

## The Soil Conservation Act



*Figure 1 Dust storm. Pearce Airport near Lethbridge, Alberta  
Photo Credit Glenbow Archives NA-2496-1*

The Soil Conservation Act was developed to help fight against soil erosion by encouraging sound soil conservation practices, preserve Alberta's agricultural land resources, and ensure productivity in the farming sector.

In the 1930s, 'black blizzards' were created from high velocity winds. For this reason, this era became known as the 'dirty thirties.' These dust storms affected the American and Canadian prairies by blowing away much of the topsoil damaging the agriculture, ecology, and economy. In south-eastern Alberta, more than 10,000 farmsteads were abandoned. This wind erosion initiated the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act and The Control of Soil Drifting Act in 1935, which was replaced by The Soil Conservation Act in 1962. Many of the soil conservation practices and procedures such as grass cover, extending crop rotations, shelterbelts, and construction of dams and dugouts are still used today.

If you believe your property may have a soil erosion issue, please contact the Agriculture and Environmental Department for more information.

## **Weed Control Act**

The Weed Control Act was established in 1907 making it one of Alberta's oldest pieces of legislation. The Weed Control Act was developed to manage invasive weed species and protect Alberta's native vegetation and agricultural crops. Invasive species present significant risk not only ecologically, but socially and economically. The Weed Control Act defines weeds in two categories: Noxious and Prohibited Noxious.

Noxious weeds are generally found throughout the province and have negative effects on the ecosystems and Alberta's agriculture. It is the responsibility of the property owner or occupier to control and prevent further spread of these noxious weeds. To control, means to inhibit the growth or spread, and/or destroy.

Prohibited noxious weeds are only found in small numbers in Alberta or not found at all. Early detection and rapid response help prevent these weeds from becoming established in the province. It is the responsibility of the landowner or occupier to destroy these weeds. To destroy, means to kill all growing parts of the weed and to render the reproductive mechanisms of the weed non-viable.

There are 75 regulated weeds in the province of Alberta, 46 of which are prohibited noxious and 29 are noxious. For a full list of these regulated weeds, you can find them in the Weed Control Regulation, or by visiting [Provincially regulated weeds | Alberta.ca](#). To learn more about the Weed Control Act or Weed Control Regulation, please contact the Agricultural and Environmental Department or visit [Manual \(gov.ab.ca\)](#).

## **The Pest Control Act**

The Pest Control Act refers to any animals, insects, birds, or disease that can destroy or harm livestock, land, or property in Alberta and enables the Minister's authority to declare them as pests. Big game, game birds, endangered animals, and birds of prey are not included in the Pest Control Act to ensure no conflict with the Wildlife Act. There are two categories that the Pest Act refers to: Pest Species and Nuisance Species.

Some pest species include grasshoppers, bacterial ring rot, rabies, Dutch elm disease and any rat species or strains derived from genus Rattus. Wild boars are also considered to be pests where they are at large in Alberta. Nuisance species include coyotes, house mouse, skunks, and Columbian ground squirrels. A horse can be declared as a nuisance in Alberta where it is at large within the seven wildlife management units. To see a full list of these wildlife management units, please refer to the Wildlife Regulation.

Alberta has had the Rat Program since 1950 and has rat-free status meaning there is no resident population within the province. If you see a rat, note the location, safely take a picture, and send the information to 310-FARM or contact the Agriculture and Environmental Department.

[Rat and Mouse Comparison fact sheet \(alberta.ca\)](#)