

## MANITOBA BEEF PRODUCERS

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# NEWS RELEASE

**For immediate release**

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## **Manitoba's beef cattle sector awarded for its environmental stewardship**

*Manitoba's beef cattle sector recognized by Manitoba Sustainable Development for its ongoing work in protecting and enhancing prairie grasslands.*

**WINNIPEG** – Presented on May 22, the 2017 Manitoba Excellence in Sustainability Award (Water and Natural Area Stewardship category) was awarded to the Association of Manitoba Community Pastures (AMCP). Manitoba Beef Producers also earned an honourable mention for its role with the Species at Risk Partnership on Agricultural Lands (SARPAL) initiative, completing a beef sector sweep of the awards category.

“Seeing both organizations recognized shows just how important beef producers are to conservation and enhancement of natural habitats and the environment in Manitoba,” said Tim Sopuck, Chief Executive Officer of the Manitoba Heritage Habitat Corporation, which nominated Manitoba Beef Producers. He noted that pastures and haylands managed for cattle represent the single largest source of natural habitat in Manitoba’s agricultural region.

Manitoba Beef Producers President Ben E. Fox added the work by beef producers to protect natural habitats for species at risk and preserve our natural grasslands, demonstrates how beef production can be a part of the solution for many of society’s environmental concerns.

“Where bison once grazed and maintained natural grasslands, cattle now have an important place in the protection and maintenance of this threatened natural ecosystem. Helping protect healthy grasslands and water supplies is beneficial not only for beef production, but for the overall environment,” Fox said. “As beef producers, we are some of the best stewards of the environment, and have long recognized the importance of a healthy environment to our industry and the integral role that producers play in protecting it.”

MBP’s is pleased to be involved with Environment and Climate Change Canada and its SARPAL initiative which offers cost-shared funding to promote grassland management practices that protect the habitat of grassland birds such as the Sprague’s pipit, Ferruginous hawk, Chestnut-collared longspur, Loggerhead shrike, Burrowing owl and the Baird’s sparrow. Already, 4,000 hectares (9,884 acres) of land in southwestern Manitoba has been impacted by this work in just one year.

“The birds need the cattle”, says Tim Poole, Manitoba Important Bird Areas Coordinator with Nature Manitoba, who adds, “without the cattle to graze, the grasslands get overgrown with brush or plowed under, and the birds lose important nesting grounds. It is essential to the survival of these at-risk birds that the grasslands be protected.”

MBP congratulates the AMCP on winning the award. The work AMCP does is important to the growth of the beef sector in Manitoba and helps provide environmental protections to more than 350,000 acres of grassland in 20 pastures. The AMCP’s work, founded in efforts to rehabilitate marginal lands and make them a productive resource for cattle production coming out of the dry 1930’s is still important today to help grow the beef sector. AMCP’s efforts are critical in managing these valuable landscapes, enhancing water filtration and retention, carbon sequestration, soil conservation as well as the protection of wetlands and wildlife habitat.

Manitoba's beef industry is proud of the recognition that our producers received with these awards for their long-standing efforts to be good stewards of our environment.

The awards were presented by Manitoba Sustainable Development.

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*Manitoba Beef Producers is the exclusive voice of the beef industry in Manitoba. Our role and mission is to represent our beef producers through communication, research, advocacy and education. Manitoba Beef Producers represents 8,000 beef producers across the province.*

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