



ARECA Soil Health Initiative

This article is part of a series to promote better understanding of our agricultural soil resources along with practices that can influence soil health.

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What can we learn about soil from the Alberta Soil Information Viewer?

David Spiess, P.Eng., GIS Engineer, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry.

Rob Dunn, P.Ag., FarmWise Inc., Lethbridge, AB

Farmers and ranchers realize the importance that healthy soil plays in such areas as supporting life on earth, filtering land, water and air of toxins, pathogens, and greenhouse gases, and, securing the world's food supply. Alberta has a diversity of soils that contribute to these functions and fortunately, we have access to an excellent soil information database through the Soil Information Viewer to better understand and manage those resources.

The valuable insights available through the Soil Information Viewer, running from an internet welcome page located at soilinformation.alberta.ca, is a starting point for soils investigation on any given farm or ranch. The viewer accesses soil information stored in database tables called the Agricultural Regions of Alberta Soil Inventory Database (AGRASID). The information in the database looks at the ability of Alberta soils to grow crops, allowing comparisons between different lands in different areas, gives information on soil properties, helps with making environmental farm plans, and a whole lot more.

Over the past 75 years there has been a significant investment in local soil survey and mapping throughout Alberta's agricultural regions and AGRASID is a compilation and update of those soil survey reports.¹ The database describes over 858 soil types within 28,366 map units across 26 million hectares in a standardized 1:100,000 scale, including detailed physical and chemical information for each soil type. The Soil Information Viewer displays these AGRASID map units, providing background on the soil types associated with any particular unit and where those soil types can be found within the landscape topography.

From the Alberta Soil Information welcome page (shown below), the viewer is accessed by pressing the graphic on the left of the page or by pressing On-line Soil Viewer above the graphic. The welcome page also provides access to a number of tip sheets and YouTube videos so that an interested visitor may read how to or watch how to perform several common tasks with the soil information viewer and at the same time, familiarizes them with an overall understanding of the capabilities the viewer may provide.

Alberta's Soil Information Viewer is a user friendly internet tool to access soils information from AGRASID. The tool, along with the supporting AGRASID database, are a starting point for learning more about the unique properties and productive capability of local soil.



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ALBERTA SOIL INFORMATION

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Welcome to The Alberta Soil Information Viewer

[Agg-News This Week](#)

Important Status Update

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Description for Soil Polygons: 1072

WHY/WHEN
 of the Dark Brown (Chernozem or mollic Chernozem (U, Sd), G), mollic (non mollic) (U, G), or the (U) (non mollic) (Sd)?

The polygon also includes soils that are not already identified from the statement of an inventory site (i.e., including, but not limited to, a listing area of 1072).

Example site picture(s)
 There may be more than one example since different soil inventories may all fall into the same landform classification.

Click on picture(s) above for larger image.

Read How to:

- [Get Started](#)
- [Find Your Farm](#)
- [Know Your Soil](#)
- [Find Your Soil](#)
- [Map Your Farm](#)
- [Save Your Map](#)

Watch How to:

- [Get Started*](#)
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Navigation and Function Help
 Access help on navigation, and functions related to the button and widgets found on the Alberta Soil Information Viewer.

*Videos are provided courtesy of the [Alberta Land-use Knowledge Network](#).

¹ About Agricultural Region of Alberta Soil Inventory Database (AGRASID) Version 3.0.
[http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/sag5173?opendocument](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/sag5173?opendocument)