



The Blade

Creating an Awareness of Forages

Monthly
Newsletter
of the
**Grey Wooded
Forage Association**

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February/March, 2017



**** Memberships are Due April 1 ****

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Photo Credit: Amy Leitch

GWFA Mission Statement

*To promote environmentally and economically
sustainable forage and agricultural practices.*

GWFA Vision Statement

*The community is engaged in regenerative
agricultural production methods.*

Message from the chair

By Ken Ziegler

Well folks, as I write this note to you, I'm beginning to enjoy the earlier daylight and the warmth planned for today. Yes, spring is just around the corner and there's a vague hope for seeing the first Canada goose or brave mallard duck! Yes, there's hope.

For those of you in the thick of feeding cows, be reminded that their nutrient requirements are escalating rapidly as the fetus is growing and that their mineral requirements are increasing as well.

This is not the time to save. Be liberal with feeding mineral, especially if you're feeding greenfeed based rations. Talk to your trusted nutritionist to get this part of nutrition right.

To change the subject, we hope you enjoy this version of "The Blade". As usual, Ginette and Devin have been working hard in compiling a good collection of articles for your benefit. Do let them know that you're appreciating their efforts and offer them



constructive feedback. They've been working very hard in offering several good workshops and field days and have several more planned during the coming winter months.

As a board, we're very pleased with their standard of excellence and personal levels of integrity. Their initiative makes our work so much simpler and more enjoyable.

Also, be sure to give the folks that are on the Project and Publicity committees a pat on the back for their creativity and extra effort in providing you with a valuable extension experience. Both committees have a good listing of plans underway for the remainder of 2017.

Stay posted!

Ken

Rocky North 4H Multi-club



**We wish to thank Mr. Ken Ziegler for his very informative presentation on
Taking Care of Your Beef Cow.**

**Our February meeting was well attended and we really appreciate him coming out
to share his knowledge with the club members and their parents.**

Manager's notes

By Ginette Boucher

Greetings,

Spring is in the air and the days are getting longer, this is what I wait for after a long cold winter. We've been extremely busy in the office, looking ahead and planning for the upcoming year.

In this publication, there is an update on the sainfoin provincial project which is extremely interesting. We are looking forward to year two of this project.

There is a great article on extending the grazing season and another on a producer's perspective of winter vs spring calving. We hope that you'll continue to enjoy reading our publication and will share it with neighbours and friends.

Part two of our Farm Transition Workshop concluded on February 8th with 38 in attendance. Advisors were brought in to consult with the farm families about financial matters and law. GWFA has the *Passing the Torch "The 12 Steps of Succession Planning"* manual in the office available for members to sign out. Thank you, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, for providing this valuable workshop. Please consider hosting another in 2017.

We are looking for three new members on our board to replace outgoing board members. If you are interested or know of someone who may be interested in filling a position, please contact us at the office and we will be happy to discuss this opportunity.

We are currently working with our publicity committee in the planning of our AGM. One consideration is hosting our AGM at the Lacombe Research Centre in mid June. If you have any ideas for our AGM, please let us know.

We've successfully updated our strategic plan and are in the final stages of completion. Thank you to our board members and staff for their contribution to the future of the association.

Our membership has grown to over 160 members in 2016/17 and is rising. It's been a great year for growth and development. The 2017/18 membership fees are due April 1st. For your convenience, we accept e-transfers, cash and cheques. To keep cost down we will not be issuing invoices as a reminder. Instead we have made mention of the membership renewal date in the Blade and a renewal form is on the back page.

Our member services and benefits are currently under review and we always welcome fresh ideas. If you have any ideas, please contact the office and let us know how we can better serve you.



Our digital distribution system is increasingly growing; our goal is to build the distribution list into the thousands. If you're not on our digital distribution list or know of someone who would benefit from receiving our information, please contact us and we will gladly

add you to our digital distribution. We are also looking at generating additional revenue for our program by selling advertising through our digital distribution system. If you have experience in advertising or suggestions for us to consider we welcome and appreciate your feedback.

More and more farmers are working full time jobs then farming. Recently I've attended a few local events and noticed the number of attendance has declined. Perhaps this is due to calving season or perhaps everyone is too busy to attend events!

This brings a new set of considerations; In the next decade, how will farmers get their information? What will be the best way to delivery extension information? We believe that a variety of extension methods, including webinars and videos, may be key to the future delivery of extension.

This would enable producers to take in their choice of activities at their finger tips. How do you think we could better serve you? What are your needs and how can we get the information to you in the most convenient way? We look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

Ginette

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310-farm

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Recapping a visit to Farmtech 2017

By Devin Knopp, P.Ag

At the end of January, I had the pleasure of attending the Farmtech Conference in Edmonton. This three-day conference was filled to the brim with farmers, industry representatives, government officials and anyone and everyone else interested in Agriculture. Over the course of the three days I had a chance to attend numerous breakout sessions, and hear keynote speaker's world renowned for their experiences in life or their knowledge of agriculture.

To kick off the conference Lieutenant-General, Romeo Dallaire spoke about his time as a commander of the UN peacekeeping mission in Rwanda. His talk was both moving and tragic. He used his experience in that mission to talk about other matters that effect everyone even after they have left the battle fields, such as mental health. He also used his stories and examples to continue to push people to become something bigger then they are. Build, grow, teach our next generations to push the boundaries.

When he oversaw the forces in Rwanda he was given constraints, rules, and boundaries that he couldn't cross and because of those unreasonable rules and boundaries he had to watch hundreds of thousands of people be killed. However, he decided to push the rules and boundaries to do what was right and saved hundreds if not thousands of lives, but in the end, was relieved of his duty because he wouldn't follow the rules bureaucrats around the world wanted him to. His powerful message applies to all people but made me think about how our industry needs to grow to become stronger.

There was a wide variety of breakout sessions that participants could attend, from crop biotechnology to animal production and everything in between. I think the most memorable of the breakout sessions for me was the presentation done by Andrew Campbell on farm advocacy. Advocating for Agriculture is something we hear about every day. With the tag lines of "we need to educate our consumers" and "we need to get consumers engaged in agriculture", his reply to this was "your right", but there is more to that. Agriculture needs to understand the consumer before we can begin to engage them or educate them. Andrew spoke about his experience with his twitter handle #farm365, where he challenged himself to post a picture from his diary farm every day for a year. He was bashed, threatened, and even stalked by extremists against agriculture. He learned a lot of lessons which gave him the 'ah ha' moment he was looking for. People want to feel good about what they see, eat, and do. They don't want to hear poor me stories in agriculture, city folks have their own problems to they don't need to hear ours. They want to



see things they feel good about and can understand. One of the examples he gave is that he has started to approach people in grocery stores when he sees them buying milk, and he thanks them for buying it. He then says he produces milk on his farm and that they may be buying milk produced there. This helps create a direct

link from the consumer to the farmer and hopefully making them feel connected to the farm. He challenged everyone to approach consumers and tell them what you grow or produce, not say I'm a grain farmer or a beef producer, because not all consumers understand what you mean by this. If you're a grain grower you produce grain that is used to make bread, beer, pasta etc.

Consumers want to know what you do at a basic level, so when they cook that pasta and eat it they can picture you and your farm with the grain and how good that tastes. It builds trust and respect. Using confusing terms only pushes consumers away. We sometimes forget that what seems like common knowledge to us because we are surrounded by it daily may not be common to everyone. Advocate for agriculture by telling your story, what you do, why you do it, and how it makes your farm a good place to grow food.

Becky McCray also gave a very interesting talk on "Big Ideas in Small Towns: Making Rural Places Open to New Ideas". I went into this one with an open mind and wondering what this session would be all about. It was exactly as the title explained, how to get your community back on the map. She described lots of different scenarios small towns could use to help them attract new businesses and people back to their communities. Some of her ideas are incredible simple, yet very complex in nature. Such as businesses within businesses.

She talked about an old strip mall in a small town of about 2000 people. It had been abandoned, was still structurally sound, but in a bit of a state of disrepair. Someone with the town thought it might be a good idea to open this whole structure up and instead of rent out individual stores, put stores within the walls of the bigger stores. This allowed small businesses with limited inventory to set up shop and pay rent merely on the square footage they occupied. Its essentially a permanent flea market with some bigger venders using larger spaces and smaller ones only occupying a table top. It actually became a revenue generator for the owner of the building. Instead of having five or six stores in this strip mall they have about sixty-five or seventy at any given time. During the summer this permanent flea market brought people in from neighbouring towns and tourists from the city.

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The businesses were successful, and now they have outside seasonal vendors in the parking lot and it is a destination for shoppers. She also mentioned there has been a big shift away from big box stores, back to the small-town mom and pop shops.

People like the idea of hand made clothing, jewelry, and food and supporting a local owner. Many of the big box stores are building small depot type stores and ditching the big warehouse spaces they used to have. Internet shopping is also helping that phenomenon. People can buy things and have it delivered to their door, so why go anywhere. There is also a shift away from big city living. People want the slower pace of small town rural life. Bedroom communities that were a few hundred or thousand people are growing exponentially, because people don't want to live in big city centers. From what Becky McCray said, now is the time to get creative and put your small town back on the map.

Another session I attended was a weather talk by Drew Lerner. He is an agricultural meteorologist with World Weather Inc. I heard him speak last year at Farmtech and he was pretty much dead on with last years' weather prediction.

He stated the weather for 2016 was going to be a very dry spring, but the rains would hit early summer and they wouldn't quit. Also fall was going to be a wet one, which I think most of us can attest to that one. So, I went to see what he thought would be in store for 2017. His prediction is that we will have a relatively dry remainder to winter. He doesn't think we will see any more major snow events. We may get a few snow squall storms and a few centimeters here or there, but nothing too major.

This spring should be a fairly early one, he believes it will warm up a bit early and be a dry April and May and be dry for seeding. As for the summer months, he said it will be a 'normal' year. In this case, we will have adequate moisture, but it will probably come mostly in the form of thunderstorms rather than big multi-day rain events. He also says it will be warm but not too hot, just average. The fall he believes will be a dry one through September and October, and should be a good harvest season. However, November and into next year, snow and lots of it. However, that's a year away and lots can happen between now and then. So, I'll be watching the weather and see how close he came to predicting this year.

Farmtech 2017 was a great conference. There was so much more that I could talk about, but couldn't fit it in. The tradeshow was filled with companies and individuals from all aspects of agriculture.

The Be Grain Safe Program had demonstrations of grain entrapment rescues, which none of us will hopefully have to use but its nice to know help is there if needed. You can never be too safe.

The experience and expertise that was walking around that place was incredible. It just goes to show agriculture is alive and doing well, but is changing rapidly.

To stay current and viable you must be willing to change, adapt, and grow. Not just on your farm, but in the way we continue to do business as an industry.

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2016/2017

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- increase calf and yearling weight gains or cow body condition scores.
- extend pasture productivity beyond the “summer slump” of tame grasses.
- fix nitrogen to reduce fertilizer costs and increase forage production and profit.
- provide root systems to different profiles in the soil, therefore increasing utilization of soil moisture and increasing carbon capture depths.
- are more drought averse.

AAC Mountainview Sainfoin...

- is a no-bloat legume containing tannins that can greatly reduce the risk of bloat from alfalfa when in a mixed stand.
- was developed by Dr. Surya Acharya, AAFC, Lethbridge.
- has a similar growth and regrowth pattern to alfalfa.
- competes with alfalfa, ensuring it stays in the pasture longer to provide bloat control.

Take away lesson from 2016 field days: **When establishing forages, seedbed preparation is key.** Ensure the seedbed is firm prior to seeding using harrow packers or equivalent.

“After close to thirty years working as a forage specialist, I don’t think I have ever seen a seedbed too firm prior to seeding a perennial forage stand. But you do need some loose dirt to cover the seed.” Lorne Klein, Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture



Sainfoin & Alfalfa Seedlings - Consort, AB

Goal was 60% legume establishment in the pasture.

Ultimate Pasture Mix consists of 30% AAC Mountainview Sainfoin and 70% Haygrazer Alfalfa.

Remaining 40% grass/legume was choice of the producer.

In cooperation with ten forage and applied research associations, thirteen producers across Alberta, through the Agricultural Research and Extension Council of Alberta (ARECA), and in consultation with high legume grazing mentors with financial and economic analysis, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry (AF) staff are coordinating a two year field trial to demonstrate the potential of sainfoin in a high-legume pasture mix on field scale level.

2016 Summer Events

During the summer of 2016, ten events were co-hosted with project teams. In addition to hearing from cooperating producers and seeing the progress in the fields, grazers with many years of involvement in using higher legume pastures came to share their experiences and answer questions at each field day. These "Grazing Mentors" had provided multiple years of economic and financial data to the AgriProfit\$ program for analysis and could speak to not only their experience, but also how it affected their financial bottom line.

Site Establishment Update (Sept 2016)

2 Rated 'Excellent'
2 Rated 'Okay'
5 Rated 'Fair'
2 Rated 'Poor'

33% of attendees gained confidence in establishing a high legume pasture in their operations.



* forage stand touch-up happened in one stand in fall 2016. Other stands will be touched-up Spring 2017.

Field day participants were provided a questionnaire at the start of the day asking how confident they were about grazing high legume pastures. Below is a summary:

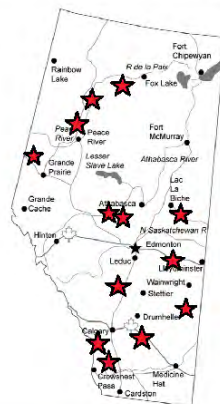


After the field day an evaluation was provided and participants were asked how confident they were about grazing high legume pastures. Below is the summary



Stand Establishment Forage Plant Count:

Excellent = 6+ forage plants/ft2
Okay = 3-5 forage plants/ft2
Fair = 2 forage plants/ft2
Poor is less than 1 forage plant/ft2



Province-wide Project

FPGA: Longview
FPGA: Gleichen
MARA: Fort Vermilion
MARA: Buffalo Head Prairie
GRO: Fort Assiniboine
WCFA: Barrhead
GWFA: Lacombe
LARA: Iron River
CARA: Consort
PCBFA: Fourth Creek
BRRG: Holden
NPARA: Manning
FS: Gratum



Sheep grazing the newly established site at Stein's (West Central Forage Association) November 2016. The stand establishment is rated as excellent. No sheep bloated.

50% attended the field days because they heard about it through their local forage/research association. We are working in the right circles to effectively extend this information.



Over 300 attendees at the 10 events.



67% of cow-calf owners attending had less than 100 cows.



80%

of attendees were very satisfied with the event and no one was

Reproduction and grazing were designed for each other

By Jim Bauer

For optimum energy utilization, the cows' reproductive cycle should coincide with the grass production cycle.



Barb and Jim Bauer

A study from the United Kingdom shows that calving or lambing outside of the seasonal cycle of pasture production can increase costs by up to 75% over spring calving or lambing. In other words, if we require our cows to calve in the winter months, it is going to cost more than if the herd calves in the spring. As ranchers and farmers go we are a group of people who often would rather be doing the production activities that we love than doing the hard work of bookkeeping and analysis of what pays and what doesn't in our operations. I include myself in this group as I too would rather be checking the grass and cattle, building a fence, riding my horse etc. etc. than working in the office!

I submit to you that we should start to look at this by asking ourselves what business are we really in. When asked what I do for a living I usually respond that I'm in the cattle business. Or I say I'm a rancher because people seem to know what that means. But when it comes right down to it, we are really in the business of turning energy into cattle. It's kind of awkward to say that, so I doubt many of us will, but for the sake of this discussion about calving in the spring verses calving in winter it is good to recognize that every day we are working at converting some form of energy into cattle that we can sell.

I believe the benefits from controlled grazing are much greater if the reproductive cycle of a herd is paralleling the natural grass production cycle.

The matching of ones' calving season with the onset of green grass is one of the principle factors to profitability for grass based farms and ranches. If you match your herds' nutritional requirements with the natural grass production cycle you will

have an abundance of high quality grass available when your cow needs it most. This direct harvest of high quality feed through grazing at a time when it is needed most is what makes it more profitable than calving at a time of year when more supplementation is required.

The late Allan Nation, editor of the *Stockman/Grass Farmer* pointed out the importance of having a breeding herd "in sync" with nature. In his book *Quality Pasture* he points out that matching an animal's breeding and lactation curve to the curve of pasture production is still the "single most important management input in grassland farming and usually the one most resisted by new graziers and quite often the last implemented".

He goes on to say that this is a cause for "grazier depression" because people who go to controlled grazing enjoy initial benefits but hamper themselves from significant cost reductions by not lining up their herds' reproductive needs with grass production. In other words, they are enjoying some growing season benefits to better pasture management but still have high supplementation costs to calve in the winter and breed while cows require added energy through expensive stored feeds and concentrates. The energy inputs to support a cow for a year are far higher for one that is calving in the winter than one that is calving in the spring.

Energy

Although the energy in feed is one of the major forms of energy involved in producing a calf it is certainly not the only form. In its raw form the energy that ends up in feed comes from the sun through photosynthesis, i.e. solar.

Cowboy Economics, a Comparison of Two Herds

Let's do some "cowboy economics" and compare two cow herds located in Alberta. We'll compare two identical herds of the same breed and the same size. Imagine they are the same cows on the same ranch. Why not think of your own place and your own cows. Let's face it, we all have the best cows and no one knows your place like you! The only difference is that Herd 1 will begin calving February 1 and Herd 2 on *May 1.

Feed Energy

It takes a lot of energy to produce a calf every year. Feed energy is made up of all 4 forms: Solar, fossil, animal and human. Solar to grow the pasture and crops, fossil to harvest and deliver feed, animal energy is spent while grazing, breeding etc. and human energy is spent putting it all together.

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Of course, other nutritional elements are required. For simplicity let's just compare the energy required by the two herds.

Gestation

A cow's energy requirement starts to climb as she enters the last trimester of gestation. For the cow calving on February 1, that is November 1, which corresponds with the start of the shortest day length and the coldest weather of the year. Energy requirement really begins to climb in the last 6 weeks pre-calving, mid-December for the February calving herd. Average monthly temperatures where I live at Acme are November -4.9, December -10.2 and January -13.2.

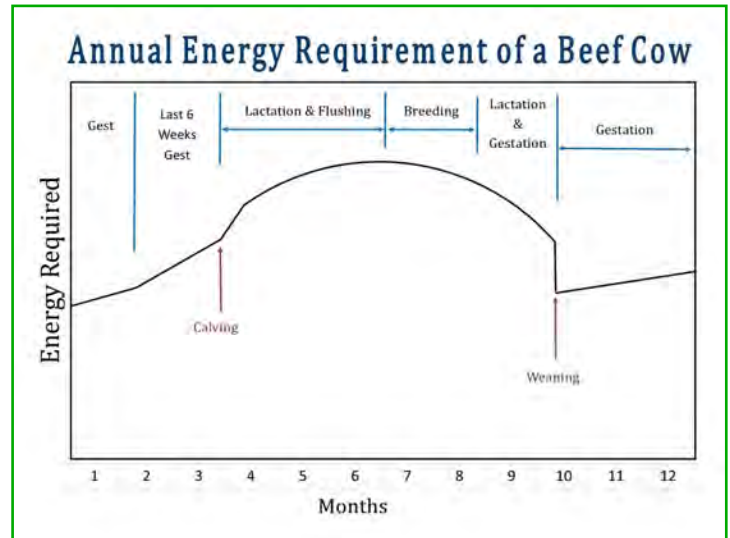
Meanwhile the cow calving on May 1 can be maintained on lower energy feed for these cold months. This cow doesn't enter her last trimester until February 1 when the days are lengthening and temperatures begin to moderate. And when her requirements really start the uphill climb the calendar is at March 15 and winter is on its way out. As this herd's energy requirements continue to rise, the days are rapidly getting longer and warmer. Average monthly temperatures at Acme then are February -7.1, March -2.9, April 4.3.

It is easy to see from these temperature statistics that energy required for maintenance and fetal growth will be less for the May calving herd. In the last 30 days of pregnancy there is a 17.5-degree average warmer temperature between April and January where I live. In cowboy economic terms the May herd needs less feed to get to calving time than the February herd.

Fat: The hay stack on the back

Another form of animal energy is fat. Back fat is a very important form of energy and could be referred to as the hay stack on the back. If a cow is in Body Condition Score 3+ going into winter she requires less energy from feed to stay warm, i.e. will eat less than her skinnier herd mate. Fat can be used for maintenance, milk production and gestation. However, feed energy is the only means for weight gain and therefore a rebuilding of fat reserves. It is easiest for a cow to gain weight before she calves and begins lactation.

If the February calving cow needs to gain weight prior to calving she must be fed energy in excess of her maintenance and gestation requirement during the coldest time of the year. This will usually require grain added to the diet and be costly. If the May-calving cow is grazing reasonable quality stockpiled grass while the pasture is greening up in April, that cow can gain weight very quickly before she calves. Also, they don't all calve on Day 1 so cows calving a couple weeks into May can easily improve body condition score from late March to when they calve on "cheap" grass alone.



Calving & Lactation

Immediately following calving, a cow's energy requirement takes another jump as she begins to lactate and her body recovers from calving. In warm weather a lactating cow needs about 25-30% more energy per day than a non-milking cow. In cold weather that increases to 40-60% over the non-milking cow. Energy requirements continue to climb through the flushing period and peak about 60 days post-calving at peak lactation.

The cow calving on February 1 at Acme is facing an average temperature for the month of -7.1 with daily average lows and highs at -13.9 and -0.3. The May-calving herd is looking at an average temperature of 9.6 for the month and 1.8 and 17.4 degrees for monthly average daily lows and highs. This is a significant disadvantage in temperature that the February-calving cow and her new born calf have to contend with over the May pair.

Besides feed energy and fat there are other forms and amounts of energy required to successfully calve out these two herds.

Human energy: there will be a higher labour cost associated with calving Herd 1 due to cold weather. More time and effort spent checking and moving cows and calves in and out of shelter etc. are the norm for winter calving. It doesn't matter in my mind if it is paid labour or unpaid, it will cost more to calve the February herd than the May herd.

The added labour cost may only be in your own physical energy, draining your "personal" account. Temperature is one thing for the rancher to deal with but another big factor to make life easier is that on February 1 there is only about eight hours of daylight and on May 1 there is almost 15 hours. Longer days makes caring for the herd easier.

Fossil energy: It is likely that more fuel is used calving the February herd for things like; additional feeding, bedding, heating a calving barn etc.

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A man-made shelter and dry bedding during winter provide comforts that nature offers free of charge in spring.

Capital investment will likely be significantly higher for the February herd for buildings, pens, shelters and equipment. This is not to say that the May calving herd doesn't need shelter.

The threat of a spring storm is real and can be devastating. However, this herd is likely calving on pasture with stockpiled growth from the previous year making a nice bed for newborns. Also, well-planned calving areas could include natural shelter from bush and the use of portable or permanent windbreaks in the calving areas.

Breeding

Breeding will start about April 25 for Herd 1. To achieve high conception rates this herd will need a high plane of nutrition supplied from expensive stored feeds probably including grain. As breeding will start about July 25 for Herd 2, its requirements would be well supplied. From pasture alone, this herd should flush nicely with cheap grass.

Health

Then there is the question of herd health, such as scours and pneumonia, a warm dry environment is a good place for a newborn. Calf sheds and dry bedding are an attempt to supply what nature provides free of charge in the spring. Scours is often referred to as a management disease.

We have the knowledge and technology to minimize and treat scours in Herd 1 but the real issue is treatment cost, labour and lost performance. A calf that is set back due to illness usually does not perform as well as if it had never gotten sick. Sunshine and dry

ground help create a healthy environment for a newborn calf, ultraviolet light from the sun kills E. coli.

Summary

Simply put, breeding your herd to calve in February will mean your farm or ranch will need to produce more feed to run the same number of cows or purchase additional forage or grain than if your herd calved in May.

The additional costs to raise a calf for Herd 1 are in feed, facilities, equipment, fuel, labour and stress on both the animals and the operator.

I don't know if all of these factors will add up to the 75% cited in the UK research, but one should recognize these costs as profit thieves and sure signs of inefficient energy conversion. The best way to lower the cost of raising a calf is to have the cow do as much of its own forage harvesting as possible. The cowboy economics are improved the more we can replace fossil and human energy with animal energy while harvesting solar energy.

We should strive for year-round grazing with beef cows as a goal and supplement during times of bad weather when it is not possible for an animal to graze.

With the understanding that reproduction and grazing were designed for each other, it is possible to align your herd's reproductive cycle with the yearly grass production cycle to become an efficient converter of energy into cattle for more profit.

*Note about the calving start dates: It was not my intention to imply that May 1 was the optimum date to begin calving in Alberta. February and May were only used for comparison to illustrate how the cows' requirements change at different times of the year. If you live in a part of the country that green up comes earlier or later, use that as your guide to when you should consider calving.



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DEADLINE REMINDER: WLP-IP-Calf is available to purchase from Feb 1 to May 31.





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Grey Wooded Forage Association

Creating an Awareness of Forages

Grey Wooded Forage Association Mission Statement

To promote environmental & economically sustainable forage and agricultural practices"

Grey Wooded Forage Association Vision Statement

"The community is engaged in regenerative agricultural production methods"

Interested in joining the GWFA Board of Directors?

★ *These are some of the things you can expect as a GWFA Board Member*

- Social interactions and networking with Industry representatives, GWFA members, staff and other board members at our events and meetings.
- Reach out to the membership to advertise events, get project ideas, receive feedback, and engage membership. Also, increase the awareness of GWFA by bringing in new members or partner organizations. Represent your community.
- Get valuable experiences and information. This is a great opportunity to expand your resume, but also tap into resources and information you may not otherwise have access to.
- Make a difference within the organization by contributing at board meetings, committee meetings and with ARECA. This will also give you greater exposure to other facets of the agricultural industry.
- Opportunity to improve yourself professionally by enhancing your leadership skills and industry knowledge. Also, take in learning opportunities at our events and meeting but also educational experiences from outside sources.
- Be involved with different committees and develop unique events and projects by sharing your knowledge and experiences to provide leading edge information to our membership.
- Most of the events hosted by GWFA will be free to board members. Participation and attendance are very important.
- Be involved in the governance and strategic direction of GWFA. Ask questions and challenge the direction of the organization by improving bylaws and policies. Also, provide clear strategy and direction to the Manager and Staff.
- Be an active participant in the three hour monthly board meetings. Offer ideas, experiences and knowledge to shape our organization, but also protect our organizational financial standing, membership investment and capital assets.

Cattle marketing on your terms



CATTLE MARKETING WORKSHOP

Special guest speakers from AgriClear, Boehringer Ingelheim (Canada) and Merial will be presenting and discussing topics such as:

- Feeder cattle marketing tips
- How to buy & sell your cattle on a secure transactional platform offering efficiency and certainty
- Marketing calves as Express Verified, where cow/calf producers are able to guarantee feedlot operations BVD free calves through CCIA
- “LongRange” dewormer for cattle on pasture

Date & Time	Location	Register
March 15, 2017 1:00 – 4:00pm Registration at 1pm	Holiday Inn & Suites, Red Deer, Gasoline Alley Room: Promenade C	Call 403-844-2645 by March 10, 2017



**Boehringer
Ingelheim**



AgriClear
TMX NGX



**Grey Wooded
Forage Association**
*Creating an Awareness
of Forages*

Going into Winter Grazing: Why it Matters to *Manage*

by: Karin Lindquist, Forage-Beef Specialist for Ag-Info Centre (310-FARM)



Since I had the pleasure of speaking at Grey Wooded Forage Association's *Extended Winter Grazing Seminar* on Tuesday, February 14th, I thought it would be worth the while provide an article for the February/March issue of the Blade on just why management is so important when it comes to winter grazing.

You have so many winter grazing choices to make when it comes down to the nutshell of winter grazing: bale grazing, swath grazing, corn grazing, stockpiled grazing, and crop-aftermath grazing. It's a whole lot of grazing.

So what's grazing without management? Well, it's just grazing; merely letting a bunch of cows onto a field or pasture and letting them eat to their hearts desire without having to move them around for a few months. But that's no way to go.

If we don't manage those cows, with regards to winter grazing (management also applies to summer grazing but that's another article entirely for another date...), we end up with problems that start with the animals and end with the feed. Problems include:

1. Acidosis/grain-overload
2. Compaction
3. Feed waste of at least 40% or more.

Management for winter grazing is intensive, because you must set up electric fencing and water sources (if snow isn't enough) so that you're moving animals every 1 to 3 days, and getting them to consume 80% of what's there.

You also need to do a bit of math so that you know, with how many cows you have plus their weights and the amount of feed you have, just what size of "paddock" is needed for your herd per grazing session. My rule of thumb for swath grazing is 50 head (1400 lb cows) per *half* acre per day.

Without moving animals regularly, you end up with serious digestive problems in your cows, particularly with corn grazing and swath grazing. It's purely habitual (and trial by fire, so to speak) that cows will go for the most tasty morsels first—grains on the swathed forages, corn cobs—before they consider eating the more stemmy portion of the crop. Without any control, this eager consumption of the grain portion of the crop will cause cows to develop grain-overload, frothy bloat, and acidosis.

On the opposite spectrum, once those cows have finished with the grains they begin to pick on the stems. The stems of a swath-grazed crop are very low in protein, low in energy, basically straw.

Compaction raises its ugly head, slowing intake and digestibility to the point cows can't eat anymore because they constantly have gut-fill. They starve with full stomachs, in other words. A lack of management begets serious problems with feed waste.

This isn't a problem with just swath or corn grazing, but all types of winter grazing. I recommend you memorize the phrase, "kitchen first day, bedroom second day, bathroom third day." In other words, what they don't eat first, they trample, lay on, and poop/pee on, reducing feed available for them to eat. You wouldn't want to eat what you used as a toilet, so neither should they!

By managing your cows by limiting access with hot-wire, you significantly reduce feed waste, and force all cows to eat almost equal parts of the feed that's available to all them on a daily basis. This proves to be beneficial for the health of your cows, and certainly optimizes your feed resources by getting animals to utilize as much as logically possible.

GALLOWAY BULL SALE

Marble on Grass – under 18 months



Online Bidding March 5-8, 2017

Live on the Internet. Live Audio. Video. Bidding and Accounting. **LiveAuctions.TV**

7:00 PM MARCH 8, 2017

**One Additional Inch of Hair
Reduces Winter Feed Costs 25%**

Sale information posted on
www.bigdealgalloways.com

Russel Horvey, Delburne, AB.
(403)749-2780 or (403)302-8175
Email: horvey@telusplanet.net

Grey Wooded Forage Association

2017/2018 Memberships

Memberships are available now for \$20.00,
and run from April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018.

For more information, call 403-844-2645.

*Membership is open to anyone interested in forage production and grazing
management in an economically and environmentally sustainable way.*

Membership Benefits:

- Receive discounts on courses, seminars, workshops, and tours when discounts are offered
- Farm calls at \$100/visit and free consultation by phone, email, or office visit, on grazing management and any other forage production questions, effective immediately.
- Receive "The Blade" monthly via a link sent to you by email each month - or - Receive a printed copy of "The Blade" in the mail monthly for just \$10/year printing/postage fee. (In addition to the \$20/year membership fee)
- Receive up-to-date information on GWFA activities via "The Blade", the GWFA website, and by email.

*Please fill out and mail the portion below with a cheque for \$20,
or \$30 (\$10 printing/postage fee for The Blade added) to:*

Grey Wooded Forage Association
Box 1448, Rocky Mtn House, AB, T4T 1B1

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY:

Renewal _____ or New Member _____	Your Preference: Email _____ Canada Post _____
Name/Company Name: _____	Phone: _____
Address: _____	Mobile Phone: _____
Town/City: _____	Email: _____
Province & Postal Code: _____	Confirm Email: _____

Please give us an idea of what area of forage production you are interested in: (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Controlled Grazing & Pasture Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Growing Annual Forages for Silage or Greenfeed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Growing Annual Forages for Extended Grazing or Swath Grazing | <input type="checkbox"/> Pasture Rejuvenation or Renovation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soil Biology | <input type="checkbox"/> Low Cost Cow/Calf Production |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Growing Hay | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Sustainability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ration Balancing | <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Sustainability |

Comments: _____

