

# SETTING UP FARM UTILITIES



**Before buying or signing a lease for a farm, know your utility rights and responsibilities as an owner or tenant.**

## Electricity

Electricity in rural Alberta may be provided by a competitive retailer or Rural Electrification Association (REA). REAs serve consumers within a specific geographic boundary. Each REA has an elected board of directors that sets rates and handles business operations.

If you live in an area serviced by an REA and would like to obtain electrical service from them, you may enter into a Member Service Contract. Members access power based on their contract, or through a competitive retailer, if the REA offers that option.

## Natural Gas

A rural gas co-op is a not-for-profit cooperative that owns its own distribution system and supplies natural gas to rural areas. Co-ops have exclusive supply rights in their areas.

## Good to know

Have the following information handy when setting up your utility:

- Site location and ID
- Operating and voltage requirements

### Are there any existing utility connections?

Ask the landlord or previous owner if there are any existing utility connections on the property. For electricity, it is important to compare your projected electrical load to the current load used on the property.

### Know your rate classification.

Rate classes vary by provider. Rate class is determined by the amount of energy required on the site. Classification of rates in rural areas may include farm, irrigation, or street light service.

## How is farm energy calculated?

Consumers may be billed separately for dwelling and farm operation energy use.

The electrical load is the total possible energy consumed including anything that will consume energy, such as appliances or machinery. There are two subcategories:

### Operating Demand Load

Consider the appliances and devices that will likely run in day-to-day operation.

### Connected Load

Calculates energy consumed when all appliances and devices are utilized simultaneously.



### Why is it important to right-size my load?

Farm energy providers use the operating demand load to determine the contract rate for electricity. When estimating operating demand load, it is advised to be as accurate as possible. It's important that you are right-sizing to optimize your energy use and only pay for the energy that you're using.





## Set up services early!

Setting up rural utility service can take up to 90 days. Make sure to account for this when planning.

## Helpful tips

### Understand Terms and Conditions.

Before signing agreements with utility providers, it's important to read the fine print. Utility companies may need to access a landowner's property to carry out installation, maintenance, construction, repair or vegetation management. This is either done through an easement or right-of-way which is outlined in contract terms and conditions.

### Complete a preliminary load calculation.

Electricians can complete a preliminary load calculation for your farm operation. If you want to calculate yourself, call your provider, and ask for their load calculation form.

### Accurate calculations.

Do not use square footage or a building footprint in to calculate load requirements. The use of the space, such as an office or barn, will be most accurate to calculate operating demand load.

## Use the Cost Comparison Tool

### Scan



### Select Farm



Select farm as the property type and enter your postal code or the closest city/town

### Compare



See options in your area to compare providers and plans

### Is the Cost Comparison Tool not showing any results?



A Rural Electrification Association, natural gas co-op or your local municipality may be your provider. Contact them for utility options.

## Who to contact

### UCA

Our team can discuss different resources and utility options. The team can assist in resolving issues with utility providers.

**Phone:** 310-4UCA (4822) or

1-888-644-6608

**Email:** [UCAhelps@gov.ab.ca](mailto:UCAhelps@gov.ab.ca)

### Alberta Federation of Rural Electrification Associations (AFREA)

Find contact information for REAs.

**Phone:** 780-417-3396 or

1-877-717-3496

**Email:** [communications@afrea.ab.ca](mailto:communications@afrea.ab.ca)

### Alberta Federation of Gas Co-ops

Find a map, a list of natural gas co-op providers and educational resources.

**Phone:** 780-416-6543

**Email:** [info@fedgas.com](mailto:info@fedgas.com)

