



ALBERTA
AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION

*Office of the Minister
MLA, Highwood*

JAN 17 2023

Beth Halford
Manager, Strategic Partnerships
Agriculture for Life
32 Priddis Creek Drive
Foothills, AB T0L 1W2

Dear Beth Halford:

Thank you for your November 15, 2023 letter regarding Agriculture for Life and the importance of the Classroom Agriculture Program. I am pleased to congratulate you on 38 years of valuable programming and anticipate many more years of success.

Enhancing food and agricultural literacy in primary schools helps students to make healthier choices throughout their lives. Additionally, learning about agriculture lets students gain a deeper appreciation for the people who produce the food on their plates. However, nothing can replace the hands-on, in-person learning your programs and volunteers provide to students. Seeing a producer in the classroom speak about their passion for farming and land stewardship leaves a lasting impression on these young minds. Because of your program, 600,000 Alberta children, many now adults, have formed a meaningful connection to agriculture. This would not have happened without your hard work.

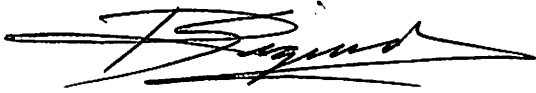
I am also pleased that you include agricultural careers in your program – both primary agriculture careers and those in agriculture support industries. The common image of a red barn with grazing cattle does not capture the complexity and innovation in our industry today. Modern technology, including robotics, data analytics, artificial intelligence, blockchain, drones, and smart sensors, are transforming agriculture and present exciting possibilities for bright young students. Although not every child who benefits from your program will choose agriculture as a career, the first step is opening their eyes to the vast opportunities that our industry has for them.

The longevity of the Classroom Agriculture Program – in operation since 1985 – demonstrates both its relevance and importance to teachers who continue to book it year after year, as well as their students. I commend you and your organization for working hard to keep this program going.

Thank you again for writing. I wish you all the best for the school year. ...

Beth Halford
Page Two

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R.J. Sigurdson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Honourable R.J. Sigurdson
Minister, Agriculture and Irrigation