

# Farm Management Survey, 2017

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Today's farmer has a lot more to worry about than just the weather. This iteration of the Farm Management Survey looks at how Canadian farmers are increasing yields through manure application and improved drainage on their land.

## Different manure patterns based on farm type

Manure has been used for millennia by farmers to boost crop yields and is still valued today, particularly when it comes to fertilizing forage crops. By farm type, dairy producers, not surprisingly, were the most likely to apply manure on an annual basis, with 89% of dairy farms applying manure on their forage fields, and 78% administering manure to their field crops each year.

Dairy operations in British Columbia were the most likely to spread manure annually (99% for forage crops and 96% for field crops). This is different from the application practices in the neighbouring province of Alberta, where 68% of dairy operations applied manure each year on forage crops, and 55% on field crops.

Beef farms were among the least likely to spread manure on an annual basis. Across Canada, 57% of beef operations reported spreading manure on their forage crops each year, and 63% on their field crops.

## Surface drainage is the most common improvement to farm land management

In 2017, almost half of Canadian farm operators (45%) reported making land management improvements over the previous five years. Farm operators in Quebec (75%), Prince Edward Island (74%) and New Brunswick (69%) were the most likely to have made improvements to their land management, while farm operators in Alberta (30%), Saskatchewan (32%) and British Columbia (33%) were the least likely to have done so.

The installation of surface drainage was the most common improvement nationally, with just over one-quarter (26%) of farm operators who reported land management improvements using this method, followed by sub-surface drainage (19%).

Installing surface drainage improvements was most common in the Prairie provinces (41% in Manitoba, 20% in Saskatchewan and 19% in Alberta), while the installation of sub-surface drainage was the preferred practice in Ontario (37%) and Quebec (55%).

Farm operators in Atlantic Canada who made land improvements in the five years prior to 2017 were the most likely to replace eroded soils on hilltops (ranging from 16% in Nova Scotia to 31% in Prince Edward Island), or to engage in practices of terracing, contouring and across slope cropping (ranging from 9% in Nova Scotia to 40% in New Brunswick). This was well above the national average of 6% for eroded soil replacement and 5% for hillside planting techniques.

## Quebec and New Brunswick report the highest shares of farms with an environmental farm plan

An environmental farm plan (EFP) is a formal, written overall assessment of environmental issues or concerns related to an operation. In 2017, 40% of farms in Canada had an EFP, while 7% were developing one and 53% did not have one.

Nationally, farms in Quebec (81%) and New Brunswick (74%) were the most likely to have an EFP in 2017. In Quebec, 82% of farms with an EFP had created it less than two years before. In Quebec, farmers can have an environmental support farm plan (voluntary) or a fertilization environmental farm plan (mandatory). In contrast, farms in the Western provinces (from 25% to 28%) were less likely to report having an EFP.

By farm type, 81% of dairy producers, 80% of pig producers and 71% of poultry producers had an EFP—the highest shares—while beef producers (30%) were less likely to have one than other types of farms.



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### **Note to readers**

#### **The Farm Management Survey**

The Farm Management Survey (FMS) is a collaborative project between Statistics Canada and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

The FMS contributes to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's work on measuring selected management practices in the agricultural sector. The information generated from this survey informs federal and provincial policy decisions in the sector.

#### **Methodological information**

Information on the [Farm Management Survey](#) is available.

#### **Previous publications**

Further analysis can be found in the Farm Management Survey release of [April 26, 2019](#).

**Available tables:** [32-10-0205-01](#) to [32-10-0211-01](#) .

**Definitions, data sources and methods:** survey number [5044](#).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; [STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca)) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; [STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca)).