



## May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026- Strychnine Update

The information below is current as of today, but it may change as the Government of Alberta and/or the M.D. of Willow Creek receive additional direction. We also plan to post updates on the M.D. of Willow Creek website: <https://mdwillowcreek.com/asb-programs>

The revised 2026 approval includes stronger geographic restrictions, stewardship requirements, monitoring, and training, specifically designed to reduce risks to predators and scavengers.

- **Supply is extremely limited.** The **first shipment has been delayed and is not expected to arrive until mid-late June**, but it is unlikely to include more than 20 cases per participating municipality (800 cases have been allotted for all of Alberta, and there are 48 M.D.s and counties within the designated strychnine-use area). A second shipment is expected in late July, with a third shipment anticipated in the fall.
- Mandatory training will be required for both vendors and users.
  - Fieldmen (vendor) training begins April 23, 2026.
  - User training will be delivered through the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM). This is an online course, will begin May 4, 2026. The course will include chapter-based modules and knowledge checks, with a certificate issued upon completion. <https://sarm.ca/strychnine-stewardship-training/>
  - SARM will confirm certificate authenticity to the M.D. of Willow Creek. This may take up to 3 business days after course completion—**you cannot purchase strychnine until the M.D. has received confirmation of training.**
- Use restrictions:
  - Only the registered landowner may purchase and apply the product. Employees and adult children of the landowner may not do so unless they hold a Pesticide Applicator Licence with exterior rodent control.
  - In the case of rented land, the renter may purchase/apply the product with proof of rental/lease
  - In the case of a corporation the director(s)/owner(s) may purchase/apply the product
  - In the case of a Hutterite Colony in which land title reflects communal ownership any person 18+ years of age may purchase/apply the product with proof of said ownership and a certificate of completion of the training course.
  - Must be 18 years of age or older.
- Species at Risk:
  - Areas with documented species at risk (SAR) populations or habitat will be avoided unless suitable methods to mitigate risk can be demonstrated. Risk mitigation measures must be appropriate for the specific species at risk present. On-site assessment of SAR will be required before application is permitted. *The **Ferruginous Hawk and American Badger** are now designated species of special concern.* (We are waiting for a map to be added to AGI

\*\*\*For further inquiries, please call 403-625-3351. Extension 229 for Carla, 249 for Ryan\*\*\*



website) here is a link to the American Badger from the Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute <https://abmi.ca/species/taxidea-taxus>

- **Timing:**
  - Use is only permitted in early spring (**March 1<sup>st</sup> to June 15<sup>th</sup>**) before vegetation has emerged, and in later summer (**July 15<sup>th</sup> to September 1<sup>st</sup>**) after vegetation has died down.
  - May only be used in areas with an infestation that is causing crop/forage damage.
    - The amount a user may purchase will be directly linked to the size of the infestation, supported by evidence. (Two case maximum) but due to limited supply it will likely be less than two cases.
    - Producer must provide evidence of control attempts using other methods.
- At the point of purchase, the vendor (M.D. of Willow Creek) will require documentation confirming that the user (producer) meets all requirements. The user will also be required to sign a declaration confirming they meet the requirements and will follow all regulations (these will be reviewed in the online training).
- **Additional forms and signage will be required** (also reviewed in the online training).
  1. Declaration upon purchase
  2. Monitoring Form (during application)
  3. Evaluation Form (upon completion)
- The Government of Alberta will be conducting audits of vendors and users. Fines for misuse have been listed at \$50,000 for an individual and \$500,000 for a corporation.

#### **What this means for the Municipal District of Willow Creek Producer's:**

- We recommend continuing to use other RGS control methods this year and documenting those efforts.
- We have not yet been advised of the cost; however, you should anticipate a 20–30% increase from the last distribution in 2021.
- Distribution will be strictly controlled to ensure we follow all protocols and requirements. If we fail to do so, we risk losing our vendor licence—and with it, the availability of strychnine throughout the M.D. Likewise, users must follow all protocols, restrictions, and label requirements to ensure the product is used properly. Misuse may jeopardize strychnine's ongoing approval by the PMRA.

At this time, we still have many questions that the Government of Alberta has not yet been able to answer—and we recognize that many of you do as well. We will do our best to keep you informed as we learn more and to provide timely updates on availability. You can also visit <https://www.alberta.ca/richardsons-ground-squirrel-control> for updates from the Government of Alberta.

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