

**AIA Council Candidate's Questions  
Responses of Gerald Ontkean, PAg.**

1. The value of the profession of Agrology lies in its ability to serve the interests of the Alberta public in a professional manner. The need for profession of Agrology is to ensure that qualified individuals are carrying out the work encompassed by the profession.
  
2. a) The main challenge to understanding the diverse views of the membership is to be able to understand the issues that each of the disciplines and members within the institute are concerned with. In understanding the various concerns, solutions that are to the benefit of all of the membership can be developed. Another challenge is in being able to relate the views of the membership not only on a discipline basis but also on regional differences.  
  
b) We need to understand how public perceives the profession of Agrology and its impact on them. "Why are we important to them?" Being able to answer this question will allow us to extend to the public information they need in order to better understand the value of the AIA.  
  
c) In my career with the Provincial Department of Agriculture I have had many opportunities to work with various aspects of the public from agriculture to environment to individuals with few direct links to either discipline. I have found that by trying to understand the views and concerns of all parties involved it is easier to develop a dialogue with them. Understanding their big picture view is critical to seeing how their perceptions have been developed.
  
3. a) I am currently a member of the EAR advisory committee at Lethbridge College and have sat on the \_\_\_ advisory committee at Olds College. Both groups provide input and advice on the programming of the related departments.  
  
b) The primary strength I would bring to this process is my experience in developing goals and direction for projects with my work. Recently I have been involved in preparing documents and making recommendations for policy development within my job. My experience in working with organizations such as Lethbridge and Olds Colleges advisory committees has also allowed me to work in a similar system.
  
4. a) My closest experience would be in my work with watershed stewardship groups. After helping these groups to define their goals and objectives I would remain in contact with the group to help them to review where they had moved along their path to meeting their goals and objectives. My time spent on the former Lethbridge Branch executive provided

me with experience in working towards the achievement of Ends but also in evaluating the overall success of the process.

b) I feel that I would be able to bring the ability to help the Council look towards the Ends and to see how the achievements of the CEO have or have not helped to improve the AIA.

5. a) I have been involved in the development of several community groups that were made up of various combinations of agricultural producers, rural residential and urban communities. I have had the opportunity to facilitate these groups and help them to develop goals and strategies. My work in project teams has also required the ability to discuss and develop research plans as a part of a larger group. While all individual points of view are included the group moves forward based on the decisions agreed on by the group.

b) I feel that others would describe me as an individual who gets involved in the process, tries to see divergent viewpoints and then helps to act on the decisions.