

ROPIN' THE WEB

- WHEREAS:** The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry is responsible for the policies, legislation, regulations, programs, and services that enable Alberta's agriculture, food, and forest sectors to grow, prosper, and diversify;
- WHEREAS:** The Ministry of Alberta Agriculture and Forestry's Ropin' the Web provided relevant and reliable information from knowledgeable specialists and experts and a general store for agricultural and forestry related supplies and services;
- WHEREAS:** Rural businesses and organizations were provided opportunities to facilitate business networks with assistance from the Ministry through the Ministry website Ropin' the Web;
- WHEREAS:** As part of a larger Government of Alberta web consolidation project, Agriculture and Forestry's web presence, including Ropin' the Web, moved to Alberta.ca and by March 31, 2019, online government directories and some relevant agricultural information was no longer available;
- WHEREAS:** The intent of the consolidation of the various Alberta Government websites on Alberta.ca to provide a one-stop shop for government information and services that is useable and accessible to all Albertans, is no longer providing a valuable services and information for Alberta's farmers;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

THAT ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST

That the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry ensure all information and services previously provided through Ropin' The Web be reinstated with easy accessibility on the Alberta.ca website.

SPONSORED BY: Mountain View County

MOVED BY: _____

SECONDED BY: _____

CARRIED: _____

DEFEATED: _____

STATUS: Provincial

DEPARTMENT: _____

BACKGROUND

In 1999 there were 1.32 million user sessions on the Ropin' the Web Department website. User feedback was very positive and constructive for the information and service channel.¹

The Ministry Internet website, Ropin' the Web was independently classed as pre-eminent among provincial government web sites and was recognized as one of the best educational sources on the web. The average usage of the site has increased from 1.3 to 1.7 million sessions per month. Over 100 marketing websites, gathered from the North American Farmers Direct Marketing Conference, were tested for website address accuracy, book marked and added to the Direct Market Web Page on Ropin' the Web. ²

The 2001 – 2002 annual report identified that Ropin' the Web was rated the best Alberta Government web site for the third consecutive year by an independent survey, and usage increased by 47 per cent to 2.5 million visitors a year.³

In 2003 when the Province confirmed that a single cow had tested positive for Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) the public was directed to the Ministry's Ropin' the Web site for information on the status of this situation.⁴

Ropin' the Web became the trusted website for data and information to support producers, agricultural and agri-food related businesses and their networks. The site contained risk management decision making tools, opportunities, services and programs in the primary and value-added agricultural sectors.

The Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development Annual Reports in 2008-2009⁵ and 2009-2010⁶ identified that rural businesses and organizations are provided opportunities to facilitate business networks with assistance from the Ministry. The General Store provided a platform for allowed rural businesses, custom operators, farmers, rural residents and the general public to easily access agricultural related projects and services. This provided opportunities to assist producers in growing their businesses by increasing marketing opportunities. The General Store offered buy and sell listings for Alberta Hay and Pasture, Wood Biomass, Custom Services Listings, Livestock, Manure and Compost Directory and Food Processing Equipment.

In 2011 Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development information management division created a designated posting and search function for Certified Weed Free Hay on the Alberta Hay and Pasture Directory on the Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development Ropin' The Web. This is the promoted method to purchase Certified Weed Free Hay as per the Alberta Weed Free Hay Program.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry is responsible for:

- policies, legislation, regulations and services necessary for Alberta's agriculture, food and forest sectors to grow, prosper and diversify

- inspiring public confidence in wildfire and forest management and the quality and safety of food
- supporting environmentally sustainable resource management practices
- leading collaboration that enables safe and resilient rural communities

“We also have a clear mandate to help job-creators create jobs and increase investment and economic activity for the province.”⁶

Municipalities continue to hear from producers that the loss of the Ropin’ the Web site is a major challenge for their continued operations. As eluded above, the site provided a variety of valuable services to producers that cannot be replicated by the new direction to use Kijiji or Facebook Marketplace.

Resources

1. Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. (2000, September 7). *1999-2000 Annual Report of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development* (pp. 26). Retrieved from <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/61751a19-69d1-4ce1-b430-80bc435950a9/resource/fbe68d78-7589-470c-93dd-3b10224b6ab6/download/21952171999-2000.pdf>
2. Deputy Premier and Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. (2001, September 12). *2000-2001 Annual Report of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development* (pp. 22-27). Retrieved from <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/61751a19-69d1-4ce1-b430-80bc435950a9/resource/51f07f03-02d9-4ac1-bf80-cdf29d67bfa1/download/21952172000-2001.pdf>
3. Deputy Premier and Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. (2002, August 29). *2001-2002 Annual Report of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development* (pp. 41). Retrieved from <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/61751a19-69d1-4ce1-b430-80bc435950a9/resource/3f30233c-e43d-4f6e-a7ad-a2b49241bf75/download/21952172001-2002.pdf>
4. Deputy Premier and Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. (2003, September 2). *2002-2003 Annual Report of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development* (pp. 23). Retrieved from <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/61751a19-69d1-4ce1-b430-80bc435950a9/resource/eb952b8b-94c5-49c0-85dc-23a5a08e08a3/download/21952172002-2003.pdf>
5. Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. (2009, September 8). *Agriculture and Rural Development Annual Report 2008-2009* (pp. 60). Retrieved from <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/b36f8f34-1ca0-448b-8777-fe7d3ffebd4e/resource/a2f19ef9-49bc-43ef-aa29-d95fcd2f5fd0/download/6849045-2008-2009-ARD-Annual-Report.pdf>

6. Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. (2010, September 8). *Agriculture and Rural Development Annual Report 2009-2010* (pp. 31). Retrieved from <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/b36f8f34-1ca0-448b-8777-fe7d3ffebd4e/resource/308d6606-ae95-42e4-adc9-d9dbb97f90b9/download/6849045-2009-2010-ARD-Annual-Report.pdf>

7. Minister of Agriculture and Forestry. (2019, June 28). *Agriculture and Forestry Annual Report 2018-2019* (pp. 4). Retrieved from <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/3bd2d2b9-6ccd-4d8d-a8a2-a5c15da00c2a/resource/bda692e4-785d-4864-9acc-c0263ffd2813/download/agriculture-and-forestry-annual-report-2018-2019-web.pdf>