

# Agri-food

Agriculture is a \$29 Billion dollar industry in Canada and the Lethbridge region is a significant player.

Agriculture and Agri-food are core wealth-generating industries in southern Alberta with 1,200 related businesses in the Lethbridge area. In fact, more than 120 established processing businesses in the Lethbridge region produce food and/or feed for local consumption and export. In the past ten years this region has seen significant investment and plans for future investment in agri-food and it is expected that Lethbridge will continue as a hub of development in these areas. In a recent study by Economic Development Lethbridge, the Agriculture and Agri-food companies surveyed reported combined revenue \$1.3 Billion annually. Additionally they:

- Employ 1,679 people
- Pay wages of \$72.8 Million per year
- Operate facilities that cover at least 30 acres
- And, 64% invested in equipment over the past year and/or the adoption of new technology

Lethbridge has a long history of being an agricultural production, distribution and service centre. In fact, The Lethbridge Research Centre (established in 1906) is the largest within Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's national network of 19 centres and leads Canada's research in the development of bioindustrial platforms. Success in this industry is supported by the surrounding agricultural region which includes more than 900 farms generating farm receipts of \$1.1 Billion per year, building on assets of \$3.2 Billion. Primary crops in this region include canola, corn, potatoes, sugar beets and pulses in addition to significant livestock and dairy production.

## Did you Know?

- The southern Alberta agricultural region has an annual production capacity of over 860,000 acres in canola crops - 21% of the Alberta total Canola crops are grown here.
- Lethbridge based Richardson Oilseed Ltd. (formerly Canbra Foods), was the first company in the world to market canola oil.
- Beef producers in the Lethbridge region have the capacity to produce more than half a million head of cattle per year valued at approximately \$700 million. That is 10% of the total number of cattle and calves reported across all of Canada in the 2011 Census of Agriculture.
- Sunrise Poultry Processors Ltd processes approximately 14.5 million broilers per year, that's 275,000 to 290,000 per week.
- Sunnrose Cheese (Agropur) processes 300,000 litres of milk per day producing millions of



Lethbridge Terminal Terminals has shipped more than 1,000,000 tonnes of grain since it  
ars ago on Highway 4 southeast of Lethbridge.

Page 2

According to information gathered in the 2013 Major Employers Survey, the Agriculture and Agri-Food cluster has grown their employment by 25.5% in the last 10 years. Companies in Lethbridge continue to grow as illustrated in the examples below:

In 2012, Richardson Oilseed invested \$15 million to increase their Lethbridge facility size by 40 per cent. They have also announced plans for a major expansion that will double their production capacity by 2015.

PepsiCo is another example of a branch location that is a major player in this industry.

- In 2013 PepsiCo Beverages Canada constructed a 9,600-square-foot LEED-certified warehouse distribution facility in Lethbridge that is actually their First LEED-certified facility in Canada.
- PepsiCo Foods is currently planning an additional expansion that has the potential to be the first of its kind in Canada.

Recently, EPIC (Egg Processing Innovations Cooperative) chose Lethbridge for the first egg breaking plant of its kind in Alberta. The 19,000 square foot facility produces liquid egg as well as eggshell membrane and eggshell powder with projected revenues of \$2.5 Million in year one and a gross annual output of \$5 Million to the Alberta economy.