomes.
- Co-learning, stronger relationships and a shared forum for comparing approaches, identifying gaps and building understanding across sectors.

Who should be involved?

The Collaborative is designed for people and organizations working in, supporting or sourcing from the Aspen Parkland, including producers and land managers, producer-serving organizations, companies and value chain partners, financial partners, researchers, and Indigenous representatives and local partners. Participation is based on mutual fit, relevant experience and a willingness to contribute to collective problem-solving.

Every participant brings valuable perspectives, expertise and real-world experience to the Collaborative's priority workstreams, helping shape practical, evidence-based solutions to shared challenges in sustainable agriculture. Together, participants help identify barriers, test new approaches and advance actions that can strengthen the resilience and long-term viability of the agricultural sector.

For more information on participating in the Collaborative contact:

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