

What is ALUS? FAQs

A. General FAQ

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A. General FAQ

Q. What is the ALUS program?

A. Active in six provinces to date, the ALUS program works with farmers to produce valuable ecological services on Canadian farmland. Specifically, ALUS helps farmers and ranchers restore wetlands, reforest, plant windbreaks, install riparian buffers, manage sustainable drainage systems, create pollinator habitat and establish other ecologically beneficial projects on their properties. What's more, ALUS provides per-acre annual payments to ALUS participants to recognize their dedication to managing and maintaining all the ALUS projects on their land.

Q. What makes ALUS unique?

A. ALUS is unique because the program is community-developed and farmer-delivered. ALUS recognizes the important role farmers and ranchers play as stewards of the land and empowers them to deliver nature's benefit on the working landscape.

Q. What are ecosystem services?

A. ALUS helps farmers and ranchers establish and maintain projects that produce ecosystem services, meaning: the essential things produced by healthy ecosystems upon which all living things rely. These include clean air, clean water, flood mitigation, climate adaptation, carbon sequestration, species at risk habitat and all our native bees and pollinators.

Q. Where does ALUS program operate?

A. ALUS is currently (in 2016) active in 19 communities within six provinces (PEI, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta), and is rapidly expanding within those provinces and to new provinces.

Q. Is there a program in my area?

A. To find out if there is a program in your area, consult the "Contact Me" section of the ALUS.ca website.

Q. Who runs the ALUS program?

A. ALUS Canada is the national body funding, overseeing and supporting local ALUS programs in communities across Canada. For more information on our governance and leadership, consult the "Meet our Team" section of the ALUS.ca website.

Q. Who makes local funding decisions?

A. ALUS is a community-delivered program. Each ALUS community establishes a Partnership Advisory Committee (PAC) to direct its local ALUS program. The PAC includes a broad spectrum of community members, such as



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representatives from local environmental groups, local government agencies and local industry. Approximately 50 percent of each PAC is made up of farmers.

Q. Who funds ALUS?

A. Funding for ALUS projects comes from a wide spectrum of sources, including private foundations like The W. Garfield Weston Foundation, federal government programs such as the National Conservation Plan, provincial government programs such as the Ontario Trillium Foundation, municipal governments, individual philanthropists, corporate social responsibility programs, and interested partner organizations and agricultural and environmental groups. ALUS also has many supporting partners that have generously donated in-kind support. For more information on our funders, see the “Supporters” page of the ALUS.ca website. To support ALUS, visit our “Donate Now” page.

Q. What kind of projects does ALUS fund?

A. ALUS helps farmers and ranchers restore wetlands, reforest, plant windbreaks, install riparian buffers, manage sustainable drainage systems, create pollinator habitat and establish other ecologically beneficial projects on their properties. Here are a few examples of the kind of projects ALUS funds, with the kind of ecosystem services they provide:

- Projects for expanded riparian buffer zones that provide critical wildlife habitat and improve water quality.
- Projects for new, enhanced or restored wetlands that improve water quality and can protect communities against spring flooding and offset the impact of droughts.
- Projects for new, enhanced or restored native prairie that enhances natural grazing, haying options, and critical habitat for species at risk.
- Projects for pollinator hedgerows that provide habitat for native bees which in turn pollinate our agricultural crops and wild plants.
- Many other types of projects that produce valuable ecosystem services.

Q. How can I find out more about ALUS?

A. For more information, sign up to the ALUS e-newsletter, follow ALUS on social media, or contact ALUS directly.



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B. FAQ for Potential ALUS Participants

Q. How do farmers and ranchers get involved?

A. Farmers and ranchers in ALUS communities who are interested in enrolling some of their land in the ALUS program should submit an expression of interest, which provides basic details on their operation. Site visits follow to determine what areas of the farm are best suited for an ALUS project. Participants sign a term agreement. They can opt out at any time, and annual payments are adjusted accordingly.

Q. What type of land can a farmer or rancher enroll?

A. Most ALUS projects target areas that are marginally productive, are inefficient to farm, or are environmentally sensitive. Examples include saline areas along watercourses, steeply sloped crop land, low wet field areas, and odd areas that are difficult to farm with today's larger equipment. ALUS also supports alternative management that has environmental benefits such as ensuring appropriate timing and intensity of grazing.

Q. How much land can a farmer or rancher enroll?

A. ALUS focuses on environmental outcomes on the working landscape. Specifically marginal and ecologically sensitive lands, that are currently under production. In general, a maximum of 20 percent of workable land is eligible. Exceptions are made in some cases.

Q. How much are the annual payments?

A. ALUS provides per-acre annual payments to ALUS participants to recognize their dedication to managing and maintaining all the ALUS projects on their land. These annual payments are usually based on the average land rental rates in the local area.

Q. How are project ideas developed?

A. All projects are developed in consultation with the farmer. Project development considers local ecology, project objectives (such as curtailing wind erosion), and the type of farming operation.

Q. Do you monitor and follow-up on projects?

A. All projects are monitored by ALUS program staff, and independently audited by a trusted farm organizations or existing institution.

Q. How long is the conservation agreement?

A. Agreements run from three to ten years in length.

Q. Can the farmer opt out?

A. An opt-out option is available and payments are adjusted accordingly.

Q. Does ALUS artificially increase farm incomes?

A. ALUS is an ecological goods and services delivery program that uses "fee-for service" to provide environmental benefits to all Canadians. ALUS provides these benefits at fair market value, and does not provide environmental subsidies that artificially increase farm incomes.



A Weston Family Initiative

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Q. How does ALUS affect our trade agreements?

A. ALUS meets international trade obligations, and is similar to programs undertaken by our trading partners to deliver ecosystem services. The program is intended to be production-neutral.

Q. How can I find out more about ALUS?

A. For more information, sign up to the ALUS newsletter, follow ALUS on social media, or contact ALUS directly.