

NOTICE TO REGULATED MEMBERS - FEES



**Alberta Institute
of Agrologists**

NOTICE OF FEE INCREASE IN 2024

From 2019 to the present, the registration and practice permit renewal fees for regulated members of the Institute have been \$650. In 2024, these fees will increase by \$100, to \$750. Each subsequent year, fees will increase by the provincial cost of living adjustment (COLA).

The AIA council establishes fees according to Bylaws enabled by the *Agrology Profession Act*, s 104(1)(k). The Bylaws provide that the council may establish fees to fund the Institute's regulatory obligations, guided by a cost-benefit analysis provided by the CEO.

The council demonstrates accountability through transparent and intelligible briefing notes and minutes to demonstrate evidence-based decisions in the public interest, including decisions about fees. The council has determined that this increase is necessary to properly fund foundational regulatory activities. Current fees prevent the Institute from fulfilling regulatory requirements. Costs to address Professional Practice Qualifying Examinations, additional staff, practice reviews, the AIA website, and registration activities are anticipated to exceed the 2024 budget by \$346,980. Had fees automatically increased by the cost of living each year, as in Quebec (the AIA's sister institute), the fee for 2024 would be \$772.00. Therefore, a fee increase to \$750.00 is in fact less than the cost of living increase.

The CEO must provide all regulated members with 60 clear days' notice of a fee increase. "Regulated members" comprise each individual registered as a professional agrologist, registered technologist in agrology, agrologist in training, agrology technologist in training, provisional professional agrologist, provisional registered technologist in agrology, visiting professional agrologist, visiting registered technologist in agrology, visiting agrologist in training, and visiting agrology technologist in training.

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DETERMINING FEES

Self-regulated professions are funded by registration fees, not the public purse. Self-funding is central to the social contract between professions and the public. Professional regulatory organizations receive the privilege of legal authority to set their own standards of registration, practice, ethics, and discipline, if they protect public safety in exchange. Therefore, fee decisions are based on objective evidence of funding needed to fulfill regulatory requirements.

Specifically, the *Agrology Profession Act* requires the Institute to regulate the practice of agrology in a manner that protects and serves the public interest by establishing, maintaining, and enforcing standards of practice, registration, continuing competence, and ethics. The proposed increase is related to these functions, as set out below.

MANAGING LEGISLATIVE CHANGE

Legislative change management is a significant challenge for professional regulatory organizations. Recently, Alberta's professions have been tasked with adjusting application requirements and procedures to accommodate strict new criteria under two separate laws that affect registration: the *Fair Registration Practices Act* and *Labour Mobility Act*, the latter of which imports provincial and federal trade agreements. These laws have spurred technical alterations to the AIA's website and have increased the Registration Committee's time commitment and need for legal training.

Furthermore, the AIA anticipates wholesale legislative overhaul in 2024 through the voluminous *Professional Governance Act*, umbrella legislation for all professions including health, law, and education. That Act will repeal and replace the more succinct *Agrology Profession Act* with a profession-specific schedule under a broad set of significant general requirements for expanded bylaws, codes, statutory committees, and regulatory enforcement. All aspects of Institute operations and council governance will demand close attention to comply with the umbrella Act.

The AIA has proactively completely revamped the website to align with modernized criteria. Consequently, website costs have increased significantly from \$2,000/month to \$6,000/month. This represents an annual expense increase of \$48,000.00. Additional funds (estimated to be about \$30,000.00) will be required for special web builds to allow additional integration of new legal obligations and standards.

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT PLANNING

Strategic foresight planning is essential for professional regulatory organizations, particularly in times of legislative change. In 2022 the council enacted an Institute Strategic Plan and accompanying Council Performance Management Plan to focus attention and resources on core legislative mandates under the *Agrology Profession Act*. Central activities include conducting practice reviews and auditing the Continuing Competence Program. The Strategic Plan stipulates, “For each practice area, retain sufficient staff to implement practice standards, practice review protocols, and continuing competence requirements”. From the Council Performance Management Plan: “Members are demonstrably qualified within their areas of practice. Regulated members work in areas in which the member is competent. Practice reviews demonstrate competence.”. The *Professional Governance Act* will heighten the importance of these activities and add quite a few more activities that will need to be addressed without fail, some of which will need to be in place before the Act comes into force.

UNFUNDED STATUTORY FUNCTIONS

Three statutory functions are unfunded: professional practice examinations, practice reviews, and statutory committees.

Professional Practice Qualifying Examinations are a principal alternative for adjudicating qualifications for practice as a PAg or RT(Ag) in relation to knowledge requirements established by the Institute’s 15 practice standards. Examinations validate knowledge gained through work experience rather than through post-secondary coursework. This gives effect to directives in the *Agrology Profession Act* and Regulation to increase labour mobility and administrative fairness by assessing applicants for registration in diverse ways. Exams are also vital to assessing competence should issues arise during a practice review.

The budget requirement for examinations is a total of \$368,800.00. Hosting costs for CP is \$9,600.00 in 2023, hosting costs for CP, ARMCL, LR, and EM are \$189,600.00 in 2024, and hosting costs for CP, AMS, and LP are \$169,600.00 in 2025. Each exam costs about \$80,000.00 to prepare: question drafting by senior agrologists costs approximately \$30,000.00/exam. A certified psychometrician is used to develop the exams at a cost of



Practice Reviews are an essential method of monitoring professional competence. They will be mandatory under the forthcoming *Professional Governance Act*, directed by a Practice Review Committee. The AIA is preparing to implement a Practice Review Protocol founded on best practices, practice standards, and continuing competence. The Institute will need to retain a Practice Review Manager to coordinate a dedicated committee of at least 6 members, three each from agriculture and environment.

Practice Review Manager	\$ 70,980	(\$65/hr x 7 hr/day x 3 days/week x 52 weeks)
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Practice Review Committee

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| • 4 Agricultural Members | \$8,000 | (\$100/hr x 20 files/person x 1 hr/file x 3 persons) |
| • 4 Environmental Members | \$8,000 | (\$100/hr x 20 files/person x 1 hr/file x 3 persons) |
| • Expenses | \$2,000 | Reasonable expenses for committee meetings |

Total:	\$ 88,980	
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Compensation for statutory committees. It has become imperative to compensate the senior agrologists who volunteer for the Registration Committee and who will be needed on the Practice Review Committee and in expanded roles under the forthcoming *Professional Governance Act*. Registration requirements, already stringent under the *Agrology Profession Act*, have become more so under the *Fair Registration Practices Act* and the *Labour Mobility Act*. Bylaws have folded the Competence Committee into the Registration Committee to streamline functions. Registration applications are increasing. The Bylaws provide for an honorarium of \$1000 per year per committee member, plus reasonable expenses. There are 8 committee members, four each in agriculture and environment. They are expected to attend at least 6 two-hour meetings. Some involve travel. **The budget requirement of \$18,000 for the 2023-24 term of appointment.**



Fee Comparisons

Note that fees are not established by comparison with what other organizations charge. They relate to profession-specific regulatory obligations. However, for interest, the following table sets out the fees charged by other professions in Alberta and Canada.

It bears noting that the AIA is active in areas the *Professional Governance Act* will entail for competent and ethical practice in all professions, such as detailed practice standards, practice area exams, practice reviews, and bylaw governance, which could impact fees in some of the professions listed here.

Alberta Professional Regulatory Organizations Fee Comparison

PRO	Fee
College of Dental Surgeons of AB (CDSA)- formerly the AB Dental Association and College (ADA&C)	\$5,050.00 (2024 fees not determined yet)
College of Midwives of AB	\$4550.00 (Review in Sept 2023 for reduction, not to fall below \$4000)
College of AB Denturists	\$2595
Law Society of AB	\$2490.00 (Fees under review until January 2024)
College Physicians & Surgeons AB	\$2200.00 (Fees under review until September 2023)
AB Veterinary Medical Association	General license \$1850.79 plus GET = \$1943.33 (Fees generally increase yearly, closer to November renewal time)
The College of Chiropractors of AB-formerly the AB College, Assoc of Chiropractors	\$1900.00 (Effective July 2023-June 2024)



AB Land Surveyors' Association	\$1700.00 (Fees valid until April 2024. Fees discussed in January meeting)
Chartered Professional Accountants of AB	\$1136.00 (Effective May 2023-May 2024)
AB College of Optometrists	\$1100.00 (Fees under review until November 2023)
AB Association of Architects	\$1028 (Fees under review until September 2023)
AB College of Pharmacy	\$944.00
AB Assoc of Landscape Architects	\$705 (AB) +\$223 (National)= \$928
College of AB Psychologists	\$875.00 (Effective 2023-2024)
College of Physiotherapists of AB	\$805.00 (Effective Oct. 1, 2023-Sept. 30, 2024)
College of Dental Technologists AB	\$730.00 (Not established for 2024)
AB College of Opticians	\$673.37 (Increased for 2024)
AB Professional Planners Institute	\$665.72 (Not established for 2024. Increases based on the percentage change in the consumer price index for Alberta)
ACSLPA (Audiologists & R.SLP)	\$750.00 (Fee increased \$100 from 2023)



AB Institute of Agrologists	\$750.00 (Fee increased \$100 from 2023)
College Registered Psychiatric Nurses AB	\$575.00 (Fee increased in 2023)
College of Dieticians of AB	\$570.00 (Effective until March 31, 2024)
AB College Occupational Therapists	\$550.00 (Effective until May 31, 2024)
Association of AB Forest Management Professionals	\$518.00 (Effective July 2023-July 2024)
AB College of Paramedics	\$499.00
AB Assessors' Association	\$510.00 (Effective until March 2024)
College of Registered Nurses of AB	\$480.00 (Effective until September 30, 2024)
Chartered Professionals in Human Resources of AB	\$440.00 (Effective until October 2023)
Association of Sci & Eng Techs of AB	\$440.00
AB College of Social Workers	\$400.00 (Effective until March 31, 2024)
Association of Professional Engineers & GeoScientists AB	\$446.00 (Increased effective July 1, 2023, from \$392 to \$446- based on budget)
Alberta Society of Professional Biologists	\$361.66 (Increase planned for 2024)
College of Licenced Practical Nurses AB	\$350.00



Association of Chemical Professionals of AB	\$295.00
College of AB Dental Assistants	\$225.00

Canadian Agrologist Professional Regulatory Organizations Fee Comparison

PRO	Fee
Ordre des Agronomes du Quebec	Registration Fee: \$730.12 OAQ 2023-24 Registration Fee PLUS Errors and Omission Insurance (group rate): \$1,155.22 (Effective until March 31, 2024)
Alberta Institute of Agrologists	\$750.00
British Columbia Institute of Agrologists	\$600.00
Saskatchewan Institute of Agrologists	\$485.00
Ontario Institute of Agrologists	\$450.00 (Anticipated to increase in 2024)
Manitoba Institute of Agrologists	\$400.00
New Brunswick Institute of Agrologists	\$260.00
Nova Scotia Institute of Agrologists	\$155.00
PEI Institute of Agrologists	\$140.00
Newfoundland Institute of Agrologists	\$25.00

CONCLUSION

The 2024 projected income will be about \$2.1 million. These fees cover key expenses for office space, staff salaries, legal and accounting fees, normal web expenses, office administrative costs, and professional service fees. The four key revenue sources are AIA membership fees, the AIA In-Training course and exam, job postings, and application fees. The proposed fee increase will raise an additional \$197,000. These extra funds are needed to offset four new expense areas of \$78,000.00 for the AIA web system, annual



exam development of \$189,600.00, a new staff member of \$70,980.00, and practice review committee members of \$18,000.00.