



Grey  
Wooded  
Forage  
Association

# The Blade

*"Creating an Awareness of Forages"*

**JULY 2013**

Box 1448, 5039 - 45 Street, Rocky Mountain House, Alberta T4T-1B1,  
Phone: 403 844 2645, Fax: 403 844 2642, Email: [GWFA1@telus.net](mailto:GWFA1@telus.net) or  
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### **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*



# 26th Annual West Country Ag Tour



**Thursday, August 22, 2013**  
**Dovercourt Hall**  
**7:30 am till 4:30 pm**

Sign up for an exciting day filled with good company and delicious food! Enjoy the sights as we tour Clearwater County and visit a variety of agricultural operations to learn about research and innovations taking place in our area!

**Pancake Breakfast  
starts at 7:30 am!**

**Tour buses  
depart right after  
breakfast!**

**Coffee and snacks  
will be provided!**

**Registration Fee:** \$25 per person before August 15th  
\$30 per person after August 15th

*Includes breakfast, lunch, snacks, bus charge and an information package!*

**To register, please contact:** Clearwater County Agricultural Services  
and Landcare  
(403) 845-4444



The tour will also feature a tradeshow during breakfast & lunch and a silent auction!

Hosted by:



## Manager's Notes:

*By Albert Kuipers*

Recently we had the opportunity to visit Jim and Barb Bauer's Anchor JB Ranch as a bonus for participants of the Controlled Grazing School we held in June. Those who took advantage of this opportunity got a quick and dirty look at some of the concepts Jim teaches.

One of the main things Jim teaches in the grazing schools and conducts at the ranch is that of training the eye to be able to estimate the size of area needed to provide sufficient forage for a given amount of time, whether that be a half day, a day, or longer. This estimation is based on the density and quality of the forages available in the pasture, and the number and size of the livestock that will be grazing there.

Jim starts with having participants go into different pastures on the ranch to take yield clips, dry them, weigh them, and then calculate how much forage is available. From there he has participants go out in small groups and visually assess how much forage is in each inch of forage on a pounds per acre basis. Then, by multiplying that with the average height of the forage in inches, participants start getting an idea about how large an area a given herd would require daily.

Sounds complicated? Maybe so, but the result is that participants go home with the beginnings of a skill that they can develop with practice. Yes, the calculating required to start the training process can be complicated and cumbersome, but the skill developed can become quick and simple.

Another thing Jim talked about was his system of



“grazing the grass up”. It's the same idea that I promote as “banking, or stockpiling pastures while grazing them”. This is an incredibly important management system that helps to drought proof a pasture and is the basis for extending the grazing season far beyond the growing season.

This is done by grazing very lightly over each paddock while moving the herd quickly over the whole pasture while forages are growing fast. Then slowing the herd moves and increasing forage utilization as forage growth slows going into late summer and fall. This is a way of maximizing forage production with the short growing season we have. It's how my friend and GWFA Director, Iain Aitken stockpiles enough forages for grazing ten months of the year.

Jim also demonstrated very well, a saying I've come up with, “He who leaves the most behind, gains the most.” I came up with this saying from seeing this idea as being common among the best graziers I know. Instead of grazing 1/2 of a stand of 6 inch grass to 3 inches, he's grazing 3/4 of a stand that's 16 inches tall, leaving 12 inches standing and using 4 inches of it.

*Thank you  
Jim and Barb Bauer  
for the evening  
pasture walk!*



## Foothills Forage & Grazing Association's Bus Tour to Neil Dennis' Intensive Grazing Operation

**August 13 - 16, 2013**

**Carlyle Saskatchewan**

\$500.00/person, double occupancy (+gst)

\$700.00/person, single occupancy (+gst)

**Registration Deadline: July 12, 2013**

Contact Laura Gibney: (403) 652-4900, [laura@foothillsforage.com](mailto:laura@foothillsforage.com)

### Itinerary

- ◆ August 13: Travel from Calgary to Carlyle SK, overnight at Kenosee Inn in Moose Mountain Provincial Park
- ◆ August 14: Full Day at Sunnybrae Farm with Neil Dennis, overnight Kenosee Inn in Moose Mountain Provincial Park
- ◆ August 15: Travel to Lanigan SK, tour the Western Beef Development Centre, overnight in Saskatoon, SK
- ◆ August 16: Travel back to Calgary

### Price Includes:

- ◆ Road travel departing and returning to Calgary on a coach bus with air conditioning, sound, TV, DVD and bathroom
- ◆ 3 nights accommodation
- ◆ Full Day Tour of Sunnybrae Farm, includes bag lunch and BBQ supper with Neil and Barb Dennis
- ◆ Tour of the Western Development Centre in Lanigan



# Alberta Farmers Hope Crops Avoid Hail Damage this Year

## **Record Hail Last Year-Almost \$450 Million Paid on Hail Claims**

As crops start to grow and another hail season begins, farmers across the province are hoping to be spared from the kind of record hail damage that battered crops in every part of Alberta last year.

“Last summer was the worst hail year we’ve ever seen. There were only 11 hail-free days all summer, from early June to mid-September,” says Brian Tainsh, Manager of On-Farm Inspections with Agricultural Financial Services Corporation (AFSC), the Crown corporation that administers crop and hail insurance in Alberta on behalf of the provincial government.

Hail pounded crops in every region of the province from Foremost to Fort Vermilion, triggering more than 11,000 claims and record payouts of almost \$450 million through AFSC’s Straight Hail Insurance program, and the Hail Endorsement rider that many farmers add to their crop insurance each spring. “There wasn’t one AFSC office across the province that didn’t have hail claims reported,” says Tainsh, noting the previous record hail year in Alberta was 2008 when hail claims totalled more than \$265 million.

## **Moisture Increases Hail Risk**

What this year’s hail season will bring is still anybody’s guess, says Tainsh. He points out hailstorms in late May and early June have already triggered claims in the Vulcan and Lethbridge areas of southern Alberta— although crops at such early stages of growth have great potential to recover from hail damage.

Environment Canada Meteorologist Dan Kulak says it’s too early to tell what the summer holds. “Alberta is a hail capital, so we know we’ll get hail. The question is how much. A lot depends on what happens through the rest of June and how much moisture we have going into July. The wetter it is, the greater likelihood of hail,” he says, noting high humidity last summer was a key factor that contributed to so many hailstorms.

Kulak points out there are three ingredients for hail - heat, surface moisture or humidity, and a trigger. “The sun is often the day-to-day trigger. It shines on the mountains, warming up the air, which then rises and often produces storms that move eastward from the foothills. If the warm air collides with cooler air moving in from the mountains, the storms can be intense. Alberta is designed for hail production and the mountains play a key role,” he explains.

## **Early Hailstorm Protection**

Tainsh says an increasing number of farmers are choosing to ‘Auto Elect’ Straight Hail coverage at the same time they purchase crop insurance in April. “It gives them a two per cent premium discount and protects their crops against hailstorms early in the season.”

That early protection is important, he says. “If farmers wait and their crops are struck by hail before they’re insured, any fields with more than 25 per cent damage become ineligible for Straight Hail Insurance for the rest of the season.”

Straight Hail Insurance is available any time during the growing season at AFSC offices, and takes effect at noon the day after it’s purchased. “Farmers also have the option of purchasing it online - giving them 24 hour access and a two per cent dis-

count,” says Tainsh. “But first they need to contact AFSC for an activation code to enter the online site.”

## **75 - Year Hail Mandate**

It’s been 75 years since Alberta passed special legislation giving AFSC its mandate to provide hail insurance in every corner of the province - even the highest risk areas, says Tainsh. “Many farmers couldn’t get hail insurance back then because the risk was too high for private insurers to take on. That’s why the Alberta Hail Insurance Board, which later became AFSC, was initially created - to ensure every Alberta farmer has access to hail insurance,” he explains. “That’s still an important part of our mandate today.”

For more information about hail insurance, farmers can contact their nearest AFSC office or the Call Center at 1- 877-899-AFSC (2372).

Submitted by AFSC



As the summer hail season begins, Brian Tainsh, with Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC), shows photos of the record hail that triggered close to \$450 million dollars in crop damage across Alberta last year through AFSC’s Straight Hail Insurance program and the Hail Endorsement rider on crop insurance.

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## Director's Corner:



By: Cameron  
Jenkins

To protect my sheep from predators, I put them in a sheepfold each evening. In the last few weeks of torrential rain, my sheep fold all but washed away. (I realize this pales in comparison to what others went through during the flooding, but I like making mountains out of mole hills.) Because I did not manage things well beforehand, my sheepfold turned into a 6" deep mud pool that the sheep refused to enter. The result has been keeping my sheep in a poorly protected corral at night, with me sleeping in a camper close by.

Each of us has a vision for our farm, and livestock wallowing in muck was never part of mine. Sure, challenges arise. We are faced with tasks everyday that demand our attention. But when these tasks and challenges distract me from my vision, then I have a problem. These last few weeks have reminded me of where I'm heading. Managed grazing, healthy livestock on fresh grass: now there is a task worth the challenge.

## Have You Noticed Any Little Black Bugs in Your Hay and Pasture Fields?

While walking through your hay or pasture fields you may have noticed a little black bug, commonly known as the Black Grass bug (*Labops hesperius*). This bug is native to western rangelands and is present in low numbers on native ranges, but has been known to increase in numbers when rangeland is seeded to tame forages. Known to have bulging eyes on the sides of their heads, the Black Grass bug is sometimes referred to as the 'big eyed bug'. They are about 1/4 inch long, and have a whitish-buff colouring along the sides of their back and light coloured markings on their head.

### How are the plants damaged?

The bugs feed on the upper part of the leaves and proceed down the leaf with their head facing downwards. By piercing the plant cell walls, the bugs are then able to suck out the liquid contents. The damaged plants look like they have been affected by frost.

### Will the plants recover?

As with any plant disease or pest infestation, the healthier a plant is the more likely it is to recover. With adequate moisture, most damaged plants should be able to recover from the Black Grass bug.

### What crops do they feed on and will they move into other fields?

Wheatgrasses tend to be preferred by the Black Grass bug, but if there are no grasses present they will feed on broadleaf plants. Researches in Utah conducted a study to see if these bugs preferred tame grasses over native forages. It was determined that tame grasses were consumed more often than native forages. The following list includes six tame grasses that were used in the test, ranked from most to the least susceptible to consumption: Intermediate wheatgrass, Kentucky Bluegrass, Slender wheatgrass, Orchard grass, Smooth Bromegrass, Mountain Bromegrass and native grass.

Black Grass bugs generally do not disperse from other areas, infestations are generally due to existing populations. The Black Grass bugs may move to the field edges of adjacent fields, but they do not move much farther than that. This is be-

cause majority of the females do not have fully developed wings.

### What is the life cycle of these bugs?

The eggs are laid in the stems of the host plants and will start hatching around four to five weeks later. Black Grass bugs only have one generation per year and the nymphs feed and molt five times before they become adults. Temperature has an impact on the bugs as they mature more quickly in higher temperatures. After the bugs have reached maturity, the adults will lay eggs and then die.

### How do you control Black Grass bugs?

In Canada, there are no insecticides registered for controlling this insect. However, in the United States both Malathion<sup>TM</sup> and Sevin<sup>TM</sup> have been used to control the bug. Other ways to control the Black Grass bug include grazing or haying fields late in the fall to remove the eggs.

Taken from: Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development  
[http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/faq8652](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/faq8652)

### \*Interesting Fact\*

Did you know that Grey Wooded soils are now called Grey Luvisol? The old name Grey Wooded continues to linger because it is such a good adjective for these soils; the soils are grey and they are developed under forests.

Please call **GWFA Manager, Albert Kuipers at (403) 844-2645** or your local County Agricultural Services staff if you would like to complete an Environmental Farm Plan. **Your EFP is required** to apply for funding to the Environmental Stewardships Plan Program of Growing Forward. **Grazing & Winter Feeding, Integrated Crop Management and Manure Management** are the 3 Stewardship programs that will be available in Growing Forward 2.

**Alberta EFP**  
Environmental Farm Plan

# Alfalfa Autotoxicity

When you are looking to breathe new life into an old alfalfa stand, alfalfa autotoxicity is one factor you will want to carefully consider before developing your rejuvenation plans.

## What is autotoxicity?

Plants produce many different chemicals that they use to defend themselves from things like insects and diseases. Certain plant species give off chemicals that affect the growth and development of other plants. This is called allelopathy. Alfalfa has an allelopathic chemical that inhibits the growth of other alfalfa plants. It is said to be autotoxic, or toxic to itself.

## What causes autotoxicity in alfalfa?

The autotoxic chemicals produced by alfalfa are water soluble and can leach into the soil from decomposing plant material and growing plants. The chemical causing autotoxicity in alfalfa has not been positively identified, but is thought to be ethylene and/or possibly medicarpin. The autotoxic chemical is found in higher concentrations in the leaves and flowers than the stems and roots of alfalfa plants.

## What affects alfalfa autotoxicity?

As soon as a stand is killed, the autotoxic chemicals are released into the environment from the decomposing alfalfa plant material. Once they enter the soil, they will remain there until they break down or are moved by water. The length of time these toxic chemicals remain in the soil depends on soil type, temperature and rainfall.

On sandy soils, you will see more acute effects of the toxic chemicals, but they will last for less time than on heavier textured soils. This is because they will be quickly leached out by rain. On soils with more clay, the toxic chemicals are more strongly attached to soil particles, resulting in a lower level of damage over a longer period of time.

The age of the alfalfa stand affects autotoxicity. Stands that are two or more years old will contain more toxins than stands that are one year old or less. In addition, alfalfa plants have a higher level of toxins when flowering compared to alfalfa that is vegetative.

## How does it affect alfalfa plants?

Both seedling emergence and growth are reduced by alfalfa autotoxicity. Plants that do emerge are often stunted and may show purpling, indicating a lack of nutrients. Root growth is most severely affected. Roots are swollen, discoloured, curled and lack root hairs. They end up branching more than normal and tend to be shallower. This negatively impacts the longevity of the stand, as it reduces the plants' abilities to take up water and nutrients.

## Does it affect alfalfa yields?

Studies have shown yield reductions when alfalfa has been seeded after alfalfa, with no break in between. These yield reductions can be anywhere from 8 to 52% and persist for years. Stands affected by autotoxicity are also slower to regrow after harvest.

## How long do I have to wait before reseeding a field to alfalfa?

If your alfalfa field is more than two years old, you should seed an alternative crop for at least one year after taking it out. This will give time for the autotoxic chemicals in the

old alfalfa stand to be released into the soil and to dissipate.

If you have a seeding failure or winterkill, you can successfully reseed that field the same summer or the spring following. The toxins are not present in the first year in new seedlings, meaning you don't have to worry about autotoxicity until the stand is two years old.

## What about thickening on older stand?

It is not recommended to try to thicken an old stand of alfalfa with alfalfa. While you might get germination and seedling growth at the start, those plants will likely die out over the summer. This is because the size of the autotoxic zone around established alfalfa plants does not leave much space in a field where new seedlings could survive.

Studies have shown that the autotoxic zone is a 16 inch radius from an established alfalfa plant. New seedlings within 8 inches of established alfalfa plants often die, while those 8 to 16 inches away survive, but have stunted shoot growth and poor root development.

**For more information, contact the Ag-Info Centre at 310-FARM**

By Stephanie Kosinski Beef/Forage Specialist  
Submitted by Mary Ann Nelson, Ag Info Centre

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



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# Could Pocket Gophers Improve Pastures?????

Last summer Iain Aitken, who is currently one of the GWFA board members, discovered that the areas on his pasture where pocket gophers disturbed the soil, had amazing regrowth. Once again, Iain has noticed this impact throughout his land this year. "I can't help but think something in this process holds the key to unlocking fertility and dramatically increasing forage yield if I better understood and could find a way to reproduce the mole effect," says Aitken. His curiosity led to the development of an on-going discussion between grazing experts, Grant Lastiwka, Ken Ziegler, Albert Kuipers, Phil Merrill and Brian Luce.

After doing a little research, Grant Lastiwka discovered an article by the Government of Manitoba which suggested that pocket gophers increase soil fertility by adding organic matter in the form of plant material and feces. Similar to an earthworm, the burrowing process increases soil aeration, and water infiltration, reduces compaction and increases the rate of soil formation by bringing subsoil to the surface. After reading this, you may begin to think twice about removing those pesky pocket gophers from your field as this all sounds pretty good, right? Well Phil Merrill's response was a little easier to relate to. "I believe a field heavily infested with pocket gophers loses production by merely loss of growing area of forage due to dirt mounds (up to 30% loss of growing forages in some fields)," states Merrill. "Pasture fields recover from mounding later on in the season with adequate moisture but hay land, particularly alfalfa, doesn't recover as well as it is cut quite early." He goes on to say that in subsequent years if the mound production decreased, then the old mounds would begin to produce better forage and there would be less bare dirt where forages weren't growing. Even though there may be some benefits to letting pocket gophers conduct their work, we all know that waiting for these benefits may cause more problems in the mean time.

Iain's response to these ideas was that he wasn't looking into increasing the pocket gopher population on his pastures, but rather an alternative way of producing a similar effect, such as the use of an AgroPlow. Brian Luce also raised another idea, perhaps poor biodiversity is the root cause of this whole issue. Whatever it may be, it certainly is an interesting observation made by Iain and perhaps something that should be looked into further.



Project area with mole disturbed plot center, left, urine influenced spots closer to camera.

Orchard grass on a mole disturbed soil area.



Left to right:  
-Control stand of orchard grass  
-Orchard/Quack grass stand on a urine patch  
-Orchard grass on a mole disturbed soil area

By Bonita Knopp, GWFA Summer Staff

**What's New on Foragebeef.ca?**

See Front Page News  
New information on forage beef issues from across Canada

**New and Improved Swath Grazing Manual Available Soon!**  
Summarizing research done by Western Forage/Beef Group and Others

Coming Soon!  
Greenhouse Gas Research Summary as it affects the forage beef industry

Your First Step For Forage and Cow Call Information

www.Foragebeef.ca

[www.foragebeef.ca](http://www.foragebeef.ca)

## 2013 Controlled Grazing Course was a Hit!



A huge thank you to Ken Pattison and Matt Martinson for letting us tour their pastures! As well, thank you to Ted Sutton, Arnold Mattson, Ken Lewis and Kelsey Spicer-Rawe for sharing their wealth of knowledge about the different topics covered each night! Unfortunately due to the heavy rain we were unable to visit Keith Pregoda's place, but we did enjoy viewing his pictures and hearing about his farm!

# Breton Plots Field Day

July 31, 2013 11 AM – 4 PM

program and registration at:

[www.soilsworkshop.ab.ca/BPfieldday.html](http://www.soilsworkshop.ab.ca/BPfieldday.html)

or contact Miles Dyck ([miles.dyck@ualberta.ca](mailto:miles.dyck@ualberta.ca))

## Agenda

11:00 – 12:00

Welcome and presentations

- Dick Puurveen (UofA)
- Sheri Strydhorst (Ab. Ag.)

Breton Community  
Centre

12:00 – 1:00

Lunch

1:30 – 4:00

Breton Plots Tour and In-field presentations

- Elston Solberg (Agri-Trend Agrology and Sun Mountain Inc.)
- Sheri Strydhorst (Ab. Ag.)
- Miles Dyck (UofA)
- Dick Puurveen (UofA)

Breton Plots

Registration Fee: \$25

# 2013 Lacombe Field Day

Thursday July 25

Promoting Farm Health

- 8 am** Registration **Field Crop Development Centre ...**  
**9 am** FCDC Tour Showcase of our 40 varieties developed over the last 40 years!  
**Noon** Lunch provided Newest barley varieties Amisk (6 row feed) and Canmore (2 row food)  
**1:30 pm** AAFC Tour Jim Helm, Flavio Capettini, Mazen Aljarrah, Pat Juskiw, Yadeta Kabeta, Joseph Nyachiro and Kequan Xi

## ... and Lacombe Research Station

Integrated crop, weed, and disease management trials and herbicide options for winter wheat

Neil Harker, John O'Donovan, Kelly Turkington, and Eric Johnson (invited speaker from AAFC Scott, SK)

**Registration** is \$20 per person and includes lunch. To register contact Kristy at [kristy.vogelzang@agr.gc.ca](mailto:kristy.vogelzang@agr.gc.ca), 1.403.782.8100, or by mail below.

Alberta Agriculture Crop Research Station is 1 km south of Lacombe on Highway 2A, south on Range Road 270.

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The Man Van will be on site 7:30 - 9:00 am providing free blood tests for prostate cancer screening

## Registration Form

Deadline July 12

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Company \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ Town/City \_\_\_\_\_  
Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of people \_\_\_\_ x \$20 each = \_\_\_\_\_ enclosed. Please provide the above information for all attendees.

Please make cheques payable to: 2013 Lacombe Field Day

Mail to: 2013 Lacombe Field Day, AAFC Lacombe Research Centre, 6000 C&E Trail, Lacombe, AB, T4L 1W1 or contact Kristy at [kristy.vogelzang@agr.gc.ca](mailto:kristy.vogelzang@agr.gc.ca) or 1.403.782.8100



Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Agriculture et Agroalimentaire Canada

Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development

## Your Personal Invitation - Livestock Grazing, Climate Change and Alberta's Ecosystem

The Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency (ALMA) is presenting another world-class speaker to further our goal of creating an informed and engaged industry. In previous years, we've looked at strong companies and their business models (Greg Page, Cargill Chairman and CEO) and how to build Alberta product as an international luxury brand to China (Andrew Wu, LVMH Group President for Greater China). This year, we are focusing on climate change and the role of grazing livestock in land reclamation efforts. I am pleased to inform you that on Wednesday, July 17, Dr. Allan Savory of the Savory Institute will spend the morning with us, sharing his lifetime of research into how livestock grazing can have a beneficial impact upon our planet.

Dr. Savory was born in Rhodesia, South Africa. He pursued an early career as a research biologist and Game Ranger in the British Colonial Service of what was then Northern Rhodesia (today Zambia), and later as a farmer, game rancher, politician and international consultant, based in Southern Rhodesia (today Zimbabwe). In the 1960s, while working on the interrelated problems of increasing poverty and disappearing wildlife, he made a significant breakthrough in understanding what was causing the degradation and desertification of the world's grassland ecosystems. He went on to work, as a resource management consultant, with numerous land managers (eventually on four continents), to develop sustainable solutions.

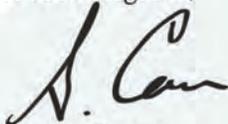
His early results in reversing land degradation in a manner that made, rather than cost, money were impressive. But, as he often states, his failures were equally impressive. Finally, in the mid 1980's the last of some key missing pieces fell into place. Since then, thousands of land, livestock and wildlife managers have demonstrated consistent results following the methodology Savory called "holistic management."

In 2003, Dr. Savory was awarded the Banksia International Award for the person or organization doing the most for the environment on a global scale. His current work in Africa is receiving much praise and recognition and the Africa Centre for Holistic Management was announced the winner of the 2010 Buckminster Fuller Award for the organization working to solve the world's most pressing problems.

Join us at the BMO Centre Boyce Theatre in Stampede Park, Calgary. The event starts with coffee and a light snack at 9 a.m., with Dr. Savory presenting at 10 a.m. A light luncheon will follow the presentation.

I do hope you accept this invitation and attend the event.

With kind Regards,



**Gordon Cove**  
*President and CEO, ALMA*



*Date: July 17, 2013*

*Location: Boyce Theatre, BMO Centre*

*Registration and Reception at 9 a.m. Presentation to begin at 10 a.m.*

*Lunch served in the Palimino Room at noon. Parking available at Lot #10, cost \$15.*

*Please RSVP by July 10*

Register Here:

<https://www.curriecom.com/alma2013speaker/index.asp>

**!!!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  
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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

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Name..... Phone.....  
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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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\_\_\_\_\_

# AGRI-FACTS

Practical Information for Alberta's Agriculture Industry

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.

**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.

# AGRI-FACTS

Practical Information for Alberta's Agriculture Industry

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## Nutrient Management on Intensively Managed Pastures

Intensive management of pastures can increase productivity and profitability, but it also increases the risk of nutrient loss and environmental risks. Nutrient management is the key to maintaining soil health and water quality.

**Soils and pathways**  
Several pools of nutrients include organic matter, growing plants, shoots, plant litter, living animals including large herbivores, above and below ground invertebrates (beetles, worms) and soil microbes, and the atmosphere.

Nutrient cycles develop as nutrients move through pathways from one pool to another. The processes and pathways are different for various systems, but nutrient balances over the cycles. Balances are made up of inputs, outputs and losses of nutrients in the pasture system.

**Inputs = outputs + losses**  
Inputs are the nutrients that enter the system. They are removed or lost through various export pathways.

# Pasture Planner

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Practical Information for Alberta's Agriculture Industry

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## 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 systems 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 beyond the producer's control.

## Stock-poisoning Plants of Western Canada

W. MAJAK, B. M. BROOKE and R. T. OGILVIE

These publications are available to our members by phoning or emailing the GWFA office!

## Management of Canadian Prairie Rangeland

Canada

## Grazing Notebook

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Year(s): \_\_\_\_\_

# AGRI-FACTS

Practical Information for Alberta's Agriculture Industry

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## Agronomic Management of Stockpiled Pastures

Stockpiling pasture is a form of deferred grazing. The producer stockpiles the forage grown during the spring and summer for use when the pasture is in short supply or when cows need fall or winter feed. This practice can mean savings for the producer:

- harvesting, hauling and feeding costs associated with winter grazing are minimized
- forage is available when needed
- forage is available when needed

Winter grazing on the prairie works best with little or no snow cover. Supplemental feed is needed if snow cover is too deep and forage yields are low.

In the Parkland and Northern areas, a multi-pass system where the second or third cut or regrowth from pastures is grazed in late fall or winter makes more efficient use of the land and is generally economical. Forage quality of the regrowth is higher than that of the stemmer first growth, especially if it is stored until fall or winter. Winter grazed cows are often required to forage through more than 50 cm (12 in.) of snow, so stockpiled forage plants must be tall.

### Species selection

Species selection depends on the system being used. Ideally, in cut-and-graze or multi-pass rotational grazing systems, a species used for stockpiling should be able to do the following:

- regrow rapidly following early harvests to provide at least 2,000 kilograms (kg) of forage per hectare (1,785 lb./ac) for good fall grazing
- maintain high quality following fall frosts

If grazing is to occur after snowfall, forage mass needs to be higher as grazing efficiency is reduced and grazing losses increase. Using an erect species makes it easier for cows to get at the feed under the snow.

In a single-pass system, a species that maintains its quality as it matures is a good choice.

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