



19 OCTOBER, 2025

AUTHORS

Ohi Ahmed
Guillaume Lhermie

KEY MESSAGE

Outcomes over ideology:
Fund yield and risk
protection, modernize
water rights, and co-design
climate measures to boost
uptake and trust.

vet.ucalgary.ca/simpsoncentre

2025 AB FARMER SURVEY: CLIMATE
CHANGE & SUSTAINABILITY

The Federal government formulated the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP), a \$3.5-billion, 5-year agreement (April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2028) between federal, provincial, and territorial governments. This program focuses on climate action, sustainability, innovation and initiatives concerning soil health, water management, biodiversity, and clean technology adoption.

Yet, producers consistently report that farmers' concerns are overlooked while these federal programs are devised. To portray Alberta farmers' priorities, the Simpson Centre surveyed 222 Alberta farmers (within a national sample of 979) as part of the "[Voices from the Field](#)" project. The findings seek to amplify Alberta producers' perspectives for lawmakers, advocacy organizations, and the public.

When asked about climate-change-related issues and policies that deserve priority, Alberta producers prioritized disaster relief (53%), federal financial aid to reduce climate risks (51%), and soil health (47%) the most. By contrast, interest is lower for carbon pricing (24%), regenerative agriculture (26%), renewable-energy incentives (19%), and climate-adaptation research (14%), reflecting a focus on immediate cost relief and yield generation and preservation over long-term measures. Please refer to **Figure 1** (Appendix).

Alberta farmers report modest concern about water shortages: only 13% are highly concerned, while most indicate low (34%) and medium concern (30%). Please refer to **Figure 2** (Appendix). Producers prefer

system-level fixes over subsidies such as harmonized regulations (37%) and research or innovation in precision water-use (37%). Secondary priorities include modernizing water rights (27%), tech-driven irrigation (23%), and integrating forecasting with water tools (20%), with lower interest in direct tech incentives (14%) or training (9%). Please refer to **Figure 3**.

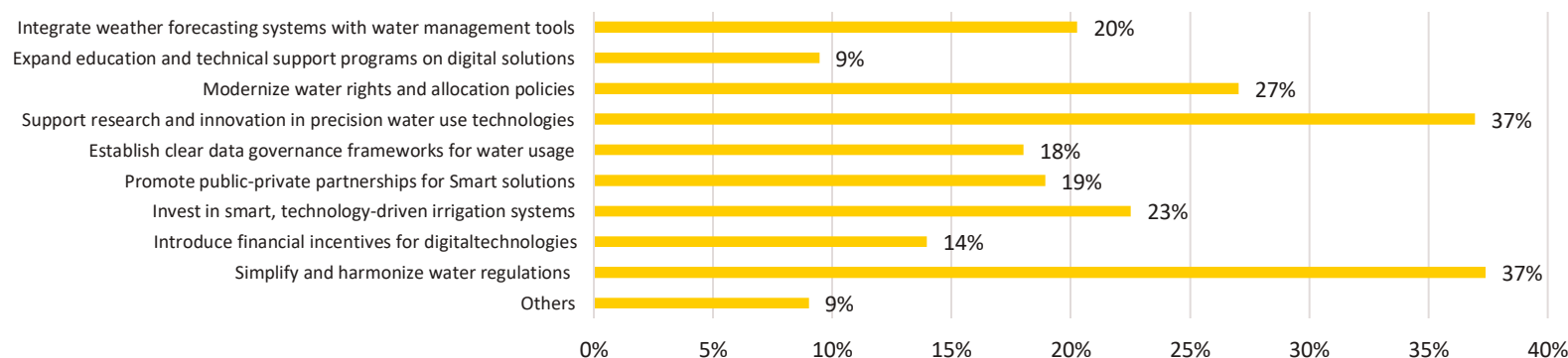
Alberta producers are adapting to water stress mainly through management-based practices such as conservation tillage or soil-moisture retention (83.06%) and shifting to drought-tolerant crops (72%). Investments in equipment are moderate, such as on-farm storage (34%) and improved irrigation efficiency (19%). Disruptive changes such as reduced herds (14%), cut acres (8.87%), added water rights (6%), or changed livestock (4.03%) are rarer. Notably, 28.23% took no action, suggesting capital limits, perceived low risk, or waiting for clearer policy support. Please refer to **Figure 4** (Appendix).

Next Steps: As per **Figure 5** (Appendix), Alberta producers express substantial skepticism toward federal agencies: 43% report low confidence in Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) and 74% report low confidence in Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), underscoring tensions between federal climate policy and provincial farm priorities. Trust could improve if programs reflect farmers stated preferences and reported frictions and were co-designed with producers.

EDITORIAL PRACTICES STATEMENT

This manuscript is a rapid contribution to the policy conversation that has been open-reviewed by at least one University of Calgary faculty member prior to publication.

Figure 3: Policy intervention as a top 3 priority for water management
(% of Alberta farmers)



APPENDIX

Figure 1: Environmental and climate related priorities indicated as a top 3 priority
(% of Alberta farmers)



Figure 2: Degree of concern and impact due to water scarcity

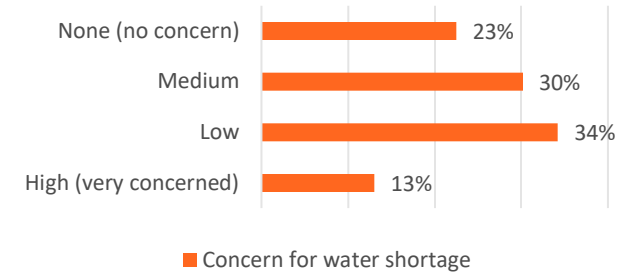


Figure 4: Measures undertaken to address water shortage challenges
(% of Alberta farmers)

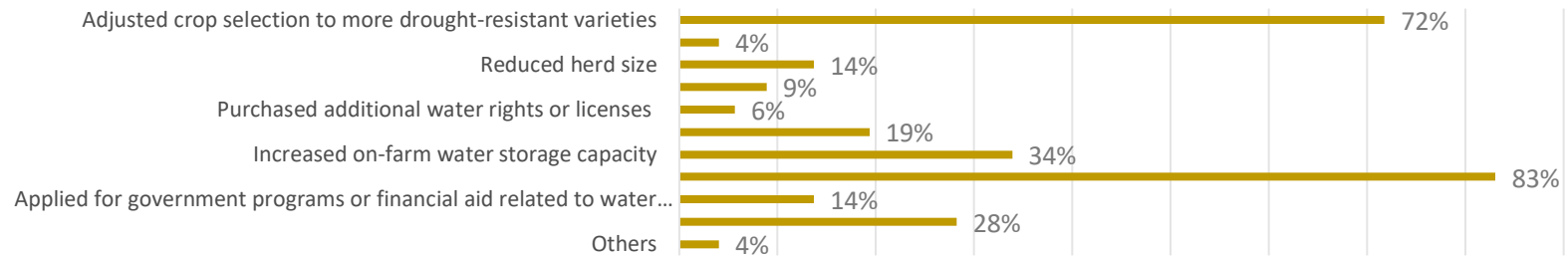


Figure 5: Level of confidence in organizations

