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Farming Smarter prepares for busy year

By Ian McDonald Global News



LETHBRIDGE- An organization that provides research and information to farmers getting ready for another busy year.

Farming Smarter is a producer directed, non-profit organization that conducts research for southern Alberta farmers.

It was formed when the Southern Alberta Conservation Association and Southern Applied Research Association joined forces two years ago.

General manager Ken Coles says this year is going to be busy.

“We’ve been on a significant growth path over the past five years,” Ken Coles said. “A lot of it has to do with government backing away from agronomy based research and producers stepping up to the plate and taking care of themselves.”

Farming Smarter rents 200 acres of land at Lethbridge and has another site at Medicine Hat. Some of its projects are funded and ready to go while others are still seeking funding.

“The two main projects that we’re continuing to work on that are quite exciting and interesting are night spraying. The idea behind that is looking at the differences in time of day and the differences on efficacy,” said Coles.

The other big project is an electro-conductivity variable rate precision agriculture one. Farming Smarter is also conducting many other research projects from some dealing with canola establishment to others studying winter grazing of winter wheat, winter triticale and fall rye.

Farming Smarter also works hard to provide information on things it discovers with producers.

“We’ve got our conference, the Farming Smarter Conference,” said Coles. “We have a diagnostic field school, multiple crop walks, we’ve got the farming smarter magazine that comes out twice a year, we’ve got a monthly newsletter.” Farming Smarter will also provide information to the Alberta Farmer Express.

Kent Sande, a producer and chair of Farming Smarter said, “Farming Smarter will do things I may want to do. On the farm you can’t always do all the experiments yourself. Farming Smarter can do those things. Test drips, things like that and help us make the decisions.”

Farming Smarter’s Annual General Meeting will be held February 27th, during Ag Expo in Lethbridge.