Grey Wooded Forage Association

The Blade

"Creating an Awareness of Forages"

MAY 2013

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gwfa1@telus.net

Controlled Grazing Course

What is controlled grazing?

It's a grazing management program based on maintaining control of animal numbers, and the amount of time each area is to be grazed or rested.
This course will provide enough information for you to be able to apply it to your own farming operations!

Includes classroom learning and pasture walks!

June 11, 13, 18 & 20th 2013

***Starts at 5:30 pm each night at the Eckville Hall.**

***New topics covered every night!**

Cost: $15 each night (supper included)

To register, contact one of the following counties:

- Clearwater County (Gary Lewis/ Brooke Sauve) (403) 845-4444
- Grey Wooded Forage Association (Albert Kuipers) (403) 844-2645
- Lacombe County (Blayne West) (403) 782-6601
- Red Deer County (Ken Lewis) (403) 342-8653

Brought to you by:

Grey Wooded Forage Association

CLEARWATER COUNTY

Red Deer County

LACOMBE COUNTY

Multi-County Controlled Grazing School

brought to you by:

Red Deer County, Clearwater County, Lacombe County & Grey Wooded Forage Association

What is Controlled Grazing?

Controlled Grazing is a grazing management system that builds healthy, productive pastures by reducing the amount of time livestock graze in any one area and giving forages sufficient time to fully recover. While GWFA has historically called this management system "Controlled Grazing", variations of this system are known as "Rotational Grazing" or "Management Intensive Grazing". This type of grazing management is not a new concept, but rather, an old concept that kinda got forgotten.

This grazing management system improves pastures over time and eliminates the need to break up and re-seed pastures. Healthy, productive pastures of over thirty years old are commonly seen when Controlled Grazing principles are used over time.

Besides improving pastures, controlled grazing often allows the grazing manager to increase stocking rates or extend grazing season as their pastures improve.

What will I learn at a Controlled Grazing School?

To start with, you will learn the basic principles of forage growth and grazing management. This will include the relationship between forage growth, grazing durations and sufficient rest for recovery, over-grazing and severe grazing. You will learn how to balance quality and quantity of your forages on pasture.

We will also be discussing nutrient cycling on pastures, the relationship between healthy forages and healthy soils, and how various weeds are indicators of over-grazing and soil nutrient or mineral deficiencies. You'll begin to learn how to "read" your pasture to know what it needs to be healthy and perform better.

Once you pretty much have the basics down pat, we'll take a look at the great variety of forage species that are found on most pastures in Central Alberta and forage species that are available that could be used to improve pastures.

We'll be looking at ways in which to extend your grazing season. Stockpiling forages and swath grazing are becoming well known as systems that can cut your costs of winter feeding in half.

Then we'll get out some of the fencing and look at some of the ways we can build permanent and portable electric fences. We'll practice some of tricks needed to use high tensile wire for your fences.

Then we'll take a look at designing pastures for controlled grazing and show the importance of a watering system that helps you put your livestock where you want them. Restrictive watering systems are often the major factor limiting grazing management.

Lastly, although not necessarily during our last session, we will take a look at a simple way to manage the finances for your operation. The Wealthy Rancher helps you divide your operation into "profit centres" and shows what activities are most profitable, or not.

When and where will a Controlled Grazing School be held?

We are planning to hold a Controlled Grazing School on the evenings of June 11th, 13th, 18th and 20th at the Eckville Hall, with a follow-up pasture walk at Jim & Barb Bauer's ranch near Acme. The date for the follow-up pasture walk is yet to be determined. We're looking at various locations in the Benalto/Eckville area for pastures to tour on the four evenings.

We hope to spend as much time as possible out on various pastures that help to demonstrate what's being taught.

Where can I learn more about this Controlled Grazing School?

You can learn more about this school and/or register by contacting the Grey Wooded Forage Association office (403-844-2645), Ken Lewis at Red Deer County (403-342-8653), Gary Lewis or Brooke Sauve at Clearwater County (403-845-4444), or Blayne West at Lacombe County (403-782-6601).

Congratulations!

At our Annual General Meeting on May 2, Iain Aitken was awarded the Red Deer River Watershed Alliance Ambassador Award by Joey Temple, RDRWA's Outreach Coordinator.

The RDRWA Watershed Ambassador Program actively recognizes and promotes efforts towards improving watershed management. Through the popular program, RDRWA is continuously raising the profile of the watershed, its stewardship groups, stewards, and all those practicing related Beneficial Watershed Management Practices.

On behalf of the GWFA Board and staff, we would like to congratulate Iain for receiving this award. The Medicine River benefits from his land management skills and many of us benefit when he shares his knowledge and skills with us.

Manager's Notes:

By Albert Kuipers

First of all, I'd like to thank everyone who attended our AGM for being there and making it the success it was. Your commitment to GWFA is valued and appreciated.

Thanks to all who participated, our tradeshow was excellent, as was the meal we enjoyed that evening. We always get fed well at the Leslieville Hall, and we keep going back for more.

Our speakers, Dr. John Basarab, Dr. Vern Baron did an awesome job of showing us what's happening in beef and forage research at the Lacombe Research Centre. They are avid supporters of GWFA and we need to make sure we show how much we value their research work on our behalf.

Duane McCartney, retired forage and beef researcher from Lacombe, finished off the evening with a good look at what this industry has gone through and where it's going. Thank-you Duane, for sharing your insights with us. We really appreciate all that Duane has done for our industry, while working in research and in his retirement.

We extend our heart-felt appreciation to Doug Skeels, Sigurd DeBruijn, Kirk Seaborn and Doug Seland for your terms of service to GWFA. May you continue to find great value from being part of GWFA. Doug Skeels and Sigurd DeBruijn have finished their three year terms as GWFA Directors. Doug Seland has completed two years as Director, this past year as GWFA's Chair. Kirk Seaborn finished a two year term and is now beginning a one year term as a GWFA Director. We really appreciate Kirk's willingness to stay on for another year.

We would now like to welcome our newly elected Directors, Kristen Ritson-Bennett, Deb Skeels and Chris Sande to the Board of Directors. We look forward to working with you and hope this will be a very rewarding experience for you.

Throughout this issue you'll find a number of photos of Iain Aitken's cows and calves on stockpiled, or banked pasture in late April and May. We've known for a long time already that calving on stockpiled pasture works very well. I honestly don't understand why there are still so few who practice it.

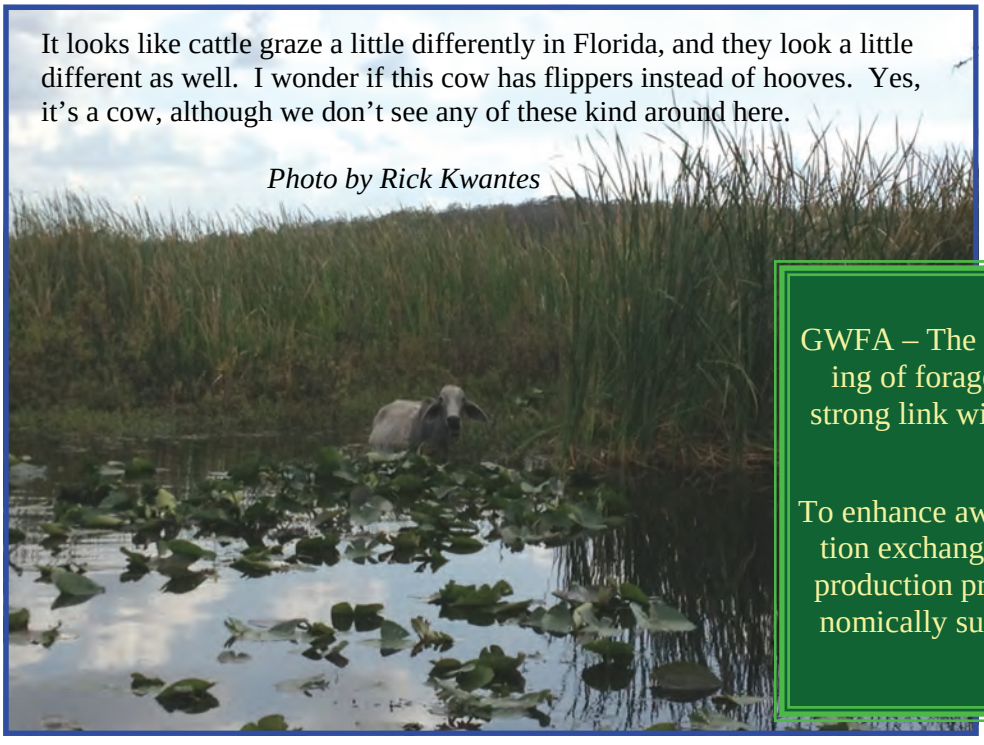
I was over visiting with Iain while taking samples of the stockpiled forages he has his cattle grazing at this time. He told me he had over a hundred calved out and he's only pulled one calf that was breached and helped one calf with sucking. He's had no scours, pneumonia or whatever else calves like to die from. He's treated no calves and has had no losses. What an easy way to calve out cows.

On the other hand, I'm hearing lots of horror stories about sick calves and high death losses from some of my other friends. These guys are working almost around the clock to try to keep their calves alive, when it seems these calves have no will to live. Hey, I've been there myself. Sometimes it seems like these calves want to die so bad, it seems like there's nothing we can do to stop them. Discouraged and exhausted? No doubt about it. Is there a better way? Yes, and guys like Iain Aitken are proving it.

Now I realize it takes a lot to switch calving seasons and manage pastures to bank grass to calve on. It takes a lot of planning to develop a grazing plan that allows you to save grass for spring calving. Iain is getting so good at it, he has more banked grass than he needs right now. Not a bad problem to have. Actually it's a really great problem to have.

Anyhow, we'll be tallying up our yield and feed test results for the past few years, so watch for more information on this subject in the future. If you would like to learn more about this subject, please don't hesitate to call me.

Photo by Iain Aitken



It looks like cattle graze a little differently in Florida, and they look a little different as well. I wonder if this cow has flippers instead of hooves. Yes, it's a cow, although we don't see any of these kind around here.

Photo by Rick Kwantes

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

"Take an Alfalfa Break" in Grain Crop Rotations

Perennial legumes like alfalfa have an excellent place in cereal and oilseed crop rotations. With such a different growth habit perennial legumes provide a key break in grain crop disease cycles. A legume's ability to capture nitrogen out of the air addresses the greater need of improving soil fertility. The demand for high quality hay is rising as forage acres drop.

Annual crop diseases were high in 2012 across Western Canada. Diseases like fusarium, aster yellows, scald, net blotch, blackleg, and club root as well as some insect issues made 2012 a challenging year for cereal and oilseed growers. Grain and oilseed yields were less than expected although high prices made up for this shortfall. Annual crop rotations are getting tight and it was notable in the 2012 crop year. Knowing that in the second year a disease like blackleg can worsen, putting forage in an annual crop rotation for 2-3 years can be a good approach to break pest cycles.

Inoculated legumes are able to capture nitrogen from the air through a symbiotic relationship with rhizobia bacteria. Nitrogen fixation amounts will vary with nodulation effectiveness, fertility, soil type, soil pH, moisture, length and warmth of growing season, etc. In as little as two to three years of perennial legume production the maximum nitrogen capture can occur.

With nitrogen fertilizer costing over $0.60/pound of actual N in 2013, a legume can create a nitrogen store of $40-$100+/acre. This allows for a short term alfalfa hay "intervention" in a cereal oilseed crop rotation to have another "synergistic" profit consideration. The nitrogen "store" produced by the legume is available to following crops for a one to three year period.

The timing and length of nitrogen release to the following annual crops is mainly based on the method of removal of the legume in the rotation, and aggressiveness of land cultivations thereafter. Nitrogen is released more slowly and more effectively over a longer period if glyphosate is used to remove the legume and followed by a zero-till cropping system.

Work by Dr. Martin Entz from the University of Manitoba has shown alfalfa creates soil benefits to annual crops following it in rotation for up to 10 years after an alfalfa removal. The reason for this is the ability for these crops to more easily explore soils in search of nutrients by using old alfalfa root channels. Another benefit is probably from improved soil organic matter.

Table 28 Legume Nitrogen Fixation in kg N/ha & lb N/acre

Legume	Kg N/ha	lb N/Acre
Alfalfa	78-222	70-198
Cicer Milkvetch	Up to 157	Up to 140
Red Clover	67-129	60-115
White Clover	129-202	115-180
Birdsfoot Trefoil	50-112	44-100
Kura Clover	17-177	17-158

*Alberta Forage Manual. Aasen and Bjorge, p. 173. *Minnesota legume trials.*

The demand for hay in Alberta rose this past year. The longer winter and an industry trend to lower hay yields from older forage stands in the last few years were two reasons for this.

A third reason is the growing potential of the hay export market to the USA and abroad. There is a growing need for high quality forage in other countries around the world where water supply is limited.

The Marketing committee of the Canadian Forage and Grasslands Association is very excited about this potential after completing two highly successful trade missions to potential hay purchasing countries over the last three years. Countries with limited water supplies are trying to make long term plans to purchase forage and divert their water use from forage production to a greater focus on human food production.

With domestic and export hay market potential improving, the net return for the alfalfa crop in rotation is going to be higher with greater stability from year to year.

With gross income being favorable in the grain industry for a prolonged period of time, it makes sense that there would be a movement to more of a grain monoculture in Canada and the United States. This does come at increasing costs from annual crop pests and rising farm inputs.

The use of a perennial legume in a cereal crop rotation may give favorable returns, allow for more profits in future grain crops and improve soil quality. Introducing a perennial legume in your cropping rotation may be a wise and profitable consideration for the 2013 cropping season.

By Grant Lastiwka, Beef/Forage specialist, Ag-Info Centre 310-FARM (3276)

Alfalfa/sainfoin mixtures reduce, if not eliminate bloat on pastures. Below is one of Dr. Surya Acharya's sainfoin research plots at the Lethbridge Research Centre.

LAND EKG-CANADA

Grey Wooded Forage Association

EKG Blink Monitoring Basics - July 8 & 9, 2013

Participants will leave this two-day course with well-practiced abilities in choosing monitoring sites, transect layout mechanics, and EKG photo procedures. This class is designed for any rancher or conservation manger seeking a rapid, repeatable monitoring program, right away.

Participants will practice thorough land monitoring basics, soil survey using Alberta Soil Information Viewer, grazing indexing, forage production measurement methods, surface cover percents, and EZ-EKG assessments, but will spend the majority of time learning monitoring mechanics for EKG transect lines.

Additional time will be spent on "situational monitoring" and site recording techniques including an introduction to EKG DataStore. Monitoring kits will be available for those wishing to purchase this item.

Prerequisite: None, bring a camera if you have one.

Investment of $400/person

We're working on getting funds to reduce the cost of this course for you. Call the GWFA office for more information!

JOIN CHARLEY ORCHARD & TED SUTTON FOR THIS INFORMATIVE 'HANDS-ON' COURSE

For course content information contact Ted Sutton
Tel: 403.764.7402, Cell: 403.909.1772, Ted@ekgcan.com

For registration information and to register
please contact the GWFA office at 403-844-2645

Location: East of Red Deer
At the Rolyn Hills B&B, approx. 10 mi (16 km) east of Hwy 2 (Corner of Hwys 595 & 808 + .5 km)
NW 36-37-26-W4 - home quarter
GPS 50.51.532, -113.35.984 - for field work

Calving on stockpiled grass. It doesn't get better than this. *Photo by Iain Aitken*

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

Agriculture Opportunity Fund

Alberta

Curious about the New Growing Forward 2 Plan?

After perusing the Growing Forward 2 website, I have decided to focus my attention on two programs that may be of more interest or use to producers in our area; the On-Farm Stewardship program and the On-Farm Water Management program.

The On-Farm Stewardship program has five areas in which farmers can apply for funding. The purpose of this program is to assist livestock and crop producers on implementing management practices that positively impact water quality. Producers will be reimbursed for 30%, 50% or 70%, (depending on the project), of the costs to improve water quality in the areas outlined below, to a maximum of $50,000 per applicant. However, some areas of funding have project maximums much lower than this, so be aware of this possibility.

Grazing Management is the first area funding may be available for in this program. Fencing and management of riparian areas, year-round watering systems, portable shelters and wetland restoration, is what this category includes. *Manure and Livestock Facilities Management* is the second category. This area includes manure storage facility improvements, livestock facility runoff control, and livestock facility relocation. The third area of interest includes *Improved Pest Management.* This category has quite the list of items, so I will just mention a few. Chemical handling systems with jug rinse, sprayer cones and shrouds, and weather monitoring equipment are a few of the areas where funding is available. *Fuel and Used Oil Storage*, is the fourth category included in this program. Purchasing new double-walled fuel tanks that are CSA or ULC approved or double-walled storage tanks for used oil that are identified with a ULC-652 name plate, are included in this area. It should be noted however that at least one old fuel tank must be decommissioned in order for an application for fuel storage to be accepted. The fifth and final category included in this On-Farm Stewardship program, is the *Innovative Stewardship Solutions* area. This area highly encourages you to contact a Program Leader to discuss the innovative area before applications for funding are sent. Multiple projects are allowed within this On-Farm Stewardship program; however, all projects must be completed within two years of the application approval date.

Growing Forward 2

A federal-provincial-territorial initiative

Now, who is eligible? Alberta producers of agricultural crops and/or livestock, who have completed an Alberta Environmental Plan, are able to apply for funding in this program. Application forms and any additional information regarding the application process for any of these areas can be found on the Growing Forward 2 website (www.growingforward.alberta.ca), under the "Environmental Stewardship" tab.

The main purpose of the second program, On-Farm Water Management, is to provide technical assistance to agricultural producers to complete a Long-Term Water Management Plan (LTWMP) and to share the cost of any advancements made to on-farm water supply management. These costs are offered through Standard and Special Incentive projects that are described in detail on the website. To summarize some of the features under each project type; the Standard Incentive projects include things like well, dugout, spring development, dam and pipeline construction. Reimbursement of up to one-third of expenses or maximum $5,000 per applicant is available. The Special Incentive projects include: decommissioning, well pit conversions, water well depth measurement equipment, etc. Reimbursement of up to 50% of expenses is considered under this project type.

In order for you to be eligible for funding, projects must be identified in a LTWMP approved by an ARD Water Specialist before starting the project. As well, you must have a minimum of $10, 000 of farm commodity production income before you are eligible for funding. More information regarding your eligibility and application process can be found on the website. A key reminder is that you must have a Long Term Water Management Plan completed for your farm before you can apply for any funding regarding this On-Farm Water Management program.

The two programs listed above are only a couple of the numerous programs listed on the Growing Forward 2 website. There are also lots of terms and conditions listed that must be followed and unfortunately there just isn't enough space to include them all in this article. Referring to the website or contacting program leaders is the best way to answer any questions you might have. However, we would also be very happy to help you with any of the application process, so please feel free to contact us at the office.

By Bonita Knopp, GWFA Summer Staff

Environmental stewardship and calving on stockpiled, or banked forages fit very well together. See if Growing Forward 2 can help you get set up for it.
Photo by Iain Aitken

Quality Water on Pasture Improves Calf Gains

There are areas of the province that have received higher than normal amounts of snow this winter. When spring actually arrives, and significant melting occurs, sloughs and dugouts could be filled to capacity and possibly expand beyond their normal size.

Water quality from melted snow is usually very good. As water moves into dugouts or sloughs, it picks up dissolved salts from the ground and other contaminants which reduce quality. Manure and urine deposited in areas of dormant grass grazing or swath grazing can be carried into the dugouts or sloughs. With the ground not freezing in some locations of the province, the amount of soil particles carried into the dugout could also be higher than normal.

When turning cattle out onto pasture, it is best to provide offsite watering options so that they can access the water without damaging dugout walls. Wet banks are softer than dry banks. Hoof action loosens the soil and it ends up on the bottom of the dugout, reducing capacity. A lower water volume in the dugout later in the year can result in higher water temperatures. This increases bacterial growth rates and algae blooms can become a problem earlier in the fall.

Year-round solar watering system at Doug & Deb Skeels' pasture. The submersible pump supplies a pasture pipeline system in summer.

Higher Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) levels reduce the amount of water the animals are willing to drink. If water consumption is reduced, the amount of milk a cow can produce and the amount of feed they can eat is reduced. Calves are smaller at weaning and cows could be thinner going into fall and winter.

Developing a water system to prevent cows from drinking out of creeks or dugouts can improve pasture gains and increase weaning weights. Some trials have shown increased calf growth rate by 50 to 120 pounds.

The Growing Forward 2 has programs that help producers implement projects and management practices that have a direct and positive impact on water quality. Under the On-Farm Water Management Program 33% of costs up to$5000 can be accessed to develop good quality water sources for on-farm use. Under the On-Farm Stewardship program producers in livestock and crop production will be reimbursed for 30%, 50% or 70% (depending on the project) of costs related to management practices that improve water quality. Check specific program information for producer eligibility details and funded items.

For more information
Phone: 310-FARM (3276)
Email: GrowingForward@gov.ab.ca
Web: www.growingforward2.alberta.ca

Barry Yaremcio
Beef and Forage Specialist
Ag- Info Centre, Stettler

Brandon Leask
Agricultural Water Engineer
ARD, Red Deer

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.

Growing Forward 2
A federal-provincial-territorial initiative

Alberta EFP
Environmental Farm Plan
Growing Forward 2
A federal-provincial-territorial initiative

Uncertainty Over Calf Prices Fuels Growing Nervousness Among Cattle Producers

'Unknowns and Question Marks' Trigger Surge of Interest in Cattle Price Insurance Program (CPIP)

With calving season well underway across Alberta, cattle producers are hoping that high calf prices - fuelled by tight cattle supplies over the last two years – will continue this fall when most calves are weaned and sold. But there are several "unknowns and question marks" on the horizon that have many producers across the province feeling nervous about where calf and feeder cattle prices could end up this year, says Anne Dunford, an Alberta cattle market analyst.

"A lot of the nervousness we're seeing began last fall when the U.S. drought caused corn and feed grain prices to spike, triggering a major drop in calf and feeder cattle prices," explains Dunford. "Calf prices fell from a record $1.85/lb in February to $1.55/lb during the fall calf run last year. That price drop resulted from significant losses that continue today for feedlot operators and backgrounders who are shouldering record feed grain costs. The impact of those losses gets passed down the chain, affecting calf prices."

As calving season continues, uncertainty about where calf and feeder cattle prices may end up this fall has triggered a surge of interest in Alberta's Cattle Price Insurance Program (CPIP), says Stuart McKie, with AFSC. He points out the deadline to sign up for CPIP-Calf coverage this year is May 30.

Wild Price Swings and Consumer Demand Cause Concern

The price drop was a classic reminder that tight cattle supplies – the key driver behind today's high calf and feeder prices – aren't the only factor that influence prices, says Dunford, noting high feed costs have kept calf prices in the $1.50/lb to $1.55/lb range this spring. "Those prices could climb higher if moisture conditions in the U.S. turn around and large corn crops are harvested this fall, causing feed grain prices to decline. But with so many other question marks on the horizon, there are no guarantees."

Dunford points to extreme market volatility and wild price swings that could pose challenges for cow-calf producers who sell their calves at the same time every fall. Consumer demand is another worry. "Consumers are paying record retail beef prices across North America. How much longer they'll be willing to pay those prices will depend on the economy. That could have a huge impact on cattle prices this year," she explains.

CPIP-Feeder Participation Triples

All of the uncertainty has sparked a surge of interest in Alberta's Cattle Price Insurance Program (CPIP), that lets producers insure a minimum price for their cattle – protecting them if prices fall lower while still allowing them to sell their cattle at the highest price.

"Participation has tripled in the CPIP-Feeder program this year and we're getting substantially more phone calls and questions about CPIP-Calf which is only in its second full year of being offered," says Stuart McKie, a field analyst with Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC), which administers CPIP in Alberta.

Until now, participation in CPIP-Calf has been low. "Because calf prices have been so strong, many cow-calf producers didn't feel the need for price protection. But that's changing," says McKie.

CPIP-Calf Payouts Last Fall – Up to $80/Head

"Producers are a lot less confident they'll make money on their calves this year. Many are driving long distances to attend CPIP-Calf information meetings. And every day about 10 new producers sign up to receive CPIP premium tables which are emailed three times a week to more than 1,000 producers across the province," says McKie.

"It's all because of the drop in calf and feeder prices last fall that triggered payouts of up to $80 per head on CPIP-Calf and up to $195 per head on CPIP-Feeder," he says, adding, "The CPIP-Fed, Feeder and Basis-Only programs are still triggering payouts due to high feed costs and other factors."

CPIP-Calf Deadline – May 30

He points out CPIP-Calf is offered from February to May, and the deadline to participate this year is May 30. CPIP-Feeder – for producers who feed cattle to a certain weight before moving them to a feedlot – and CPIP-Fed – for feedlot operators – are both available year round.

Rose Wymenga, a cow-calf producer near Leslieville, used CPIP-Calf for the first time last year. "We locked in a pretty high floor price" of $1.54/lb at the end of May. She received a payout when her settlement price ended up at $1.46/lb in the fall. As a member of the Alberta Beef Producers Cow/Calf Council, she now promotes CPIP-Calf to other cattle producers.

"We go to quite a few meetings so we can pass on information about the program. We think having a floor price for our calves is important to cover downside risk and prevent losses. Things often look really good in the spring and then suddenly, whoops, something changes in the fall," says Wymenga, adding she plans to use CPIP again this year.

Cattle producers who aren't happy with the CPIP floor prices and premiums being offered today should keep an eye on the premium tables, says McKie. "Those prices change daily as markets fluctuate."

Continued on Pg 10

New Information on www.foragebeef.ca

Forage and beef producers in western Canada and the northern United States have a source for the latest research information on forage and beef production. Foragebeef.ca summarizes forage and beef cattle research for farmers and ranchers.

The site features in-depth information on forage production, silage management, forage seed production, beef cow calf management, animal health issues, grazing management, and range management in addition to many other topics.

Approximately 200 research papers have been added to the website as they become available over the past year.

Foragebeef.ca is a living library for research and extension information that is useful to Canadian beef producers. The website provides three levels of information.

The top level is "cut to the core" information on a particular topic. Called "Knowledge Nuggets", this level provides the most important pieces of advice on that topic.

The next level is for the reader who wants more information about that topic. Links are provided to the best related information, either in fact sheet format or as videos. The objective is to select the most comprehensive and applicable information for Canadian and northern USA agriculture.

The third level is for people who want related, in-depth information. This level focuses on relevant scientific review papers, research abstracts, research papers, major publications and links to research communities throughout Canada and the world.

This is a living web site and news items, research results and summaries will continually be added to the site. It is a unique approach to developing and organizing research information for the Canadian forage and beef cattle industry. With these knowledge summaries, fact sheets, and research reviews, www.foragebeef.ca is the gateway in the future for forage and beef information for the forage and cow calf industry.

By Ken Ziegler – Beef/Forage specialist, Ag-Info Centre 310-FARM (3276)

Nervousness Among Cattle Producers continued from Pg 9

He explains the floor prices producers can insure with CPIP reflect variables such as futures markets, the price of barley, exchange rates on the Canadian dollar, and the basis – the difference between U.S. and Canadian cattle prices. "It covers all those risks in one tool."

The flexibility of CPIP programs surprises many cattle producers, says McKie. "Especially when we tell them they don't have to sell their cattle to collect a claim. They can sell the animal later once prices improve. Or if they insure a floor price for November but sell their calves at a higher price in August, they can still collect a payout if prices drop and trigger a claim in November, even though they've sold the calves already – as long as they owned the calves for 60 days during the policy."

No minimum number of cattle need to be insured, and a four-week settlement window gives producers flexibility on when to settle claims, he adds. Claims are triggered when average calf and feeder prices at auction marts across Alberta fall below their insured price.

Revenue Protection to Prevent Losses

"At the end of the day, CPIP is revenue protection that lets you lock in up to 95 per cent of the future forecasted price of Alberta cattle. Sometimes the price you can protect will be profitable. Sometimes it will minimize losses. It depends on where markets are that day," says McKie.

For more information about CPIP, producers can contact their local AFSC District Office, the AFSC Call Centre at 1-877-899-AFSC (2372) or visit www.afsc.ca.

!!!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.....
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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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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.

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 requires a ration with crude protein of pregnancy, 9 per cent in late pregnancy

August 2009 Agdex 130/538-1

Nutrient Management on Intensively Managed Pastures

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

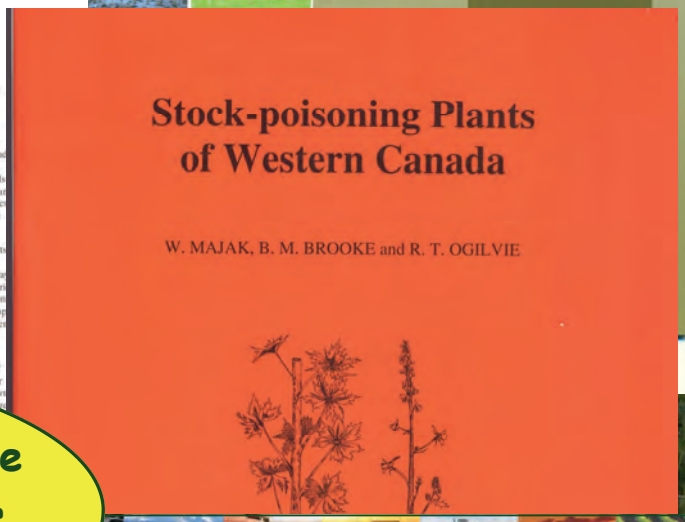
ols and pathways

several pools of nutrients includ organic matter, growing plants shoots, plant litter, living animals luding large herbivores, above an low ground invertebrates (beetles rms) and soil microbes, and the nosphere.

trient cycles develop as nutrients ng pathways from one pool to other. The processes and pathwa trient cycles are different for vari trients, but nutrient balances con the cycles. Balances are made up uts, outputs and losses of nutrie on the pasture system.

inputs = outputs + losses

they are removed or



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

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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
- to be removed from feeding

range is prairies. Depth limits winter in the regions. son may be by using fall and early

ing a successful system:

period between grazing or cutting

stems

for a full growing season, for a regrowth may be stockpiled age harvest or grazing.

is suited to the drier prairie her rainfall prevents good native species in these areas quality better than

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 stemmier first growth, especially if it is saved until fall or winter. Winter grazed cows are often required to forage through more than 30 cm (12 in.) of snow, so stockpiled forage plants must be tall.

Stockpiled forage for pasture can mean savings for the producer

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.

Alberta