

Systems to Manage Grazing Leases

Forestry and Parks

Report of the Auditor General
April 2026

**Assessment of
Implementation Report**

**Auditor
General**
OF ALBERTA

The logo for the Auditor General of Alberta, featuring a stylized orange and white graphic element resembling a corner or a bracket.

Brandon Lundy, MLA
Chair
Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

On behalf of my office, I am transmitting the *Systems to Manage Grazing Leases Assessment of Implementation* to the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, under the *Auditor General Act*.



W. Doug Wylie FCPA, FCMA, ICD.D
Auditor General of Alberta

Edmonton, Alberta
April 2026

Assessment of Implementation Report

Systems to Manage Grazing Leases

Forestry and Parks

(July 2015)

Summary of Recommendations

We assessed the implementation of the recommendation from our July 2015 audit of Systems to Manage Grazing Leases.¹

IMPLEMENTED Recommendation:

Clarify objectives, benefits, and relevant performance measures

Introduction

A grazing lease is a legal agreement between the Government of Alberta and a leaseholder. It gives the leaseholder the right to graze livestock on public land where grazing is considered the best long-term land use. Grazing leases are typically issued for 10 years and can be extended for up to 20 years.

The government sets the overall direction for managing these lands through legislation and land-use planning. Leaseholders act as day-to-day stewards of the land. Their responsibilities include managing soil, vegetation, water sources, and livestock. Through this stewardship role, leaseholders help keep the land productive and sustainable over the long term.

There are about 5,700 grazing leases in Alberta, covering roughly 5.2 million acres, or about five per cent of Alberta's land base.² Grazing on these public lands is an important contributor to Alberta's beef industry.

¹ [Report of the Auditor General of Alberta—July 2015](#)

² [Alberta Grazing Leaseholders Association, Frequently Asked Questions.](#)

Recommendation: **Clarify objectives, benefits, and relevant performance measures**

IMPLEMENTED

Context

In 2015, we examined the department's systems for managing grazing leases. We found that the department's processes ensure that, overall, public land in Alberta used for grazing is in good health. However, the department could not demonstrate that the grazing lease program is achieving clearly defined objectives.

We recommended that the department define and communicate the objectives of the grazing lease program and establish performance measures to monitor whether those objectives are being met.

Our current findings

The department has implemented our recommendation. In December 2022, it released the Rangeland Grazing Framework, which sets an environmental objective for Crown rangelands, identifies the expected social and economic outcomes, and outlines the tactics to achieve them.³

To track progress, the department created a performance measure—percentage of grazing leases in good standing—and included it in the ministry's 2025-28 business plan.⁴ The department also implemented processes and controls to ensure the information collected for this measure is accurate and complete.

To determine whether grazing leases meet the criteria for good standing, professional agrologists inspect a sample of grazing leases each year. They assess whether leaseholders are following the grazing management stewardship principles, including:

- balancing livestock with available forage
- spreading grazing pressure across the land
- avoiding grazing during vulnerable plant-growth periods
- providing enough rest after grazing

The department uses these inspections to calculate the percentage of leases in good standing. Results for the 2024-25 fiscal year will be reported in the ministry's 2025-26 annual report.

To support consistent and accurate assessments, the department established guidelines and training for agrologists. In 2026, it also plans to implement a verification process to confirm that agrologists' assessments are properly supported. This process will help identify opportunities for improvement and additional training needs, supporting continuous improvement over time.

As part of our assessment, we examined how these processes were designed and, where possible, confirmed their implementation. We found no issues.

³ [Rangeland Grazing Framework](#), December 2022. The Framework defines the environmental objective to "sustain or enhance the function and productivity of Crown rangeland ecosystems in a manner that promotes biodiversity and ecological goods and services."

⁴ [Forestry and Parks Ministry Business Plan 2025-28](#).

About our Assessment of Implementation Report

Management is responsible for implementing our recommendations. We examine implementation plans and perform procedures to determine whether management has implemented our recommendations when management asserts that they have been implemented. We repeat our recommendations if we do not find evidence they have been implemented. We may also issue new recommendations for matters that come to our attention during our assessment.

We conduct our assessments of implementation under the *Auditor General Act*. We apply the Canadian Standard on Quality Management 1. Accordingly, we have maintained a comprehensive system of quality management, including documented policies and procedures regarding compliance with applicable professional standards and applicable ethical, legal, and regulatory requirements. We comply with the independence and other ethical requirements of the Chartered Professional Accountants of Alberta Rules of Professional Conduct, which are founded on fundamental principles of integrity and due care, objectivity, professional competence, confidentiality, and professional behaviour.



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