



SECTION: Community Pastures
SUBJECT: Community Pasture Policy

11-02

1. Purpose

To provide a reliable allotment to assist in the establishment and stabilization of farm and ranch units within the Special Areas.

2. Authority

Special Areas Act R.S.A. 2000, Chapter S-16 with amendments in force as of December 11, 2013.

Special Areas Disposition Regulation, Alberta Regulation 137/2001.

This policy is to be used in conjunction with the *Special Areas Disposition Regulation*, Alberta Regulation 137/2001.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 Animal Unit Month (AUM) means the amount of forage needed by an “animal unit” grazing for one month.
- 3.2 Allotment means the number of Animal Unit Months to be allocated within a Community Pasture.
- 3.3 Guide to Range Condition & Stocking Rates for Alberta Grasslands 1988 defines Animal Units (AU) as one mature (1,000 lb.) cow; however, for the purpose of applying this policy the Special Areas Board recognizes an Animal Unit as a 1,200 lb. cow.
- 3.4 Applicant means a person who has filed an application with the Special Areas Board for privileges of grazing stock in a Community Pasture.
- 3.5 Assessment means the assessed value for tax purposes of real property as confirmed by assessment notice.
- 3.6 Immediate family means a son, daughter, son-in-law, daughter-in-law.
- 3.7 Patron means a person currently holding an allotment in a Community Pasture. Patrons must maintain their Special Areas and Association accounts in good standing to sustain their status.



- 3.8 Residence means the place where you normally return at night within the boundary of Special Areas. It is a recognition by the local community of where your residence actually is, and what is right.
- 3.9 Yearlings are recognized as 0.75 AU.
- 3.10 Allotment Committee means an elected committee comprising of local pasture patrons and Special Areas Board administration.

4. Eligibility

Allotments may be provided, by the Special Areas Board (SAB), to residents of the Special Areas who are recognized by the Allotment Committee as having their principal occupation as farming or ranching. They must demonstrate a tangible need for supplemental, seasonal grazing for their livestock.

5. Priority

Allotments are prioritized in accordance with the intent of the *Special Areas Disposition Regulation*, Section 58(3) as follows:

- Class 1. Near pasture, current patron, dependent upon pasture.
- Class 2. Not near pasture, current patron, dependent upon pasture.
- Class 3. Near pasture, new applicant, require additional grazing.
- Class 4. Operating near pasture, not residing near pasture, current patron, dependent upon pasture.
- Class 5. All residents who do not fall within any of the above classes.

Applicants who claim dependency upon allotment in a Community Pasture must demonstrate their need.

6. Assessment

The applicant must provide the Special Areas Board with a summary of the assessed value of all their land used for farming or ranching. This shall include all lands owned, within and outside the Special Areas.

The Special Areas Board recognizes that a 350 cow/calf unit operation is economically stable. To support this size of herd, an operator would require approximately \$560,000 of land assessment. This assessment value is given in terms of the assessed value for tax purposes of real property as confirmed by assessment notice.

Those renting land out to non-immediate family members are not eligible for pasture.



Applicants holding less than \$560,000 of assessed land value shall be viewed as demonstrating a greater need than those who hold more.

7. **Stabilized Units over Assessment**

Patrons over assessment:

Patrons holding over \$560,000 of assessed value of land, shall not be eligible for further allotment increase.

Where a patron holds \$840,000 of assessment, the Special Areas Board, shall request the patron to phase out of the pasture in three (3) equal annual reductions.

Applicants over assessment:

Applicants holding over \$560,000 of assessed value will not be considered for entry in a Community Pasture.

Combined Assessment-AUM threshold:

Where a patron's assessment in the thousands of dollars added to their allotment in AUMs reaches a value unit threshold of 860, any AUMs exceeding this threshold shall be returned to the allotment pool for redistribution. The allotment reduction shall occur in three (3) equal annual reductions.

The value unit threshold is calculated by the following formula:

$$(\text{Assessment}/1000) + \text{allotment AUM} = \text{value unit threshold}$$

The Special Areas Board reserves the right to grant exceptions where phasing out a patron would significantly jeopardize the economic stability of their farming or ranching operation.

8. **Proximity**

Recognizing that Community Pastures negatively impact the availability of local land base, the *Special Areas Disposition Regulation* addresses the hierarchy of allotment priority in Community Pastures.

9. **Long-term Patron**

Economic stability is dynamic and is recognized to change over time. An operator's needs are greater during the years they support a family on the farm or ranch, and less during the latter stages of their ranching career.



When a patron becomes eligible for Old Age Security (OAS) benefits, this income can be used to offset living expenses. Therefore, it is reasonable to presume that the patrons need to receive allotment in a Community Pasture has been reduced.

This is based upon:

- a. The patron having supplemental income – OAS.
- b. The patron having lesser needs when family becomes self-sufficient.

In an effort to maintain equitability among patrons, and to support the principle of providing opportunities for the lesser established applicant, the Special Areas Board will require the patron who is eligible to receive the OAS to reduce their allotment and phase out of the Community Pasture in three (3) equal annual reductions.

The Special Areas Board reserves the right to grant exceptions where phasing out a patron would significantly jeopardize the economic stability of their farming or ranching operation.

10. Patron-Retirement Option

Pasture allotments are not an inherited right, nor are they a marketable commodity.

The Special Areas Board allows a senior patron to phase out of the pasture over time. Patrons may choose to phase out of the pasture by equal annual reductions for up to three (3) years.

11. AUM Threshold in Pasture

In recognition of the fact that not all patrons will receive identical allotments, and that it is desirable to provide equitability, not equality amongst applicants, and that there must be an upper limit to the number of AUMs an individual can graze in a Pasture, the upper thresholds for each Pasture shall be as follows:

Bullpound	200 AUMs
Buffalo-Atlee	400 AUMs
Remount	400 AUMs
Sounding Creek	300 AUMs
Richdale	35 head / patron

These allotments thresholds are not provided as allotment targets but do establish a point upon which no further growth will occur.

12. Miscellaneous

- 11.1 The Special Areas Board makes the allotments, based upon the recommendations of the local Allotment Committee.



- 11.2 As AUMs become available, emphasis and priority shall be given, without creating a long-term imbalance to other levels, to patrons at:
 - a. The mid-level of assessment and AUMs in the Pasture.
 - b. The low-level of assessment and AUMs in the Pasture.
 - c. The upper-level of assessment and AUMs in the Pasture.
- 11.3 New applicants shall receive consideration after the above priorities have been met, while maintaining a stable membership.
- 11.4 The Allotment Committee shall be responsible to provide information useful in determining actual need of applicants and patrons seeking new admittance or increases to their existing allotments.
- 11.5 The Allotment Committee of each pasture shall rotate its' membership in a manner that maintains equitable representation of its' Association members.
- 11.6 Local Allotment Committee members shall be chosen from the respective association members.
- 11.7 Allotment Committee business shall be restricted to Allotment Committee members and representation from the Special Areas Board.
- 11.8 The Allotment Committee shall have liberty to request the presence of any non-members for the purpose of supplying information.
- 11.9 Allotment Committee members unable to attend meetings, may be represented by proxy, however the proxy member must be a member of the association under discussion.
- 11.10 Individuals or organizations may present comments or concerns by requesting such an audience in a written brief to the Allotment Committee prior to the pasture application deadline. The spokesperson shall have up to fifteen (15) minutes to present to the Allotment Committee prior to the business of allotments at the meeting.
- 11.11 Patrons shall not enter stock in more than one Special Areas Community Pasture.
- 11.12 Applicants or patrons taking in livestock owned by others, on lands controlled by themselves, for grazing shall be disqualified from entry into a Community Pasture.

This does not apply to haled out or similarly damaged annual crop fields, nor running stock within family held lands.



Patrons may appeal to the Special Areas Board in extenuating circumstances.

- 11.13 Applicants or patrons breaking native prairie lands under their control may be viewed as demonstrating a lesser need as a bona fide ranching operation.
- 11.14 Patrons selling hay from Grazing Leases shall be disqualified from entry to a Community Pasture.
- 11.15 Patrons selling hay from private lands will be viewed as similar to selling grain as cash crop and this does not affect Community Pasture privileges.
- 11.16 Applicants or patrons found to be falsifying information supplied on their applications shall be disqualified from pasture privileges.
- 11.17 Occasionally extenuating circumstances contribute to a patron disposing of Special Areas lease land.

Patrons disposing of lease land shall have their continued Community Pasture privileges reviewed, by the Allotment Committee.

- 11.18 Applicants and patrons must own a minimum of $\frac{1}{4}$ section of titled land or hold a minimum of $\frac{1}{4}$ section of Special Areas grazing lease.
- 11.19 Patrons not fulfilling their AUM allotment shall still be responsible to pay the full annual rate.

Notwithstanding the above, where the Special Areas Board requests patrons to reduce their stocking rate in a Community Pasture due to drought or to other conditions, patrons will be exempt from the penalty provisions of that clause.

The period of exemption will be for that grazing season and will be re-evaluated the following year.

- 11.20 Patrons not fulfilling their allotments for two (2) years shall be refused subsequent entry into a Community Pasture.
- 11.21 Applicants holding irrigated land or controlling intensive stock operations shall be evaluated on a case by case basis.
- 11.22 No allotment increase will be considered unless applied for on the annual application.



13. Estates of Deceased Patrons

After the death of a patron, where a spouse continues on as a bona fide farmer or rancher, and maintains the necessary residency criteria, he or she shall continue with the former patron's allotment, and henceforth apply under their own name.

Where the above does not apply, the Estate shall finish up the grazing season and be permitted entry for one (1) year following. This will enable the Executors have a reasonable length of time to settle the affairs of the Estate.

14. Appeals

14.1 Allotments may be appealed in writing to the Special Areas Board within thirty (30) days of the issuance of allotment permit letter.

14.2 Appeals shall be heard by the Special Areas Board with representation supplied from the Allotment Committee.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Christianson', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Jordon Christianson, Chair
Special Areas Board

Board Motion 19-5-19
Reviewed Oct 11, 2019