

Teacher Fast Facts & Vocabulary Support



PROJECT Agriculture
Project-Based Learning and
Teaching Series

Change with the Times

Does change always result in progress?

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Change with the Times

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Teacher Fast Facts and Vocabulary Support



Background Fast Facts

The **Fast Facts** that follow can provide you with additional background related to the history of agricultural activities in Alberta and Canada and may support class or small group discussions you facilitate with students.

-  Alberta's agricultural profile was primarily comprised of large scale ranching enterprises in the late 1800s and early 1900s.
-  It was not until the railway was completed that the government started to break up parcels of land to encourage settlement, and the small family farm that is so common across the Alberta of today had its beginnings.
-  Early homesteaders relied on wheat as their main crop. In 1907, a new breed of early-maturing wheat, Marquis, was developed to replace the later-maturing Red Fife. Drought, frosts, diseases and pests frequently caused crop failures. Farmers discovered they were better off diversifying, and mixed farms that centred on dairy cows, hogs and poultry as well as field crops became common.
-  John A. Macdonald's national policy included a vision of a populated west with productive farmers who supplied the east with food and bought goods manufactured in the east.
-  In 1871, the government surveyed the land into townships. In 1872, it enacted the *Dominion Lands Act*. This *Act* gave homesteaders the opportunity to obtain 160 acres of land in exchange for a \$10 administration fee, a promise to cultivate at least 40 acres and build a permanent home within three years.

The Empowering the Spirit website, at <http://empoweringthespirit.ca/foundational-knowledge-conversation-guide-series/>, provides a number of conversation guides that present information on historical and contemporary contexts of First Nation, Métis and Inuit experiences. Consult these conversation guides for additional background and for links to other resources.

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- At this time, the measurement of land into acres or sections was used as a standard that continues today, with a “quarter section” consisting of 160 acres and a full “section” consisting of 640 acres. The *Dominion Lands Survey* was also enacted and resulted in a series of townships and settlement grids.
 - Although farming communities on the prairies were still growing in the first two decades of the 1900s, the mechanical revolution was coming to Alberta. Huge, clumsy steam tractors pulling multiple-bladed ploughs were used to break the land. Steam threshers were owned by custom operators and moved from farm to farm.
 - Farmers quickly adopted automobiles in the 1920s for their personal transportation. The earliest recognizable versions of modern implements were appearing on farm fields. Immigration was still filling up the areas not yet cleared and broken.
 - Farmers formed their own co-operative organizations for marketing grain, and were such a strong force politically in an area with a predominantly rural population that they formed a political party that ran the provincial government in the 1920s.
 - After World War II, farming continued to become more specialized, with more and more reliance on technology. The technology that enabled farmers to meet increasing demands for better quality milk was the milking machine. The milking machine allowed farmers to milk more cows in shorter periods of time. Milk was stored in metal cans and delivered to local creameries for processing.
 - In the 1950s, dairy farming was once again changed by the development of the bulk milk tank system. Milk pipelines were used to bring an air supply to the vacuum pumps now used in milking machines. Pipelines were also used to move milk from the cow to a milk house. Bulk milk tanks reduced the labour required to pour milk by hand into cans and refrigerated tanks held the milk until it could be transported to a dairy. This developing technology also eliminated problems with contamination.
 - As dairy farming continued to change in the 1980s and into the 21st century, pipeline milking systems have become commonplace, and computer-managed schedules and record-keeping, as well as robotic milkers became an increasing aspect of dairy operations.



Vocabulary Support

The **Vocabulary** list provides a starting point for vocabulary that students will find in the student resources or potentially in class discussions. Definitions are embedded in sentences or provided in brackets beside the term.

Some of this vocabulary may be challenging for students. Vocabulary can be explored in advance to support learning of concepts and development of deeper understandings of content. Alternatively, some students may find vocabulary more relevant when explored in context. Add terms that students identify and define through their research to a vocabulary list.

Acres are a measurement of area that is similar to hectares.

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

Farms can be **amalgamated**, or combined to make a larger farm.

Archeology is the study of the buildings, containers and other, usually buried, objects that belonged to people who lived in the past

Artifacts are objects made by people and used in daily life.

Cooperative dairy farming occurs when farmers work together and combine their resources.

A **centrifuge** is a machine that rotates at high speeds to separate liquids from solids.

Operating **commercially** means to operate as a business.

Condensers convert steam into water for the dairy's refrigeration system.

A **creamery** is a place where dairy products like butter and cheese are made.

Cultivating means growing.

Cultural heritage involves the beliefs, customs, knowledge, values and historical experiences shared by a given group.

Demographics is information pertaining to the study of a population.

When the language in an excerpt is shortened, they are marked with three dots, called an **ellipse**.

An **excerpt** is a smaller part or section that is taken from a larger story or article.

Favourable weather is pleasant weather.

First Nations refer to the various governments of the First Nations peoples of Canada. There are over 630 First Nations across Canada, with 46 First Nations in Alberta.

For instance means for example.

A **goodly** amount is a large amount.

A **hamlet** is a small village.

A **harrow** is a tool for breaking up and smoothing out soil.

One **hectare** is equal to about 2.5 acres, and is approximately the same size as the grass inside a standard athletic track or about half a football field.

An early **homestead** was an area of land that a family claimed by building a home and farming the land.

Income is money that is received from providing a product or service.

Indigenous peoples are the descendants of the original inhabitants of North America. First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples have unique heritages, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs

Innovation can refer to the creation of a new idea, device or method. It can also refer to a situation in which an idea is applied to a different situation.

Métis Nation refers to a group of individuals who are associated with a recognized Métis family or community and who self-identify as Métis people.

Milk chutes, or two-way openings to the outside and inside of a house, were popular design features of homes right into the 1960s, typically located right next to back doors.

To **persuade** is to try to influence.

A **plough** is a tool used to prepare soil for planting crops.

Ploughing refers to turning over the soil to prepare it for planting crops.

A **primary source** is an original document or object that was created during a specific time period.

Returns are payments received for something.

A **rural** community is found on a more open area of land with less settlement and fewer buildings.

A **surplus** is an amount that is more than what is used or needed.

Many First Nations and Inuit people travelled throughout **traditional territories**, the lands their ancestors had also occupied.

An **urban** community is an area that is built up and settled by many people.
Cities and towns are urban communities.

Values are ideas and principles that you believe to be most important in life.