



Creating opportunities in South-Central Alberta

September 16, 2019



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Featured

MacKinnon Report: RMA Analysis

By RMA | Volume 2019, Issue 36 | Research & Analysis



Published: Sept. 12, 2019 | RMA

RMA provides a breakdown of the Blue Ribbon Panel Report

On September 3, 2019 the Government of Alberta released the [Report and Recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Alberta's Finances](#) (the MacKinnon Report), which explores Alberta's provincial government

spending. RMA appreciates the intent of the MacKinnon Report to provide recommendations on how the Government of Alberta can improve its financing and spending situation. RMA supports improved efficiency and service delivery, but is reviewing the recommendations to ensure they do not compromise the sustainability of rural municipalities. Below is RMA's analysis of the report. However, he said the report didn't provide enough perspective on the taxation system currently in place in Alberta.

Areas of Alignment:

- Capital Spending
- Health
- Fixed Budget Dates
- Nurse Practitioners

Areas of Concern:

- Capital Spending - Municipal Grants
- Municipal Accountability
- Advanced Education

[Learn more about the areas of alignment and Concern](#) or [Download report](#).

Canada's new ambassador to China, meat industry assistance and rising wheat exports

By [Canada West Foundation](#) | Edition 028 | News



Canada has asked for a WTO meeting with China over canola

Canada has formally asked for a [meeting with China](#) before the World Trade Organization (WTO) to resolve the Chinese ban on Canadian canola seed shipments.

This is an interesting piece exploring why farmers are still growing canola, even with the current difficulties with China, saying that “it is impossible for multi-generational farming operations to treat the challenge issued by China [in isolation](#) of the rich, nuanced agrarian history of which canola is a part.”

Meat industry asks Ottawa for assistance, saying pork, beef ban costing \$100 million

Canadian meat processors and packers are saying that the economic impact of the ban on Canadian beef and pork to China is almost at [\\$100 million](#). The Canadian Meat Council is asking the federal government for financial assistance.

This [piece](#) explores how Canadian meat packers and processors are feeling the financial burden from this more than Canadian meat farmers, and this piece, from a few months ago, explores how the [RCMP](#) were asked to investigate a falsified meat export certificate that started off this ban.

On the balance: canola sales to China down – but wheat is up

While crop exports to China from Canada have largely taken a hit, wheat exports to China have [soared](#). According to the [USDA's latest Canada Grain and Feed Bulletin](#), Canada's share of total Chinese imports of wheat has risen above 60 per cent, whereas last year it was 32 per cent. This is largely a result of falling American (because of the trade war) and Australian (because of a major drought) exports.

While the fact that wheat exports to China have surged is financially a bonus to the agriculture sector, overall the story of exports to China is negative, with wheat gains more than offset by canola and soy losses. (And while surging exports are a good thing in the short-term, it does remind one of the recent surging exports of canola...)

[Read more.](#)

ATB's Economic Outlook pegs Alberta's GDP growth at 0.8 per cent

By ATB Economics | Economy Outlook | Research & Analysis



With a sluggish oil and gas sector dampening job creation, consumer spending and construction activity, ATB Financial is forecasting 0.8 per cent real GDP growth for Alberta in 2019 in its latest [Alberta Economic Outlook](#).

If the Line 3 oil pipeline that was scheduled to be in service this fall is moving oil a year from now, Alberta's economy is forecast to grow by 2.0 per cent in 2020. Risks in 2020 that could reduce growth in Alberta include a slowing global and/or U.S. economy, ongoing trade disputes, weak oil prices, more bad news regarding the Trans Mountain pipeline and Keystone XL oil pipeline projects, and the possibility that the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement will not be ratified by the U.S. Congress.

The main factor keeping growth low in Alberta at the moment is insufficient oil transportation capacity. The system reached its limits last year and prices for Alberta crude collapsed. Production cuts mandated by the province shored up prices, but until investors are convinced that new transportation capacity will come online, capital investment will remain lower than it could be.

At the same time, the natural gas industry has been faced with low prices and its own egress challenges. The daily spot price of Alberta natural gas at the AECO Hub has even closed below zero on more than one occasion.

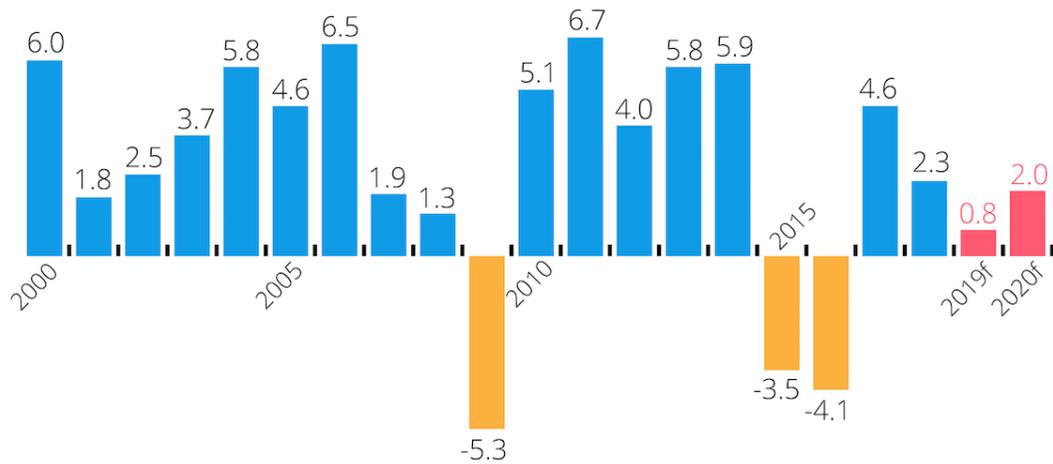
Tepid job creation has kept Alberta's unemployment rate above the national average. Alberta's unemployment rate over the first eight months of the year was 6.9 per cent compared to 5.7 per cent for the country as a whole. The provincial unemployment rate is expected to remain high next year as well, dropping slightly to around 6.6 per cent.

On the bright side, despite these challenges, the Alberta economy is forecast to grow this year. Barring a global economic crash and assuming more oil can get to market, it should post stronger

Alberta's economic growth

Annual per cent change in real GDP

Graph by ATB Financial



f = ATB forecast

Source: Statistics Canada Table: 36-10-0402-01 and ATB Financial

Weekly Economic Briefing

Brought to you by

For the week of **August 19 2019**

[Full Document Access](#)



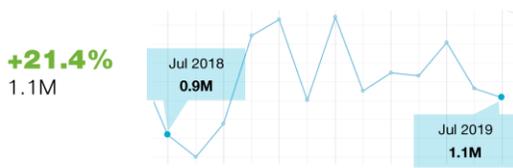
Indicators Updated this Week

Business Incorporations



In August 2019, the number of businesses incorporated in Alberta totalled 3,024, a decrease of 16.0% from the same period a year earlier. Alberta incorporations were down 16.0% to 2,747. Non-Alberta incorporations decreased 15.5% from a year earlier to 277.

Building Permits



In July 2019, Alberta municipalities issued \$942.9 million in building permits, a decrease of 12.2% from July 2018. Nationally, building permits increased by 0.7% over the same time period.

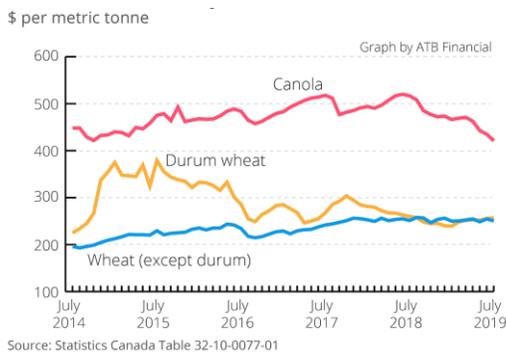
In Alberta, Institutional and governmental permits increased by 50.8%, while all other permit types declined, with Industrial permits seeing the largest decline at -35.5%.

Housing Starts



In Alberta, urban housing starts totaled 2,579 in August 2019, a year-over-year decrease of 7.7%. Canadian housing starts increased by 12.4% over the same period. In Alberta, apartment units had the largest decline (-14.9%), while single-detached and row units declined 4.4% and 2.6% respectively. Semi-detached units increased by 4.5%.

Wheat and Canola Prices



The average price of Alberta canola over the first seven months of 2019 is down 10.6 per cent compared to the same period last year. On a year-over-year basis, the price of a metric tonne was down \$95.56 in July (18.5 per cent). Wheat prices have held up better but are still below where they were last year. The average price of a metric tonne of wheat (excluding durum wheat) over the January to July period was 0.5 per cent below the same period last year.

The average price of durum was down 7.1 per cent. Average prices of cattle for slaughter were down 3.2 per cent over the first seven months of the year compared to the same period last year. Calves for slaughter were down 1.8 per cent and cattle/calves for feeding were down 1.0 per cent. Alberta hog prices, on the other hand, were up by 4.9 per cent. Complicating matters for Alberta farmers and ranchers are a number of barriers to the sale of Canadian agricultural products imposed by other countries, including the Chinese ban on Canadian canola and meat.

News Highlights

- Syncrude commits to bolstering Fort McMurray economy. [Read more](#)
- Calgary could soon face new Airbnb regulations. [Read more](#)
- Province preparing to host seminars for tourism entrepreneurs. [Read more](#)
- ATB report shows stalled economic growth in Alberta. [Read more](#) | [Report](#)
- Amii, the Alberta Machine Intelligence Institute, has launched Amii Innovates to guide AI adoption for teams and businesses. [Read more](#)
- Edmonton Chamber of Commerce: Edmonton needs to be more competitive. [Read more](#)
- New transit service running from Banff to Moraine Lake, the popular tourist destination. [Read more](#)
- Small tech startups finding home at Edmonton International Airport. [Read more](#)
- Alberta company, Surex, is fastest growing Insurance Brokerage in country for past two years. [Read more](#)
- Demand has jumped for yak meat, say central Alberta farmers. [Read more](#)
- Nine Energy closes Calgary headquarters, pulls up stakes in Canada. [Read more](#)
- Varcoe: Gas City throws in towel on 2,000 money-losing natural gas wells. [Read more](#)
- Refining the Hula Hoop: how the oil industry sparked a global plastics boom. [Read more](#)
- What is blockchain and what could it mean for Alberta's oil and gas industry? [Read more](#)
- Haskayne School of Business to use \$5M donation to start 'Social Entrepreneurship Centre'. [Read more](#)
- Parker: Broderick family grows its 45-year appliance business. [Read more](#)
- Alberta losing out on film production, union says. [Read more](#)
- Alberta invests \$1.5 million in apprenticeship training. [Read more](#)
- U.S. trade deal with Japan may cost Canadian farmers a tariff edge. [Read more](#)

Major Projects

- Suncor building \$1.4B cogeneration units in Alberta oilsands. [Read more](#)
- Polykar plans to build new manufacturing plant in Edmonton. [Read more](#)
- \$500M riverfront high-rise proposal met with fierce opposition from St. Albert residents. [Read more](#)
- Hundreds protest proposed 182 unit housing development in southwest Edmonton. [Read more](#)
- New high school planned for Burman University campus in Lacombe. [Read more](#)

Key Economic Indicators

Period	Indicator	Latest Update	Change	Last Updated
2018	GDP yr/yr	\$335.0B	+2.4%	May 2019
Q2 2019	Population yr/yr	4.4M	+1.7%	June 2019
Aug 2019	Unemployment Rate yr/yr	7.2%	+0.5%	September 2019
Sep 9-13, 2019	WTI Oil Price wk/wk	\$54.82	-3.4%	September 13, 2019 Closing
Jun 2019	Retail Trade yr/yr	\$6.8B	-1.1%	August 2019

Looking Ahead

Mon 16	Tue 17	Wed 18	Thu 19	Fri 20
Indicator Releases: New Motor Vehicle Sales	Indicator Releases: Manufacturing Sales	Indicator Releases: Consumer Price Index	Indicator Releases: Employment Insurance	Indicator Releases: Retail Trade

Things You Need To Know



Tecconnect Announces New Programs and Live Webinar Offerings

Tecconnect is now offering its workshop's via *Live Webinar Broadcast* – bringing our education to entrepreneurs and innovators all over Alberta!

It's never been easier to connect current and upcoming business owners with opportunities to learn and further develop their skills!

Through funding from Alberta Innovates and Western Economic Diversification, *Tecconnect Lethbridge – Southern Alberta's HUB for innovation and technology* is featuring new and exciting offerings this fall with the option to join our sessions from the comfort of your home or office.

Here are some programs currently open for registration and beginning this September/October:

- **Code School Series** – www.bit.ly/TCCCSPACK
- **Emerging Technology** – www.bit.ly/TCCEPACK
- **Entrepreneurship 101 – Foundations Module** – www.bit.ly/TCCE101PACK
- **Entrepreneurship 102 – Developments Module** – www.bit.ly/TCCE102PACK

You can also find our extensive list of programming available for registration now here: www.tecconnect.ca/education

Clients can access full packages or can opt for a-la-carte if they are looking to brush up on a topic or two.

If you have further questions about these programs, please reach our Entrepreneur Program Managers at education@chooiselethbridge.ca.



Lethbridge College – Corporate and Continuing Education Announces a New Online Agribusiness Risk Management Series

Enhance your agribusiness competency

Focusing on the business side of agricultural operations, the program explores the financial risks and opportunities inherent in agribusiness. This series includes the following classes:

- Commodity Marketing Fundamentals
- Currency
- Effective Communication
- Financial Literacy
- Government Policies Marketing
- Introduction to Marketing Tools
- Market Equity
- Market Fundamentals
- Market Tools
- Risk Tolerance and Risk Policy
- Statistics for Agribusiness
- Successful Planning in Agribusiness

Built to be flexible enough to fit with your life and career, the AgBRM program is available in a modular format through online delivery . Great add on to your finance or accounting degree.

[Learn more.](#)

For more information:

lethbridgecollege.ca/cce

403.320.3288



Free online training on employment standards

The Government of Alberta's Employment Standards team is offering additional free webinars in September and October that provide an overview of Alberta's employment standards rules and describe the new rules for [banked overtime](#), [general holiday pay](#) and the [job creation student wage](#). The webinars will also cover what happens to existing banked overtime agreements and Flexible Averaging Agreements.

If you were unable to attend the first webinars that were offered, you now have another opportunity to sign up!

Webinars focused on the job creation student wage and the new rules for banked overtime and general holiday pay will occur on the following dates:

- Tuesday September 17, 2019
- Friday September 20, 2019
- Thursday September 26, 2019
- Wednesday October 2, 2019
- Tuesday October 8, 2019

We are also hosting webinars providing a broad overview of Alberta's employment standards rules, including overtime and general holiday pay, on the following dates:

- Friday September 13, 2019
- Wednesday September 25, 2019
- Monday September 30, 2019
- Friday October 4, 2019
- Thursday October 10, 2019

Each webinar includes a live Q&A session to give participants a chance to discuss their own situations with the group.

Sign up for a webinar on the [registration page](#).

Stories to Follow



Government

[City receives one time double up of federal gas tax fund](#)

MyGrandePrairieNow | Sept. 5, 2019 | News

The City of Grande Prairie has received \$7.7 million from the Gas Tax Fund thanks to a one-time double-up payment from the federal government. The \$4 million initially allocated, which was already worked into municipal budget plans for 2019, was given an additional \$3.7 million, one-time payment ...

[Government of Alberta Seeking Input on Proposed Police Costing Model](#)

RMA | Sept. 9, 2019 | Press Release

The Government of Alberta is currently reviewing Alberta's police costing model, and has since distributed a survey to allow municipalities an opportunity to provide feedback on the test model.

[AUMA looks forward to working with provincial government on aspects of MacKinnon Report](#)

AUMA | Sept. 11, 2019 | News

AUMA is pleased to see that the MacKinnon Report largely reaffirms our positions on infrastructure funding. We continue to support the creation of a capital spending plan that will provide sustainable and predictable infrastructure funding for municipalities and encourage collaboration between the province and municipalities on a 20-year infrastructure investment plan ...

Economy & Markets

[Cool, wet weather delaying Saskatchewan harvest: report](#)

The Western Producer | Sept. 5, 2019 | Markets

Saskatchewan farmers made some harvest progress during the week ended Sept. 2, but the pace remains well behind normal for this time of year, according to the latest provincial crop report from Saskatchewan Agriculture. At 11 percent complete, the harvest was up from six percent the previous week but well below the five-year average of 28 percent done ...

[Trade lessons – the benefits and costs of having options](#)

Canada West Foundation | July 4, 2019 | News

Given the alarm over China's ban on Canadian beef and pork, it is reassuring — and perhaps surprising — to hear that a major exporter like Alberta sends about as much pork to Mexico as it does to China, and even more to Japan and South Korea. Even better news is that Canada will see continued export growth in these and similar stable, middle-class markets, thanks to recent trade agreements ...

[Large oat production won't move prices](#)

AGCanada | Aug. 29, 2019 | News

While the most recent crop production report from Statistics Canada predicted significantly more oats than originally expected, prices will likely remain stable. Statistics Canada estimated 3.952 million tonnes of oats will be grown in 2019, up considerably from the 3.436 million tonnes produced in 2018 ...

[Canada should support Taiwan's accession to the CPTPP – but not as a full member](#)

Canada West Foundation | Aug. 25, 2019 | News

The Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership – also known as “the largest, most complex, and potentially most impactful [trade] agreement Canada has been a part of” – will soon have new members. Several countries have voiced interest in applying to join the CPTPP, and which ones the trading bloc allows to join will have implications for every member, including Canada ...

[Alberta could run near \\$40B deficit by 2040 if changes not made, paper suggests](#)

CBC News | Sept. 5, 2019 | News

Continued downtrends in the oil and gas industry paired with costly expenditures will plunge Alberta further into deficit to the tune of \$40 billion by 2040, according to a new paper released by the University of Calgary. The paper, which was authored by economics professor Kenneth McKenzie, attributes that potential deficit to factors such as global decarbonization policies and declining market demand.

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Communities

[Farmer prepares for 70th harvest](#)

The Western Producer | Sept. 5, 2019 | News

RAYMORE, Sask. — For 85-year-old Herman Kirstein, nothing beats a fried egg sandwich washed down with ice tea while combining late into the night. He's working his 70th harvest right now — his favourite time of year ...

[Improper sale of seized cattle sparks procedural change](#)

Western Producer | Sept. 5, 2019 | Livestock

Some cattle seized under animal protection laws in Saskatchewan last winter were sold in error. According to Livestock Services of Saskatchewan, which conducts brand inspections, three owners will be compensated after their animals were sold along with those owned by the person from whom they were seized ...

[RMs declare ag disaster in Manitoba's Interlake](#)

AGCanada | Aug. 29, 2019 | News

Twelve rural municipalities in Manitoba's Interlake and WestLake regions declare a state of agricultural disaster due to severe dry conditions. The RMs of Alonsa, Armstrong, Bifrost-Riverton, Coldwell, Ethelbert, Fisher, Grahamdale, Lakeshore, McCreary, Ste. Rose, West Interlake and Woodlands were named in a news release ...

[PED makes nasty comeback in Manitoba](#)

Western Producer | Sept. 11, 2019 | News

Manitoba is grappling with a hog disease outbreak that's so severe it's even showing up in U.S. import statistics. As of Sept. 10, 74 Manitoba hog production facilities have been discovered positive for porcine epidemic diarrhea virus this year as a widespread outbreak that began in May continues to knock down new barns ...

Science, Technology, & Innovation

[Canadians in northern Alberta to benefit from faster internet](#)

Cission | Sept. 6, 2019 | News

The Honourable Bernadette Jordan, Minister of Rural Economic Development, today announced an investment of \$4.9 million to bring new high-speed Internet access to seven

communities including Zama City, the 5 Bigstone Cree First Nations communities, and Sandy Lake, in northern Alberta. In addition to the Government of Canada investment, Arrow Technologies is contributing \$1.6 million ...

Innovations in Canada's technology 'pipeline' are reducing GHG emissions

Canada West Foundation | Aug. 15, 2019 | Research & Analysis

The Canada West Foundation hosted a roundtable in Calgary on June 25 on the future of Canada's economy, with a partner organization which had held similar roundtables in Toronto and Montreal. A representative of the partner wondered why they "didn't hear anything about climate change in this Alberta roundtable," unlike the experience in the other cities. The question was curious, indeed shocking – but we quickly realized what had happened: the roundtable participants weren't talking about the problem of climate change because they had gone well beyond that ...

Corteva reveals new offerings, new facilities

Western Producer | Sept. 5, 2019 | Crops

In Corteva Agriscience's first major event since it officially started operations on June 3, it showcased new products at its research and development station in Saskatoon.

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Events



**OCT.
24 - 25**

IEDC Course - Managing Economic Development Organizations

Host: [International Economic Development Council](#)

Time: Thu. – Fri. 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM

Location: Coast Edmonton Plaza

This advanced course will focus on the key principles and practices of professional management in economic development. It will define excellence in economic development and explain the fundamentals of managing for results, outcome-based performance, organizational assessment, stakeholder identification, vision and mission scope, organizational culture and more. Also, participants will learn how to engage their board or council, staff and community stakeholders, constituents, and customers to achieve results in job creation, tax-base stabilization and community growth and development. Since EDOs differ from one another depending on their available resources, location, and mission, this course is designed to equip a leader of any organization to make the right decisions.

Course Highlights:

- Outcome-based management and performance
- Managing conflict and developing a statement of ethics
- Understanding and evaluating the EDOs core competencies
- Serving the customer and measuring customer satisfaction
- Improving knowledge management and internal processes
- Working with board/city council members, staff and community stakeholders
- Team building, determining hiring needs, and managing budgets
- Leveraging existing resources and working with regional organizations

[Learn More & Register](#)

**NOV.
13 - 15**

RMA Fall 2019 Convention

Host: Rural Municipalities of Alberta

Time: **Wed.** 7 a.m. – 10 p.m. | **Thu.** 7 a.m. – 10 p.m. | **Fri.** 7 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Location: Edmonton Convention Centre

Convention Program

The convention program continues to be developed and a [draft agenda](#) is now available.

Key program items include the RMA's Annual General Meeting, the resolutions session, and education sessions and plenary addresses on current topics impacting rural municipalities, in addition to [several elections for board positions](#).

Awards and Recognition

During the fall convention, RMA presents awards and honours those who have passed away. Members can submit nominations and information for the following:

- [R.W. Hay Award](#) for Rural Administrative Excellence
- [Long Service Awards](#)
- [In Memoriam](#)

The deadline for nominations for the R.W. Hay Award is September 27, 2019. Submissions for Long Service Awards and In Memoriam will be received until October 15, 2019.

For enquiries, please contact:

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Tasha Blumenthal

Director of External Relations & Advocacy

tasha@RMAAlberta.com

[Learn More & Register](#)

Employment Opportunities

[AUMA | Association of Urban Municipalities of Alberta](#)

- Asset Management Specialist - Water Services, City of Airdrie
- Director of Operations and Infrastructure, Town of Three Hills
- Director, Public Works, Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo
- Senior Manager, Engineering, Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo
- Senior Manager, Environmental Services, Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo
- Chief Administrative Officer, Town of Didsbury
- Deputy City Manager, Financial and Corporate Services, City of Edmonton

[RMA | Rural Municipalities of Alberta](#)

[Government of Alberta](#)

Resources

At SouthGrow's main office, we are working hard to further improve our implementation of technology and data to improve our organization and service. Here's what we are using, as well as some other tools we think would help the businesses within our communities.

[Community \(Local\) Economic Development - Government of Alberta](#)

Tools and resources to help support local economic development. ... Alberta's communities need qualified workers and professionals to drive their local ...

[CED Grants & Funding Portal](#)

Find funding opportunities that support thriving communities and economic prosperity in Alberta's small cities and towns.

[Community Toolkit for Economic Recovery and Resiliency](#)

Community Toolkit for Economic Recovery and Resiliency (2017 Canadian Version) In June 2014, the International Economic Development Council (IEDC).

[Alberta Community Health Dashboard | Healthier Together](#)

The Alberta Community Health Dashboard from Alberta Health Services makes it easier for you to find and apply comprehensive, interactive data.

[Lethbridge College – Corporate and Continuing Education](#)

Check out their catalogue and learn something new this Fall! —> [Fall Catalogue](#)

Questions? Suggestions? Have something you would like us to share? *Contact the SouthGrow team!*

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