ROTATIONAL GRAZING – VIRTUAL FENCING

Please note: ***If your project does not involve virtual fencing, please use the Rotational Grazing - General template.***

The RDAR On-Farm Climate Action Fund (OFCAF) program supports the adoption and on-farm implementation of Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs) that strengthen rotational grazing strategies by improving forage quality, increasing animal and soil health, and enhancing resilience to changing climates.

Applicants may receive a maximum of $100,000 in OFCAF funding from all delivery partners across all BMP categories between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2028. The minimum eligible project cost is $10,000 per application. Approved eligible expenditures are reimbursed at up to 85%, subject to applicable cost limits and the applicant's remaining OFCAF maximum.

For the 2027-2028 OFCAF program activities must:

- Have project start dates on or after 1 April 2027
- Be completed no later than 1 December 2027
- Have total eligible application costs of at least $10,000
- Meet all eligibility requirements listed in the OFCAF Program Guide and below

Rotational grazing BMPs rely on the following four principles of grazing management:

1. Balance forage supply with livestock demand
2. Growing season rest
3. Avoid vulnerable periods
4. Plan animal distribution

Although these can differ between fields or farms based on terrain, composition, and water supplies, they must all be considered for effective implementation. Water supply and distribution are critical factors in any rotational grazing system since water is essential for life, growth and reproduction. The quantity of water animals consume is affected by growth, pregnancy, lactation, activity, diet composition, and performance. Research indicates that when provided with high-quality water, livestock will drink more, eat more, and ultimately gain weight faster. Planning for reliable water supplies, such as water wells, dugouts, springs, and OFCAF-funded distribution systems (shallow water pipelines, remote watering systems, etc.), is as important as planning the fence locations for an efficient grazing system.

One of the main objectives of improved rotational grazing is to extend the grazing season into fall and, in some cases, winter. A properly managed grazing system can benefit poorer soils by providing nutrients and organic matter, thereby improving soil structure and health. Feed sampling, including forage testing, ensures a balanced diet and promotes good herd health, ensuring that the animal's nutritional needs are met throughout the year based on the animal's production cycle (growth, pregnancy, lactation).

Your grazing management strategy will need to describe all of the components above. How are you addressing the four principles? How will you change your fencing to improve your grazing practice? What are your existing water sources, and how will you distribute the water to ensure that you have a reliable supply for your grazing? How may you improve your pasture composition to meet your livestock needs? What changes will you make to your movement of animals to increase the effectiveness of your grazing system?

The BMPs supported by OFCAF must be new to your farm or field. Applicants may request funding to support eligible practices listed in the OFCAF Program Guide. Please outline how you will apply these practices on your farm using the BMP Action Plan on pages 4-6 of this form, including labelled maps that show legal land descriptions (LLDs) and field boundaries on an aerial photo or imagery. Any method of outlining and labelling can be used, as long as the fields are visible beneath. The Guide to Locating and Labelling BMP Action Plans provides further details. Your completed BMP Action Plan must be recommended by a qualified third-party adviser who is a Professional Agrologist (PAg) or Certified Crop Advisor (CCA); see the Guide to Accessing Agicultural Recommendations in Alberta. Your BMP Action Plan must be approved in writing by RDAR to be eligible for OFCAF funding.

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Important Notes:

- Invoices and proof of payment must be on or after 1 April 2027
- You must receive RDAR's written approval of your application, **confirm participation and accept implementation responsibilities before funding is considered active**
- A project start date and a project completion date must be submitted within 14 days of written approval from RDAR. Funds may be reallocated to other applicants if the project is not accepted through the Pending Project Acceptance process in Agriculture Research Grant Organizer (ARGO).
- All paid invoices with photos, LLDs of pre-approved project fields and proof of payment must be submitted within 45 days of the project completion date, and no later than 15 January 2028

In addition:

- Purchased items and custom work must be delivered on-farm between 1 April 2027 and the applicant's project completion date, which must be no later than 1 December 2027
- Photographs with date stamps and GPS coordinates are required to document conditions before and after completing your project

GUIDELINES AND ELIGIBLE COSTS

Virtual fence collars can only be applied based on your current livestock numbers. Virtual fence collars cannot be applied to future cattle or to future small ruminants.

The applicant is responsible for ensuring that the project complies with applicable animal-welfare requirements and industry standards.

1. **Field perimeters must be securely fenced**. Note: OFCAF does not fund perimeter fences.
2. **Water distribution systems** – Water distribution may be included as part of a virtual fencing project. Eligible costs include remote watering systems, shallow-water pipeline materials (maximum 2-inch diameter and less than 15 inches (38 cm) deep), custom installation, and equipment rental.

   Note: ineligible costs include the development of water sources such as new water wells, dugouts or spring developments, and deep, buried water lines.
3. **New to Field** – The BMP must be new to the quarter section. A rotational grazing BMP previously funded by any OFCAF delivery agent on the same quarter section is not considered new and is ineligible.
4. **Logistics -** A formal quote from the virtual fencing company is required for your application. The quote should include evidence that the supplier assessed cellular coverage and determined whether towers are required. Note that towers will not normally be approved for areas where adequate cell service is available.
5. **Other –** Other costs include BMP Action Plan recommendations, technical assessments or engineered designs. Please describe using the "Other" box in the BMP Action Plan of the template below. The cost of a BMP Action Plan recommendation is up to 10% of the total cost of all eligible BMPs, to a maximum of $2,000 per applicant from 2022 to 2028.

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MAPPING REQUIREMENTS

The BMP Action Plan must include maps, aerial photos or images of existing conditions and the planned project, as shown in the example to the right. Maps must include:

- Legal land description (LLD)
- Field boundaries
- Water sources
- Existing perimeter and cross-fences
- Proposed virtual paddocks or anticipated paddock movements. Note: It may not be feasible to describe all paddocks that will be created using virtual fence collars, but you must include a well-defined description of how you will use the virtual fence collars to improve your current forage management
- Significant variation in vegetation and/or topography may require a second map



ELIGIBLE COSTS

- Virtual fence collars (neckbands)
- Towers where cell service is inadequate
- Eligible only as part of an approved virtual fencing project: water-distribution systems that improve rotational grazing management

INELIGIBLE COSTS

- Perimeter fences
- Repair, maintenance, or upgrades to existing fences or gates
- Brush clearing
- Materials that are currently in farm inventory or not purchased from a recognized dealer
- Trailers
- Development of new water sources[1]
- Water pipelines greater than 2 inches (5 cm) in diameter, surface-only pipelines, and pipelines buried 15 inches (38 cm) or deeper, including deep or frost-free lines, are ineligible.
- Solely limiting livestock access to the existing water
- Platforms such as RANGEVIEW (multi-use devices to display the virtual location of Virtual Fence collars that can reach beyond the project scope)
- Subscription fees
- Total eligible costs that are less than $10,000 per application

REPORTING – Must include:

- Activation email from the virtual fencing company
- Photo of virtual fence collars on your cattle or small ruminants (date and GPS stamped), ideally with an identifiable person included
- Only activated virtual fence collars will be eligible for reimbursement

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[1]Although not eligible for OFCAF funding, other government programs are available for water source development, such as the Government of Alberta's Water Program.

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ROTATIONAL GRAZING VIRTUAL FENCING - BMP ACTION PLAN

Please note: All costs must exclude GST. *Use extra forms to add information and identify individual fields as needed.*

Applicant Name					
Type of Virtual Fence (VF)		**VF Supplier**		**# of Head for VF Project**	
If you do not own the land, do you have permission from the landowner to install permanent structures (e.g. towers, base station)				**Yes** ☐	**No** ☐
Is the BMP new to the field?	**Yes** ☐ **No** ☐	**Is the BMP new to the farm?**		**Yes** ☐	**No** ☐

VIRTUAL FENCING – Planned date (mo/yr):

Field (LLD)	**Area (ac)**	**Materials and/or installation (neckband or base station)**	**Quantity**	**Cost/Unit ($/specify)**	**Cost per Field ($)**
Total		**A) Total Cost of Virtual Fencing**			**$**

WATER DISTRIBUTION – Choose activity and provide planned date (mo/yr)

Remote water (Y/N):		**Shallow pipelines (Y/N):**	**Other (describe):**		
Field (LLD)	**Area (ac)**	**Materials and/or installation (describe)**	**Quantity or Length (specify)**	**Cost/Unit ($/specify)**	**Cost per Field ($)**
Total		**B) Total Cost of Water Distribution**			**$**

Is this plan recommended by a Professional Agrologist (PAg) or a Certified Crop Advisor (CCA)?	**Yes** ☐	**No** ☐	**Have you included a detailed, labelled map of your project? ***	**Yes** ☐	**No** ☐
Name:	**PAg and/or CCA number:**	**Phone number:**		**Date:**	
		Email:			
C) Total Cost of Other and/or BMP Action Plan recommendation**				**$**	
Total Cost of Project (A+B+C)				**$**	

*Please include an aerial map of the field. Note existing perimeter fences, water sources, and proposed paddocks, as outlined on page 3 of this document. The map can be generated using Google Earth or GeoDiscover Alberta. A **Guide to Locating and Labelling BMP Action Plans** is available on the RDAR/OFCAF website.

** May include the cost of a BMP Action Plan recommendation of up to 10% of all eligible BMPs, to a maximum of $2,000 per applicant (total from 2022 to 2028).

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ROTATIONAL GRAZING VIRTUAL FENCING – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please describe using at least 50 words for each question:

1. Describe your plan for placing virtual fence collars on cattle or small ruminants, including the type of squeeze and handling procedures that will be used during collar placement.

2. Describe the frequency of your in-person (eyes-on) inspections of the cattle or small ruminants with virtual fence collars, to assess the need for adjustments or removal.

3. Describe your animal welfare plan for the ongoing use of virtual fence collars. Include actions that will be taken if concerns are identified, and how collar adjustments or removal will be managed in fields where a squeeze is not readily available.

4. Describe your plan for training cattle or small ruminants with virtual fence collars. Include details on the training environment (e.g., paddock size and layout), duration of training, monitoring procedures, and the behavioural indicators that will demonstrate the cattle or small ruminants have been successfully trained.

5. Describe the vegetation types and topographical features on your farm or ranch that would benefit from virtual fencing. How would virtual fencing improve your grazing management practices?

6. Using your labelled map as a reference, outline your virtual fencing plan, including paddock locations, water sources, virtual fence placement, and any planned or potential livestock movements.

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Please Confirm:

	Yes	No
The virtual fence will be used only for cattle or small ruminants (Nofence only).	☐	☐
The field has an existing physical perimeter fence.	☐	☐
The virtual fencing will not be used near roads or highways unless an industry-standard perimeter fence is in place.	☐	☐
Water sources are available within each grazing paddock.	☐	☐
I understand that virtual paddocks and system monitoring will be managed using a mobile phone or computer and that users must have the necessary digital skills.	☐	☐
I understand that the final report **must** include an activation email from the virtual fencing company and pictures of the collared cattle or small ruminants (date- and GPS-stamped).	☐	☐

☐ **I certify that the information provided in this application is true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge.**

☐ **I attest that all cattle or small ruminants to be fitted with virtual fence collars under this application are currently owned by me and present on my operation. No future or yet-to-be-acquired cattle or small ruminants are included.**

☐ **I confirm that I have read, understood and agree to the terms and conditions above and that the check box has the same legal force and effect as if the Applicant had signed a printed copy of this document.**

☐ **I acknowledge that funding is subject to the RDAR–OFCAF Sub-Contribution Agreement and the OFCAF Program Guide.**

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