Grey Wooded Forage Association

The Blade

"Creating an Awareness of Forages"

JANUARY 2013

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Photo credit: Duane McCartney

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Upcoming events:

Contact us to read 'The Blade' online on our new website:
www.greywoodedforageassociation.com
*Email us for a username/password and enjoy reading 'The Blade' anywhere!
* Restricted to members only!

gwfa1@telus.net

'Like' Grey Wooded Forage Association on Facebook and enjoy viewing our latest photos and hear about upcoming events!

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May the new year be happy, healthy and prosperous for all of you!

Manager's Notes:

By Albert Kuipers

This is the time of the year when many of us have set, or are in the process of setting goals for the coming year. Some of these goals are brand new. Others are about improving some aspect of what you're already doing.

For some, goals are mostly a wish list, or new years resolutions that are abandoned shortly after the new year begins. Goals should be much more than that. A goal must be the desired result on which you stay focused as you work your way through the many activities that get you there. It has been said, and proven, that anyone who has ever been successful has had clear, written goals.

Thus, a goal must be clearly written and always in front of you so you can stay focused, even when the going gets tough. There are always many diversions and pitfalls that threaten to steer you off course.

Make sure that your goals pass the SMART test. They must be specific, not wishy-washy or a fantasy, but real and measureable, the second part of the SMART test.

They must be achievable, not so far out there that they truly are only a fantasy. You should be able to see a logical path to your goals.

Your goals must be relevant to what you do, what your purpose is. They must clearly be the results you want to achieve.

There must be a time-frame or a deadline for your goals. Goals without deadlines are only dreams, or fantasies.

Setting goals for yourself, or your business is integral to success, and you must own your goals. It's like choosing a place to travel to.

Once you've set a goal you need to develop your plan of how to get there. Lets say you decide your goal is to go to an address in Saskatoon and you don't know how to get there, but you know it's somewhere east of here.

You could start out driving east and you will eventually get on the right road to Saskatoon. You will likely get on some roads that take you in different directions, taking a lot more time to get there than necessary.

Now, if you pull out your trusty Alberta/Saskatchewan map, you chart your route to Saskatoon and pick out the shortest route. Or, you could turn on your gps, enter the specific address in Saskatoon and follow its directions, first to Saskatoon and then the shortest, or fastest route to the specific address that is your goal, or destination.

When your goals are clear and specific, developing strategies to get there will be like charting a route on a map, or following the directions on your gps.

OK, so you've set some goals for your forage and livestock business. While you can see the path ahead of you, you see that you need some knowledge, or skills to get there.

If there are any ways that I can help you gain knowledge, develop skills and help you chart the course, please don't hesitate to call me. Forage production and grazing management consulting is a free service to GWFA members and could be a huge value for your $20 membership fee. Not a member? We can sign you up at the time of your first consultation.

I look forward to serving you well by helping your get the knowledge and skills to keep you on the straight and narrow path to your goals.

Albert.

Director's Corner:

Hi, my name is Bob Aasman. I farm just north of Rocky Mountain House. The part I like about being on the GWFA Board is seeing all the projects and what works and doesn't work. One of the newest potential project of interest to me is some small plot research on sainfoin, alfalfa and cicer milkvetch we're planning on doing with Dr. Surya Acharya from the Lethbridge Research Centre.

If you have been using any varieties of alfalfa that seem to be hardy and thrive in our climate, please call Albert at the GWFA office. We would like to put some of these in our small plots as well.

Bob Aasman

We need your help!

All you guys who swath graze, could you please let me know what cereal forage species you prefer, and what varieties do you prefer, or have used, and why.

We need this information to contribute to forage and beef research at the Lacombe Research Centre.

Thanks, *Albert.*

VISION STATEMENT

GWFA – The centre of choice for gathering and dispersing of forage and livestock information, providing a strong link with producers and the research community

MISSION STATEMENT

To enhance awareness of the organization as an information exchange centre, illustrating forage and livestock production practices that are environmentally and economically sustainable for the agricultural community.

Approved May 2012

Comparison of Swath Grazing and Dry Lot Feeding for Backgrounding Calves

Backgrounding is an important part of the life cycle of a beef animal destined for the plate. It covers the time from weaning to the finishing feedlot. The main goal of backgrounding is to grow these calves to their optimum frame size before going into the finishing stage.

Traditionally most calves are born in spring, go to pasture with their mothers and go into a backgrounding feedlot after weaning. Some cow/calf producers background their own calves, some sell their calves to backgrounding feedlots and some retain ownership while the animals are custom fed in a backgrounding feedlot.

Not so traditional summer and fall born calves often stay with their mothers through part of the winter, after which they are backgrounded in a feedlot and often on pasture. These animals would go into finishing lots in the fall.

So that's a bit of a description of what backgrounding is about. The big problem in this day and age, is that feeding cattle in feedlot pens is faced with increasing input costs that are reducing profit margins and even going into negative margins.

The big challenge is to find, or develop backgrounding systems that get the job done at a considerably lower cost than feeding in pens.

Well, it so happens that I received an email stating that new research papers had been added to foragebeef.ca. One of these research papers just happened to deal with this very subject.

A research project had been done in Saskatchewan over the last three years that compared two swath grazing systems with traditional backgrounding of calves in feedlot pens. If you want to read the whole research paper, look for "**Comparison of Alternative Backgrounding Systems on Beef Calf Performance, Feedlot Finishing Performance, Carcass Traits, and System Cost of Gain**".

The idea is to give producers another set of tools to make decisions on how to background calves, taking a look at swath grazing vs. pen feeding. This project certainly helps us start down that path and, hopefully, we will see much more research done on swath grazing for backgrounding using a variety of annual crops, and maybe even perennials. What we need is information that will help us select appropriate forage species and varieties based on a wide variety of agro-climatic growing conditions.

Now, the objective of this project done in Saskatchewan was to compare three backgrounding systems, one using barley for swath grazing, one using millet for swath grazing and one using grass-legume hay in feedlot pens. This trial was conducted at the Western Beef Development Centre's Termuende Research Ranch in east-central Saskatchewan.

Anyhow, they seeded 20 acres of Ranger Barley and 20 acres of Golden German Millet each spring for the three years of the project. Then in the fall of each year, they divided each into two 10 acre paddocks using portable electric fencing.

Each year 120 late September weaned Black Angus calves, split evenly between steers and heifers, were split up between the three backgrounding systems. All animals were vaccinated and were sorted into the three treatments to have the best uniformity between herds as possible.

The barley was swathed at soft dough stage and the millet was swathed at 30% heading. Dry matter (DM) yield was determined by weight 25 samples that consisted of all the material in one linear meter of swathed forages.

Residual dry matter was measured in the same way after the swaths were grazed. From this they could determine a decent estimate of dry matter intake.

For the calves in the feedlot pens, the coarsely chopped hay was fed once a day. This amount was recorded daily and any wastage of feed by the calves was accounted for in determining the dry matter intake for them.

Samples from the barley swaths, millet swaths and the grass-legume hay feed tested and that information together with the dry matter intake measurements resulted in the value shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Effect of backgrounding system on estimated DMI, consumed nutrients, and beef calf performance over 3 yr

	Backgrounding system[1]				
Item	BAR	MILL	DL	SEM	*P*-value
DMI, kg/d	7.76	6.81	7.53	0.447	0.32
CP, kg/d	0.92	0.90	0.75	0.105	0.19
NDF, kg/d	3.25	3.16	3.84	0.286	0.23
TDN, kg/d	4.28	3.51	3.89	0.518	0.27
DE, MJ/d	76.31	61.25	68.65	8.116	0.13
Performance[2]					
Initial BW, kg	207.1	207.3	207.7	8.46	0.99
Final BW, kg	288.1[a]	269.4[b]	290.7[a]	7.65	0.01
ADG, kg/d	0.8[a]	0.6[b]	0.8[a]	0.03	<0.01
BW change, kg	77.9[a]	59.0[b]	79.9[a]	4.39	<0.01

[a,b]Means within a row with different superscripts differ ($P < 0.05$).

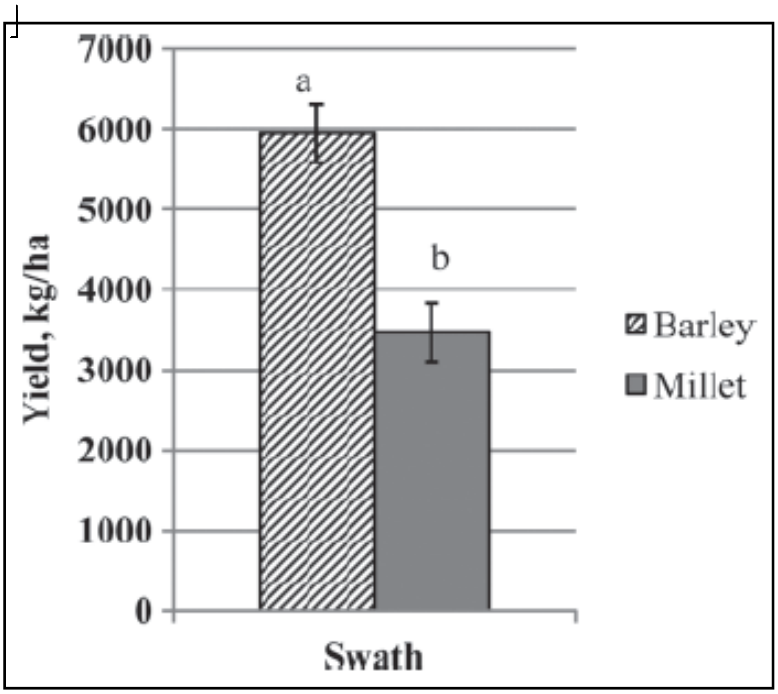
[1]BAR = swathed barley grazing; MILL = swathed millet grazing; DL = drylot pen feeding.

[2]4% pencil shrink applied to all BW.

All animals in the trial were weighed on two consecutive days at the beginning and end of the trial, and every 21 days throughout the trial. Weather conditions were also recorded throughout the trial.

After backgrounding on the swaths was completed, all animals were fed a grass-legume hay plus a supplement for 20 to 30 days before going into the finishing phase at the University of Saskatchewan's Beef Research Unit.

Determination of the costs of production included all the cropping costs, equipment costs and labour costs from the forage crop establishment to the finished animals going to slaughter. All animal performance data was collected to compare animal performance during the backgrounding and all the way through the finishing stage. After slaughter, even carcass characteristics were compared between the three groups.



So here's what happened. Barley yielded better than millet and TDN was higher in the barley than in the millet as well.

By the time the animals went into the feedlot, calves in each backgrounding group weighed about the same. There was also virtually no difference in weights between the groups when the animals had completed the finishing stage.

So we could say that the choice of swath grazing for backgrounding didn't have any impact on animal performance when compared with pen fed calves.

Table 3. Effect of backgrounding system on feedlot performance of beef calves over 3 yr

	Backgrounding system[1]				
Item	BAR	MILL	DL	SEM	*P*-value
Performance					
Initial BW, kg	323.8[a]	307.3[b]	320.8[a]	5.85	<0.01
Final BW, kg	602.1	595.7	601.3	9.78	0.74
ADG, kg/d	1.63	1.65	1.61	0.04	0.59
ADG[2]					
ADG, d 1 to 28	0.49	0.49	0.47	0.04	0.86
ADG, d 29 to 56	0.39	0.41	0.42	0.02	0.44
ADG, d 57 to 84	0.46	0.52	0.47	0.03	0.08
ADG, d 85 to 112	0.45	0.42	0.45	0.03	0.32
DMI, kg/d	11.46	11.46	11.40	0.16	0.88
Feed:gain	7.02	6.92	7.03	0.12	0.50
Rib fat,[3] mm					
Initial	5.79	4.99	5.09	0.79	0.46
Final	12.15	11.75	11.55	0.34	0.39
Change	6.30	6.30	6.20	0.89	0.99
Rump fat,[4] mm					
Initial	60.02	57.63	60.69	2.02	0.54
Final	90.64	88.50	91.60	1.26	0.22
Change	28.50	28.85	28.40	2.50	0.98

[a,b]Means within a row with different superscripts differ ($P < 0.05$).

[1]BAR = swathed barley grazing; MILL = swathed millet grazing; DL = drylot pen feeding.

[2]ADG as percentage of mean BW.

[3]Ultrasound measurements of subcutaneous fat thickness.

[4]Ultrasound measurements of longissimus dorsi area.

Dry matter intake was also pretty much the same for all three backgrounding systems. Please keep in mind that we could get winter storm conditions that could seriously reduce dry matter intake in swath grazing systems. Not having a back-up plan could seriously impact animal performance and animal welfare.

Now for the production costs comparisons. Feed cost for the calves grazing barley swaths was the lowest at $0.92/hd/day. The feed cost for millet came in at $1.04/hd/day. This was due to higher production costs for millet over barley, and lower yield than barley.

The feed cost for the pen fed calves came to $1.22/hd/day. The research team noted that the cost of the grass-legume hay was high because it was purchased rather than home grown. I would think that value of home grown hay would be the same because it should be valued at what you could receive for it if you choose to sell it, rather than feed it.

Total yardage costs were calculated for each backgrounding group. Yardage costs for the two swath grazing groups were pretty much equal. They were, however, 50% less than the yardage costs of the pen fed group of calves.

Table 5. Effect of backgrounding systems on cost of gain over 3 yr

	Backgrounding system[1]				
Item	BAR	MILL	DL	SEM	*P*-value
Backgrounding cost of gain					
Feed cost, $/calf per day	0.92[b]	1.04[ab]	1.22[a]	0.099	0.04
Direct cost, $/calf per day	0.08[b]	0.07[b]	0.09[a]	0.007	<0.01
Yardage cost, $/calf per day	0.38[b]	0.37[b]	0.75[a]	0.037	<0.01
Total production cost, $/calf per day	1.38[b]	1.48[b]	2.06[a]	0.007	<0.01
Cost of gain, $/kg	1.70[b]	2.45[a]	2.47[a]	0.160	<0.01
Feedlot cost of gain					
Feed cost, $/calf per day	2.43	2.43	2.43	0.047	0.99
Direct cost, $/calf per day	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.002	0.68
Yardage cost, $/calf per day	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.028	1.00
Total production cost, $/calf per day	2.88	2.88	2.88	0.047	0.99
Cost of gain, $/kg	1.64	1.63	1.66	0.020	0.12

[a,b]Means within a row with different superscripts differ ($P < 0.05$).

[1]BAR = swathed barley grazing; MILL = swathed millet grazing; DL = drylot pen feeding.

All in all, while animal performance was equal between all three groups of calves, the total cost of production was 49% higher for the group of calves fed in the feedlot pens.

So, what does this mean for you guys who are backgrounding calves, or considering backgrounding calves? Backgrounding on barley swaths could work well at a considerably lower cost than backgrounding in feedlot pens. A very important consideration would be how to deal with winter storm events, or freezing rain capping the swaths.

What about other annual forage crops, like triticale? What about mixtures, like maybe a cereal and a legume. What about perennial forages, or mixtures of perennial and annual forages. As long as you can get the nutrient density of the feed in the swaths and the dry matter intake of the calves into the range where animal performance equals that of pen fed calves, you should be OK.

That's the production side of it. The big questions will always be, "Does it pay?" and "What risks are involved?"

By Albert Kuipers

Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference

Red Deer, Alberta | February 19 – 22, 2013

Engaging People in Conservation

On February 19 - 22, 2013 the Alberta Prairie Conservation Forum and the Alberta Society of Professional Biologists will jointly host the 10th Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference (PCESC). This major North American conference is held every three years, rotating between Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The conference will bring together decision-makers, researchers, consultants, industry representatives and community and grass-roots groups along with farmers, ranchers, First Nations and other private citizens who have an interest in sustaining prairie ecosystems. The conference theme, ***Engaging People In Conservation,*** recognizes past efforts, supports the identification of current issues, and promotes future work to achieve success with prairie conservation and endangered species management.

For more information and to register go to:

www.pcesc.ca

The organizing partners are:

- the Alberta Prairie Conservation Forum
- the Alberta Society of Professional Biologists.

PRAIRIE CONSERVATION FORUM

ASPB

Big Picture Approach Key to a Successful Grazing System

EFP opens doors for discussion, contributes to total farm sustainability

When it comes to grazing management systems, it's what you leave behind that can make all the difference, and according to Grant Lastiwka, grazing/forage/beef specialist with Alberta Ag-Info Centre in Olds, research in Alberta shows that the most highly-profitable beef producers in the province are those that rely on a long grazing season and a well-managed forage resource.

It's a strategy with proven benefits on many levels — resulting in cows with good body weight, suitable to be rebred; highly productive calves at side, as well as environmental benefits that naturally flow from sound pasture management.

"To me, a grazing season is a 365-day dynamic management plan that flows from one year to the next," Lastiwka explains. "I have to have cattle someplace in spring. I have to have cattle someplace in fall, but I've got to manage those times so that they are times with biological recovery. So those same stands will maintain that vigour, that thickness of green solar panel, and the volume that comes with thickness and height. They will be able to replenish nutrients removed with the grazing bite and to grow roots deep into the soil, replenishing the soil as well."

Overgrazing a profitability pitfall

If producers choose to graze a pasture more than once in a growing season, he says it's crucial that they rest that pasture between grazing incidents so that the green solar panel opportunity, whereby plants create nutrients by harvesting the sun's energy through photosynthesis, is maximized. In an effort to increase profitability by reducing when feeding starts, Lastiwka says producers sometimes overgraze their pastures by leaving animals on them too late into the fall.

"The joke we use is that the cows are left to graze fresh air and sunshine," he says. "Grazing it into the ground to extend your grazing season is the worst thing you can do for profitability in the future. The reality is we are choosing to graze it in a way that we lose some of the more productive and diverse species from the mix leaving us with grazing tolerant species that tend to be less productive, have shallower root systems, are more drought prone, start growing later in the spring and stop growing earlier in the year."

"All of that comes from overgrazing, which, to me, is rebiting a plant before it has had time to recover nutrients lost in the last grazing incident."

A decision to extend the grazing season on overgrazed pastures, in hopes of cutting winter feed expenses, comes at a cost that's evident the following growing season and for years to come.

"If we are going to leave animals out cleaning up those pastures, they're also reducing the number of tillers or plant density in earlier growth that we would be seeing next year," he says. "It's important for producers to realize that you can't get more out of pastures unless you give more to them."

Riparian fencing a management tool

And that doesn't mean completely removing sensitive areas from a grazing system. Lastiwka feels that riparian fencing should be seen as a tool that allows for better management of these highly productive areas. He says if producers understand

Pick a time to graze and set a target for residual forage.

the natural cycles of riparian areas, that knowledge will help them best utilize those resources for grazing. For example, historically, the grazing patterns of nomadic herds were a factor which helped to create the prairies and grasslands as we know them today. Fencing riparian areas completely out of a grazing system can be detrimental because it actually works against the natural cycle of the area.

"We've seen land where there's hardly any new growth until very late in the spring and summer because the density, the mass of dead material that's grown and fallen over in these areas, is so great it prevents the growth of new tillers," he explains. "And that's not a green solar panel that's capturing sunlight, building strong root systems in the soil and allowing for filtration of nutrients coming into it. To me, it limits its ability to function as a filter and ends up being a contaminant."

"In the past, when they're continually accessed, they're degraded. But when they're sporadically accessed with proper recovery in between, they're regenerated."

Lastiwka advises producers to pick the time to graze and to set a target for the amount of residual they want left behind. Again, it all comes down to developing a system of planning — acting, monitoring and revising plans to make desired outcomes happen -- that's based on the specific environment, plants and variable weather conditions of a region.

EFP a starting point for grazing system development

And producers working on developing their grazing systems can rely on a number of resources to help them along the way. He says completing an Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) can help producers look at their operations in a completely different light, can open doors to discussion and can strengthen the sustainability of the entire farm operation. He recommends the web site www.foragebeef.ca, which addresses a variety of issues relevant to producers. He also strongly encourages producers to take advantage of the resources available by being a member of forage and applied research associations throughout the province.

"It's a luxury we have," Lastiwka says. "Alberta has a set of producer organizations with leading edge producers caring and leading the way with critical thought within their organization. They're a resource that's invaluable because of the openness and the sharing that occurs between members of these associations".

More information on EFPs in Alberta is available at www.albertaefp.com.

BATTLE RIVER WATERSHED ALLIANCE

Water Events

Save the date for these upcoming workshops!

Preparing for Extremes: Drought

Wednesday, January 30 *(FREE LUNCH!)*

Forestburg Community Centre, 10am - 3:30pm

Drought is an issue that impacts all areas of life, from food and water security to social and economic prosperity. Join us in working together to develop recommendations and guidelines to help our watershed communities adapt to drought.

Guest speakers from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada with the Invitational Drought Tournament!

Quality Water, Quality Life

Friday, March 1 *(FREE LUNCH!)*

Forestburg Community Centre, 10am - 3:30pm

We all need quality water in order to live quality lives. Come learn more about the state of water quality in the Battle River watershed and explore ways we can work to improve that water quality through non-point source pollution management.

Guest speakers from Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, and more!

Water Management Plan

Tues, March 5: Wainwright, Communiplex, 7:00-9:30pm

Thurs, March 7: Camrose, Edgeworth Centre, 7:00-9:30pm

Tues, March 12: Wetaskiwin, By-The-Lake Park, 7:00-9:30pm

Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development has developed a draft Approved Water Management Plan for the Battle River Basin. *Key recommendations in the Plan include setting a water allocation limit, enabling water licence transfers and establishing a Water Conservation Objective for the watershed. Come learn more and share your thoughts on the draft plan.*

Plan to attend! Workshops are free but pre-registration is appreciated.
Call 780-672-0276 or email sarah@battleriverwatershed.ca to register.

Cowbytes Saves Money on Winter Feeding

From the Dec 31, 2012 Issue of Agri-News

Cowbytes is a cattle ration balancing program developed by Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development. It allows producers to optimize the use of home grown feeds by only purchasing supplements that are necessary or by taking advantage of lower cost alternative feeds or by-products. In this way, producers can often reduce feed costs while meeting production targets or even boosting productivity and profitability.

"The program allows producers to select the type and breeds of cattle they want to feed, and productivity levels based on body weight, average daily gain in growing cattle, or body condition score, stage of gestation or milk production level in cows," says Patrick Ramsey, business development specialist – beef competitiveness with Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development. "Producers can also adjust for climatic conditions such as temperature, wind speed, or mud in pens, as well as for hide thickness and summer or winter hair coat depth that is dry or wet."

The program comes with a feed table based on average values of Alberta feeds. After selecting feeds from the feed table, producers can modify the nutrient content of these feeds based on their own feed test results. Then they enter the amounts fed of the various feeds to balance the ration for energy, protein, major minerals such as calcium and phosphorus, trace minerals such as copper, zinc, manganese and selenium, and vitamins A and E. The program also allows producers to enter water analysis which may affect the feeding program especially in salt and mineral intake.

"Once the ration is balanced producers can create a feed mix, such as a grain mix, or grain/silage/supplement mix, or mineral/salt/vitamin mix, and create batch scale sheets in increments that allow for adjusting the levels of the mix for increased size of the cattle," says Ramsey. "The number of head for the feeding period can also be entered to create a ration summary report of all the feeds used in the various rations for different groups of cattle, to determine the inventory of feeds that will be required. This helps producers to purchase more feed in advance or to sell some animals to match feed inventory with cattle requirements."

One of the new features of Cowbytes Version 5 is a yardage calculator. This allows producers to enter their facility and equipment costs, expected life of these facilities and equipment, expected salvage values, annual interest rates, taxes, insurance and other costs such as vet/med, utilities, repairs, fuel, coral cleaning, labour, additional insurance and interest along with the number of cattle and number of days on feed to determine yardage costs per head per day. This is especially important if producers are over-wintering someone else's cattle on a custom rate per head per day basis as often producers underestimate their yardage costs. The Cowbytes Manual has also been expanded to include everything producers would ever want to know about cattle nutrition while also having a very practical beef ration rules of thumb section.

"By playing with the amounts fed of various combinations of feeds and by-products at different prices, producers can find ways to reduce feed costs while achieving production targets," explains Ramsey. "One time I helped a producer shave off $0.10 per cow per day by cutting back on feeding levels during mid-gestation. For 900 cows for 30 days this amounted to a savings of $2,700. Most producers will easily find $1,000 in feed savings for over-wintering their cattle, by scouting around for some cheaper alternative feeds such as crop residues and by-products, and by using this program to prevent over or under feeding while getting the performance they desire. Boosting your cattle's performance could lead to even greater returns."

To order Cowbytes online, use the following link: http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex12486 . Producers can also order Cowbytes by calling the Alberta Agriculture publications office toll-free at 1-800-292-5697.

To contact Patrick Ramsey, email pat.ramsey@gov.ab.ca or phone 403-652-8303

Albert can help you with ration balancing using Cowbytes. Just give him a call.

This publication is made possible by funding from Alberta Agriculture & Rural Development & Alberta Environment and Water via the Agriculture Opportunities Fund (AOF).

Alberta

Agriculture Opportunity Fund

Draft Beef Cattle Code of Practice Released for Public Comment

(Ottawa) 08 January 2013 – The Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) and the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC) are pleased to announce the launch of the public comment period on the draft Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Beef Cattle. The draft Code can be viewed at nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice/beef-cattle until **March 8, 2013**. Comments must be submitted through the online system at nfacc.ca/codes-ofpractice/beef-cattle and easy to follow instructions are provided.

Cattle producers, consumers, and others with an interest in the welfare of beef cattle, are encouraged to provide input to ensure that this Code reflects a common understanding of beef cattle care expectations and science-based recommended practices in Canada.

A Scientists' Committee report summarizing research on priority welfare topics for beef cattle can be found online alongside the draft Code. This peer-reviewed report aided the discussions of the Code Development Committee as they prepared the draft Code of Practice.

"The Code Development Committee is a great representation of interested stakeholders. This public comment period really allows us to check our work with an even more representative group," said Ryder Lee, CCA Manager of Federal and Provincial Relations. "I encourage producers to weigh in and make their points known as the Code will be an important tool for communicating how beef cattle are raised in Canada. The more producers that review the Code the more certain we can be that the final Code will represent how cattle are raised across Canada."

"The Code process provides an important opportunity for advancing farm animal welfare policy in Canada," said Geoff Urton of the B.C. Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), which represents the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies. "We hope to receive broad input both from industry professionals and the general public to ensure this Code will improve animal welfare and reflect the values of Canadians."

The Code Development Committee leads the Code revision process. The Committee includes participants from across Canada representing the diversity of the industry. Committee members include producers, animal welfare and enforcement representatives, researchers, transporters, processors, veterinarians and government representatives. The final beef cattle Code of Practice will be released Summer 2013. More information on the Code development process is available at nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice.

The beef cattle Code is one of eight Codes of Practice currently under revision as part of a multi-year NFACC project. Codes of Practice serve as our national understanding of animal care requirements and recommended practices. It is important Codes be scientifically informed, practical and reflect societal expectations for responsible farm animal care. The Codes cover housing, feed and water, handling, euthanasia, transport and other important management practices.

Funding for the Codes of Practice is provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Agricultural Flexibility Fund, under the Addressing Domestic and International Market Expectations Relative to Farm Animal Welfare initiative, as part of Canada's Economic Action Plan.

About the National Farm Animal Care Council

NFACC is a collaborative partnership of diverse stakeholders created in 2005 to share information and work together on farm animal care and welfare. It is the national lead for farm animal care issues in Canada. NFACC would like to acknowledge the Canadian Animal Health Coalition (CAHC) for their role in securing funding for this project. For more information on NFACC visit nfacc.ca.

About the Canadian Cattlemen's Association

As the national "voice" of Canada's 83,000 beef producers, CCA's structure represents every phase of the production system; the purebred, cow/calf, backgrounding and feedlot sectors. The association was founded by producers and is led by a producer-elected board of directors from across Canada. The CCA works with other sectors of the agriculture and food industries on matters of mutual concern. For more information about the CCA, please visit cattle.ca.

For more information contact:

- Jackie Wepruk, General Manager & Project Coordinator, National Farm Animal Care Council, (403) 783-4066, nfacc@xplornet.com, nfacc.ca
- Ryder Lee, Manager of Federal & Provincial Relations, Canadian Cattlemen's Association,(613) 233-9375, rlee@cattle.ca, cattle.ca

Mark your calendars for

"COWS, CREEKS AND COMMUNITIES"

Thursday, April 25, 2013

At the Kurt Browning Complex in Caroline Alberta

"THE BEST FOR EACH"

RANCHING OPPORTUNITIES

Conference

Ideas and Opportunities for Growing your Business

February 7th at Olds College in the Alumni Centre, lunch and tradeshow are included.

Discover new ways to manage your livestock, explore options for marketing your product and learn about the challenges and achievements of successful ranchers.

February 7th, 2013 at Olds College

*Register today or for more information contact Mountain View County Agricultural Services at Phone: **403-335-3311 Ext 143***
e-mail: Amber.Hines@mountainviewcounty.com or contact your local conservation staff.

The cost is $40 and includes lunch

Registration closes January 30th

Conference Schedule

- **Bite Beef Marketing** - *Nicole Lamb & Carl Baum, Bite Beef*
- **Breakout Sessions**
  1. Online Resources for your Farm Business - *Laura Bodell (BellaSpur)*
  2. Keep Wildlife Out & Profits In: 3D Fencing & Livestock Guardian Dogs - *Ron McKay (MD of Willow Creek), Julie Robinson (B.C. Ministry of Agriculture & Lands)*
  3. Soils; what's under your grass - *Jack Payne (Olds College)*
- **Thinking Outside the Beef: Panel Discussion**
  Dun-Rite Stock & Stables Inc., Butters Beef, Deer River Ranching
- **Alberta's Natural Capital in a Changing Climate**
  Dr. David Sauchyn (University of Regina, Prairie Adaptation Research Collaborative)
- **Economics of Grass vs. Grain** - *Doug Wray (Chairman of the Canadian Forage and Grassland Association, Director on the Alberta Forage Industry Network)*

Hosted in Partnership by:

Municipal District of Mountain View County · Government of Alberta · Red Deer County · Rocky View County · Foothills Forage and Grazing Association · Kneehill County · Olds College & Leduc County

!!!Don't miss any issues of The Blade!!!

Join *Grey Wooded Forage Association*

Or renew your membership!

2013 –2014 Memberships are available now for $20.00 and run from April 1,2013 to March 31,2014

For more information phone 403-844-2645

Become a part of an enthusiastic group of people who are exploring ways to turn grass into $$$.

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

Members benefit by:

- Receiving discounts on Controlled Grazing Courses, seminars, tours, farm calls and consulting on grazing management, pasture rejuvenation, feed production (annual forages) and more.
- Receiving *The GWFA Newsletter* in Spring & Fall and *The Blade* monthly.
- Receive up-to-date information on G.W.F.A. activities via The Blade.

Please mail the portion below with a cheque for $20.00 to:

Grey Wooded Forage Association
Box 1448
Rocky Mountain House, Alberta
T4T-1B1

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY: Renewal_____ or New Member_____
Canada Post_____ or Email_____

Name..... Phone.....
Address.....Fax.....
Town. .....Prov..... Email.....
Postal Code..... Confirm Email.....

Please give us an idea of what area of forage production you are interested in:
Controlled Grazing & Pasture Management:_____
Growing Annual Forages for Extended Grazing or Swath Grazing:_____
Growing Annual Forages for Silage or Greenfeed:_____
Growing Hay:_____ Ration Balancing:_____
Soil Biology:_____ Pasture Rejuvenation or Renovation:_____
Low Cost Cow/calf Production:_____
Environmental Sustainability:_____ Economical Sustainability:_____
COMMENTS:_____
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October 2004 Agdex 420/52-4

Beef Ration Rules of Thumb

This factsheet can both guide producers through a feed test and help them understand the results.

With a feed test in front of you, look at the following rules and compare them to the feed test. Remember, these are rules of thumb, which means they hold true most of the time, but variations in management and cow type will affect the end result.

These rules of thumb should not be considered a replacement for balancing rations with proven software, but rather an aid to understand the feed and where it fits in the management.

Rules of Thumb

Dry matter

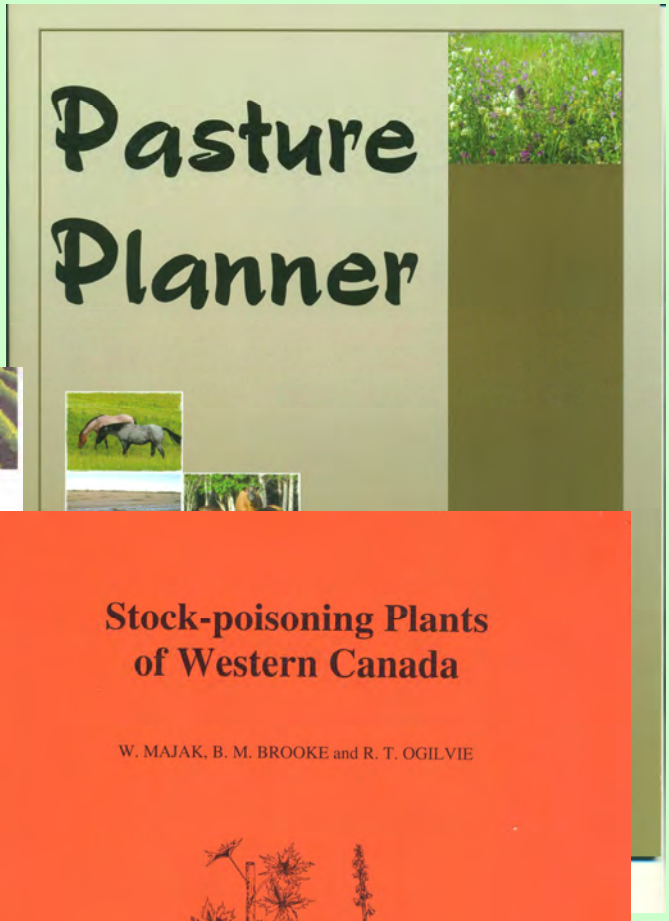
Always refer to the "dry matter" numbers. These numbers have the moisture factored out and allow the comparison of all feeds, from silage to grains.

Crude protein

Protein is a building block. The **Beef Cow Rule of Thumb** with protein is 7-9-11, which means an average mature cow requires a ration with crude protein content of 7 per cent in early pregnancy, 9 per cent in late pregnancy, and 11 per cent after calving.

Energy

Energy gives the ability to use the building blocks for growth and other productive purposes. Learn one of the six measures for energy and stick with it. Using Total Digestible Nutrients (TDN) per cent, the **Rule of Thumb** is **55-60-65**. This rule says that for a mature beef cow to maintain her body condition score (BCS) through the winter, the ration must have a TDN energy reading of 55 per cent in mid pregnancy, 60 per cent in late pregnancy and 65 per cent after calving.



August 2009 Agdex 130/536-1

Nutrient Management on Intensively Managed Pastures

Pastures are unique to agricultural production systems in that only a very small portion of the nutrients

• effect of legumes

and environmental risks

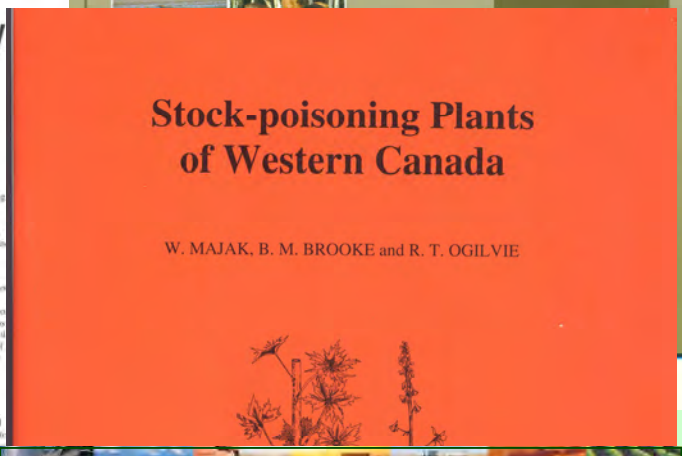
and pathways

pools of nutrients including matter, growing plants plant litter, living animals large herbivores, above and round invertebrates (beetles and soil microbes, and the

cycles develop as nutrients flow always from one pool to The processes and pathways cycles are different for various but nutrient balances control cles. Balances are made up of outputs and losses of nutrients pasture system.

ts = outputs + losses

when they are removed or hay or silage. These exported to some type of fertilizers



September 2008 Agdex 420/56-3

Agronomic Management of Swath Grazed Pastures

Feed, feeding, cow management and manure disposal can account for up to two-thirds of the total cost of production in a cow-calf operation. Systems that can extend the grazing season and reduce these costs are of great interest to cow-calf producers. One of these is swath grazing.

Many factors come into play to determine forage quality, quantity and unit cost of production in a swath grazing system. Some of these factors, such as weather, are

Swath

bedding

Agdex 420/56-4

Agronomic Management of Stockpiled Pastures

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