



Grey
Wooded
Forage
Association

The Blade

"Creating an Awareness of Forages"



MAY/JUNE | 2016

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This publication is made possible in part with funding from:



**Memberships
are Due!**

Photo Credit: Herman Wyring

Mission Statement

To promote environmentally and economically sustainable forage and agricultural practices.

Vision Statement

The community is engaged in regenerative agricultural production methods.

Grey Wooded Forage Association

2016/2017 Memberships

Memberships are available now for \$20.00

and run from April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017

For more information phone 403-844-2645

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

Membership benefits:

- Receive discounts on Controlled Grazing Courses, seminars, workshops, tours when discounts are offered.
- Farm calls at \$100/visit and free consulting by phone, email or office visit on grazing management and any other forage production questions, effective immediately.
- Receive *The Blade* monthly via a link sent to you by email each month.
- Receive a printed copy of *The Blade* in the mail monthly for a \$10/year printing and postage fee, in addition to the \$20/year membership fee, effective July 1, 2015
- Receive up-to-date information on GWFA activities via The Blade, the website and by email.

Please mail the portion below with a cheque for \$20.00, or \$30 (\$10 printing & postage fee added) to:

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

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Soil Biology:_____ Pasture Rejuvenation or Renovation:_____

Low Cost Cow/calf Production:_____

Environmental Sustainability:_____ Economical Sustainability:_____

COMMENTS:_____

Manager's Notes

By Ginette Boucher

Greetings,

The much needed rain has come in many areas, and it was a relief for most of us. With the dry conditions and the threat of fires the rain was a blessing. Although some rain has come, I've seen grass go to seed already. Be sure to manage your pastures for drought conditions, and reduce your stocking rates and delay putting your cows on pasture as long as possible to alleviate the pressure on the little seedlings trying to grow in these dry conditions. Amber Kenyon writes about what they do on their farm during drought conditions in this publication of the Blade.



For those of you who attended our Seminar & AGM on the 14th, thank you for being part of this very special day. We realize that this is a critical time of year being seeding time, we are considering some changes although it is a challenge to complete our year end on March 31st, and have the books ready for auditing prior to this time. We hope to address this in the future. Our Seminar was very successful, Karin Lindquist provided a summary on page 10. You will be hearing more from Karin Lindquist as she is the new Forage & Livestock Specialist at the Ag-Info Centre. Karin will be writing a column in the Blade on a regular basis. Thank you Karin, for your assistance with photography, and your write up on our Seminar. We also thank Lacombe County for sponsoring our event, Next to New, and Frost Free Nosepumps for providing water for the event. We thank our Corporate Sponsors for supporting us, the speakers for their contribution, Board members for helping, and membership for attending.

Our annual report will be posted on our website soon and it will be available to everyone. For those of you who do not have online access please drop by the office and we will give you a copy. Our AGM went smoothly; no major decisions were made although some thoughts were brought forward for next year. One of those thoughts was to change the

membership fee from \$20.00 to \$40.00 and the other was to visit changing the name of GWFA to reflect the larger non grey wooded soil area that we now serve. The members agreed that we should review and consider it but discuss it at the next year's AGM. Most members were in favor although a few members did not agree about a name change.

We thank our new elected Board members Benz Rufenacht of Bluffton, and Amy Leitch of Alhambra for joining the Board of Directors; we look forward to working with you. We also thank our two outgoing Board members, Deb Skeels and Chris Sande for their years of service.

We will send out a digital copy of the AGM handout to members. Please drop into the office if you need a paper copy.

We welcome Devin Knopp; our newest addition to GWFA staff. Devin has taken on the Environmental & Communications Coordinator position and was present at the AGM and met many members. We are pleased to have Devin join us. Devin's write up is on page 7.

For those of you who have not heard, we now have a large sign in front of our alfalfa plots at Doug & Debbie Skeels farm prominently displaying our project. As we continue to monitor these plots and take plant clippings, we will keep you abreast of the developments. Thank you to Clearwater County for providing the equipment, labor and installation. We are developing a legume project (sainfoin & alfalfa) in conjunction with Alberta Agriculture and Forestry; this is taking place on Murray Abel's farm. We will keep you posted on this project as it develops. We are planning an event in August 2016 to create awareness of this project and generate interest. Wishing you a great summer.

Best regards,
Ginette

The Scourge of the Cattle Producer - SCOURS

By Kristen Ritson-Bennett

I wrote on this topic last year, but it sure doesn't hurt to have a refresher to go over the key points as we go into the season we all know too well as the scours season.



I believe that one of the biggest reasons calves get scours is out of curiosity. They start nibbling on everything when they mimicking momma cow. The primary method of transmission for scours is fecal oral, so if we can reduce this transfer through management we are already a big step ahead of an outbreak. The sources can be mud/fecal puddles in the calving areas, any standing water, manure piles in calving pens and confined calving spaces where proximity of critters is close.

It is well known that calf scours has a huge economic impact on your operation (drug, veterinary costs, labour). While some calves recover from treatment, there is a long term effect on the economics of your operation. Research shows that affected calves weigh as much as 35lbs less at weaning than healthy calves. There are some very minimal changes in management that can help mitigate the risks.

So what exactly is scours?

Calf scours is characterized by diarrhea which can prevent the absorption or cause the loss of fluids and nutrients from the intestines. This leads to dehydration and lethargic, acidotic calves that do not nurse. The loss of fluids is also accompanied by the loss of critical electrolytes such as sodium, potassium, chloride and bicarbonate ions which are essential for normal cell function and regulation of pH in the body. The intestines often

end up with permanent damage, hence the overall decrease in weight gain over the birth to weaning period.

What happens when my calf ends up with scours?

The primary damage in the intestines comes from infectious agents but death occurs from a combination of dehydration, acidosis and loss of electrolytes. The identification of the agent causing the scours can go a long way in helping us determine appropriate treatment for infected calves. Below is a chart that help to identify the infectious agent, age of calves infected, transmission and primary fecal signs.

Infectious Agent	Age of Affected Calves	Method of Transmission	SIGNS
BACTERIAL			
E. Coli	newborn calves typically less than 5 days.	Fecal/Oral	Effortless passing of yellow or white feces
Salmonella	Usually 2-6 weeks but can be any age	Fecal/Oral Colostrum/Milk Saliva/Nasal In-utero	Yellow to white Feces
Clostridium perfringens type C	5-10 days but can be in up to 2 month old calves	Fecal/Oral	Severe dark bloody diarrhea. Rapid deterioration
VIRAL			
Rota virus	7-14 days	Fecal Oral	Watery brown to light green feces, blood and mucus
Corona virus	Newborn to 1 month	Fecal/Oral	Watery, Yellow Feces
PROTOZOAL			
Coccidiosis	3 weeks to 6 months	Fecal/Oral	Blood tinged Feces sometimes with intestinal lining
Cryptosporidium	5 days to one month	Fecal/Oral	Blood tinged Feces

Treatment options for all of these infectious agents can be different, but let's start with prevention and then talk about treatment.

PREVENTION IS THE BEST MEDICINE!

These are the top 5 things you can do to prevent

scours from occurring and reduce the chances of transmission.

1. Reduce exposure of newborn calves to infectious agents that are present in the environment:

- Clean and disinfect all calving areas before the calving season has started. Some of these agents naturally live in the environment.
- Minimize confined calving/high stocking density if possible
- One-way flow of cows that are calving
- Pre-calving > Calving/Maternity > post-calving > Turn out with older healthy pairs
- Calving and calf creep areas need to have good clean bedding and be well drained. Fecal/Oral is the most common transmission, so cleanliness is key!
- Remove sick cow/calf pairs from the healthy group
- Avoid standing/ stagnant pools of water, do not calve downstream of wintering sites (run-off)
- SANITIZE equipment, boots and hands between treatment of sick calves
- Calve heifers first so their calves are older before the environment becomes heavily contaminated with scour agents later into the season (heifer colostrum is typically not as high quality as a mature cow)
- BVD virus shed from Persistently Infected (PI) calves will immunosuppress other calves, making them more susceptible to scour agents

2. Keep stress to a minimum

- Assist with calving when needed
- Keep animal dry, clean and provide wind shelter
- Have cows in a body condition score of 2.5-3 for optimal calving

3. Ensure adequate colostrum intake by calves

- Nurse as soon as possible after calving
- Supplement if necessary – this was well covered by Dr. Ritson-Bennett in the February 2015

edition of The Blade

- Maternal nutrition is very important in producing high quality colostrum for high passive transfer of antibodies.

4. Have a scour vaccination protocol in place

- Helps to provide protection to the calf through the colostrum
- There is no such thing as a universal protocol. Talk to your veterinarian to implement the most appropriate vaccination protocol for your operation. It is possible to vaccinate against rota virus, corona virus, E. coli and Clostridium perfringens.

5. Feed a coccidiostat

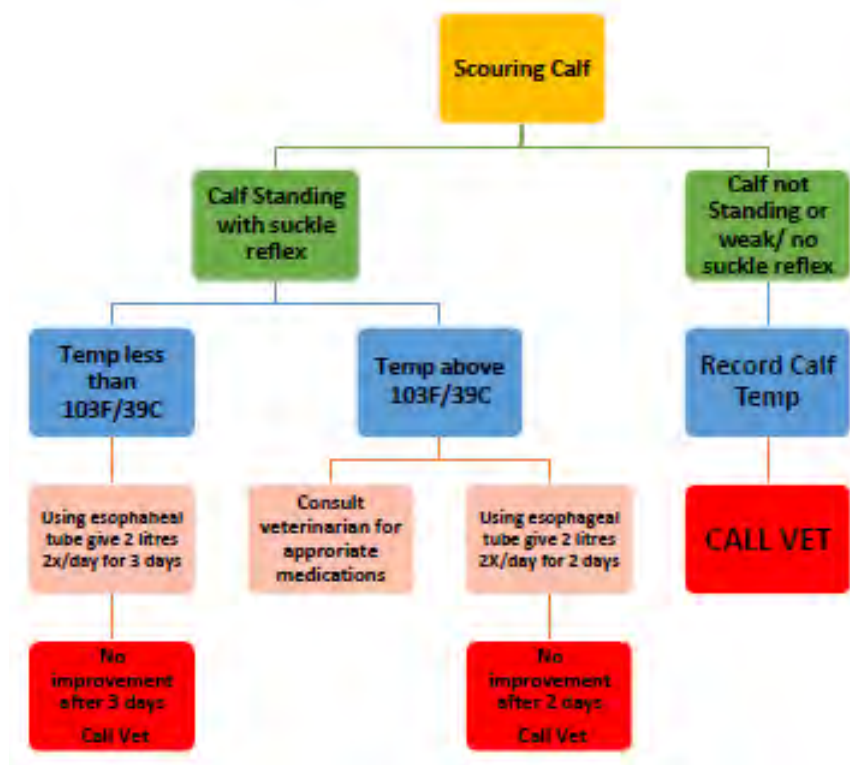
- Coccidiosis is a common source of scours and plays a role in immune response
- Can be included in a mineral/feed program: decoquinate (Deccox®), lasalocid (Bovatec®), monensin (Rumensin®), or for individual treatment Amprol or Baycox®. Discuss with a nutritionist or veterinarian to determine the most effective coccidiostat for your program.
- Although some cost is associated, it will always pay you back in improved gains and reduced labour costs associated with treatment (Keep that extra \$60-100 at weaning in mind!)

Treatment:

Even after implementing all the prevention measures listed, the pathogens can still be present in the environment. At the very least you have reduced the number of cases you will have to treat. The sooner you recognize that a calf is scouring the better the chance you have at saving it and reducing your costs associated with scouring. A calf that is lethargic, isolated, dehydrated (skin tents when pinched and eyes sunken), had watery/bloody/discoled feces and a high or low body temp (normal being 37.8-38.9 degrees C or 100-102 degrees F) should be closely monitored.

Below is a flow chart for easy decision making. Time

is key for these critters, so take action following this protocol:



Principles of Treatment:

1. Calf comfort

- Keep calf warm and dry – isolate from healthy calves.

2. Rehydration

- Use the appropriate electrolyte for the situation.
- Bicarbonate containing electrolytes may promote bacterial growth by increasing pH, do not add baking soda or table sugar. This environment is ideal for salmonella and E. coli proliferation.
- Ask your vet how to tube a calf if you do not already know.
- Calf-Lyte II®, REVIBE HE® - only use commercially manufactured electrolytes. They are specially formulated to deal with dehydrated calves.

3. Do NOT withhold milk for longer than 12 hours

- Oral electrolyte treatments do not contain enough energy to sustain calves and withholding can exacerbate problems

4. Re-evaluate regularly

- Hydration, demeanour, suck reflex, feces
- Take appropriate actions

Overall focus should be on prevention and management, NOT products or interventions. We have covered the causes of scours, the prevention of scours and the treatment of scours. The primary reasons for scours outbreaks are poor dam nutrition causing a failure of passive transfer of antibodies in colostrum, unsanitary calf housing and bedding, overcrowding and improper cleaning of areas where sick calves have been. Tackling a few prevention measures can go a long way in reducing your costs associated with calf scours on your farm and getting an extra 35lbs on your calf at weaning.

References: wcabp 2014 Dr. Geof Smith DVM, North Dakota State University

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Kristen Ritson-Bennett BSc. Ag – Ruminant Nutritionist/Business Manager
Office: (403) 227-2742 Email: Bluerock.Kristen@explornet.com

Please Welcome Devin to the GWFA Team

Grey Wooded Forage Association is pleased to announce Devin Knopp will be joining our team.

Devin grew up on a farm near Leslieville, Alberta. He left the farm to pursue an education in Agriculture from the University of Alberta. After graduating Devin spent four years working with DuPont Pioneer as a Research Agronomist in their Canola Research



Division. He then moved on to Leduc County where he spent a year and a half as the Agricultural Forman with his focus on vegetation management.

Devin is a member of the Alberta Institute of Agrologists where he is awaiting final approval for his professional designation and currently holds his pesticide applicators license. Devin and his wife Brenna are currently in the process of moving back to the farm and are very excited to be returning to the area.



Is your annual compensation review coming this year?
It is time to start planning.

I can help. Give me a call.



ALBERTA ENVIRONMENTAL FARM PLAN

General Inquiries:
Alberta Agriculture & Rural Development
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or Email: Info@Albertaefp.com

For more information contact the ARECA office:
Phone: 780-612-9712
or Email: faye@areca.ab.ca



Is Your Farm Implement Dealer or Distributor Licensed?

All farm implement distributors and dealers operating within the province of Alberta must be licensed under the Farm Implement Act.

This legislation provides consumers with protection on the purchase of new farm equipment. "Farmers should be aware that if they are conducting business with an unlicensed farm implement business, they will not have any protection under the Farm Implement Act," explains Jeana Les, rural engagement and communications specialist with the Farmers' Advocate Office (FAO). The FAO administers the Farm Implement Act.

"When a farmer is buying new farm equipment, part of making an informed decision is checking to make sure the dealer or distributor is licensed," states Les. Consumers can review the lists of licensed dealers and distributors on the FAO website at www.farmersadvocate.gov.ab.ca.

Additionally, each year licensed dealers and distributors are provided with physical licences to be displayed at their place of business.

If you have any questions about farm implement dealer and distributor licensing, please call the FAO through the Ag Info Centre at 310-FARM (3276).




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...continued on next page.

Healthy Lands, Healthy Future Seminar & AGM

By Karin Lindquist

The Healthy Lands, Healthy Future Seminar was a great opportunity for producers to hear about the research and opportunities behind beneficial land management practices and their potential for the future.



University of Alberta's rangeland ecologist Dr. Edward Bork focused on the research side of good land use and ecological goods and services, with impacts of grazing management and carbon storage being the primary focus. Results from several years of comparing grazed and ungrazed rangelands were shared, as well as potential for policy change if carbon tax benefits were applied to perennial grasslands.

Blake Hall of Prairie Gold Pastured Meats talked about the regenerative management principles and practices he and his family maintain on their ranch for continually improving both the land and themselves. Innovation and a philosophy for reducing waste--from human talent to materials--was a particularly interesting concept shared.

Alternative Land Use Services' (ALUS) Ken Lewis showed how the ALUS program is used to help producers improve their management practices to improve the quality of their land and increase profits. Kevin Ziola then talked about how his farm benefitted from the ALUS program. He is seeing huge improvements in wetland areas and greater productivity in their pastures with better grazing management.

Paul Watson, manager of the Environmental Farm Plan with the Agriculture Research and Extension Council of Alberta (ARECA), talked about an ever-growing program to help producers document and plan out their operations so that they can become more sustainable. Focus is being done to streamline the program so that it takes less time to complete and

to have it on-line, as well as implement a species-at-risk plan for producers to work with.

Overall, it was a very informative and interesting session. There holds a lot of opportunity for producers to further improve their land base with a lot of resources at their fingertips, much of which has been shown in this meeting.

Karin Lindquist was raised on a mixed farm near Barrhead, with backgrounding/stocker beef steers, and barley and canola crops. Besides experience working with the cattle purchased and sold annually, and working on an Animal Science degree (Bachelor of Science in Agriculture) at the University of Alberta, she also worked a few times as a summer student at a local private large & small animal veterinary practice.

A year was spent working as a customer service representative for a farm & ranch supply store. Summer 2014 was spent working as a research field assistant with the Rangeland Research Institute (as part of the U of A) travelling to, and working on the university's primary rangeland and beef ranches: Roy Berg Kinsella Research Ranch north of Wainwright, and the RRI's Mattheis Research Ranch near Brooks. Plant identification, building grazing exclosers and soil coring were some of the primary duties Lindquist enjoyed.

After graduation, Karin worked at the Breton Plots (west of Edmonton) and the Ellerslie Research Station as a research assistant in soil and crop science research, working with various crops and collecting data on various crops from barley and hay mixes, to oats and canola.

Karin came to the Alberta Ag-Info Centre as a Forage-Beef Specialist in January 2016. Her main interests and expertise are with plant identification, rangeland, pasture, forage, and grazing management, as well as beef production from feeding and reproduction to health and nutrition.

Creep Feeding Calves

By Rob Hand - Feedlot Specialist, Red Deer

Creep feeding is the practice of providing supplemental feed to calves before weaning. Creep feeding helps in supplementing mother's milk and pasture. The feed is provided in a facility designed so that adult animals are unable to consume the creep feed.

By providing creep feed, it is possible to increase pre weaning weight gains and weaning weights. However, the selling price of the calves and the cost of feed must be considered when a producer is making a decision about creep feeding. Creep feeding has many advantages, but there are also disadvantages that must be considered by the livestock producer.

Pasture and Feed Conversion Efficiency

In most cases, pastures become energy deficient later in the grazing season. Using energy-rich creep feeds to fill deficiencies in energy that calves may experience will result in better growth performance. In an energy-deficient state, calves will substitute forage on pasture for creep feed, allowing for increases in stocking rates.

In situations where cattle are grazing poor quality mature or dormant grasses, protein deficiencies may be of primary concern. In this case, creep feed may be used primarily as an additional source of protein for calves. Supplemental protein fed in association with grazing poor quality, low protein forages will result in an increased consumption of poor quality feed on pasture. In this case, stocking rates would have to be reduced, as calves will tend to consume more grass.

As a rule, it is not advisable to include urea in creep feeds designed to act as a protein supplement as individual animal intake is quite variable. Also, without a source of readily available energy, calves are limited in their ability to metabolize urea to the microbial protein used for growth.

It is estimated that each kg (lb) of creep feed consumed will save 0.5 to 1.0 kg (0.5-1.0 lb) of forage dry matter. Therefore, if a calf consumes 90 kg (200 lb) of creep feeding throughout the summer, a saving of about 68 kg (150 lb) of forage dry matter would result. This saving would represent an additional animal unit month of pasture for every four calves being creep fed. Since creep feeds have a higher energy value than forages, a substitution of creep feed for forage dry matter will result in an increased energy intake and a subsequent increase in weight gain by the calf.

Since stocking rates can be increased if calves are creep fed, feed conversion efficiency is often difficult to calculate. Assuming no change in stocking rate, the feed conversion could range from 5 to 20 kg (with 8-10 kg being common) of creep feed per kilogram of additional gain. If changes in pasture stocking rate are considered, the feed conversion efficiency is often less than 5 kg of creep feed per kg of additional gain. In general, feed conversions are the most efficient for calves sucking two-year-old or poor milking cows, or when pastures are inadequate or mature.

When to Creep Feed

Creep feeding may provide an economic advantage if one or more of the following apply:

- during periods of drought, when pastures are poor later in the grazing season or when cow milk production is lowered
- two-year old heifers and low-producing cows or cows older than eleven and their calves can be separated from the main herd
- as part of a forage management program to conserve pasture
- increase the pasture stocking rate or when calves are fall born
- as part of preconditioning program, creep feeding two to three weeks before weaning will

help calves become accustomed to dry feed

- prices for weaned calves are high and feed grain prices are low
- the market demands calves to be in extra good flesh
- calves will be slaughtered immediately after weaning or late calves are being pushed for a set market date
- feeding potential replacement heifers from low milk producers to get calves to reach puberty by 13 to 15 months of age for large cross-bred calves from low milk producing cows
- when the price discount is small for heavier-weight feeder calves
- when large-frame calves are immediately placed on a high energy ration and destined for slaughter at 12 to 14 months of age

When Not to Creep Feed

- cows are milking well or pastures are of high quality and abundant
- calves will be fed for a low daily gain after weaning
- calves are being raised for replacements or grain prices are high relative to calf prices

For more information, contact:

Alberta Ag-Info Centre

Call toll free 310-FARM (3276)



Water Solutions in a Drought

By Amber Kenyon - Greener Pastures Ranching (www.greenerpasturesranching.com)

Here at Greener Pastures Ranching we have recently taken stock of our dugouts on the five grazing cells that we will be running our 1000 head of custom grazed cattle on. It will be no surprise to anyone to hear that we have very little water in our dugouts for starting off the grazing season. The past winter in our area was a very dry one. Although terrific for the pea straw grazing that we did throughout the season, it has the potential to make the upcoming summer incredibly tough.



One of the most important things that we do on our ranch before going into the grazing season is setting up our grazing plan. On this operation not only do we need to make our grazing plan for our cattle, but we also need to make plans for our swine, broilers and our layers. Last year our biggest challenge of the season was water. Because of proper grazing management we did manage to have plenty of grass for the year; however water was difficult. Because

we know that this was an issue last year we are going into this year with a better idea of what to expect. So what are your options when water for your animals gets tight?

On our ranch we have numerous dugouts, a couple of wells, some gravity flow sites, and a turkey's nest. The first thing that we looked at was which sites still hold enough water capacity to sustain our herds, and through how many rotations. (We run most of our herds through two rotations on our pastures, depending on growth). From there we looked at how we might access those watering sites from the paddocks that will more than likely be lacking in water this year.

One of the easiest and cheapest ways to get the animals to water this year is going to end up being a temporary alleyway. By using electric fence and step in posts we can set up an alleyway nearly anywhere. This will keep the animals out of the majority of the paddocks that they are walking through and give

that land a chance to recuperate until we come around to it on the next rotation. The downside to an alleyway is that the land the passageway is put on does see more abuse than the area around it; however with it being temporary we will be able to give it the rest that it will need next year. Nature will forgive one mistake, it just won't forgive the same mistake over and over.

Another option that we looked at was running an above ground pipeline system. While being fairly economical, this is a quite a bit more expensive than a temporary alleyway and it is more labour intensive to set up, especially if your land doesn't already have a way to pump the water (such as power or enough of an incline for gravity flow). An above ground pipeline does also heat the water running through the pipes to some extent, depending on where you place it. This can potentially be problematic if the water comes out too hot on the other end. An alternative would be to trench the pipeline underground, although again adding more expense. Some of the benefits to a pipeline system are that you are able to get the water to almost anywhere that you need it to go. This means that the cattle won't have to walk as far to get to water, which will save the abuse area that an alleyway might see.

The option that we will be looking at for our pigs and chickens will be the water truck method, although in our case it is more of a water trailer method. We pump water from a dugout into a water tank that is permanently mounted on a trailer and use this to gravity flow to our smaller animals' water bowls. Because the smaller animals take in less water, this is a fairly simple process and makes it easy to rotate water with the pens. The water truck method can be a terrific way to rotationally graze cattle as well, in that you can choose where you want your watering site each time that you move. This allows for better utilization and manure distribution in each of your paddocks and more flexibility. The water truck

method is a fair bit more labour intensive than the alternatives though.

Another thing to keep in mind when looking at your possible watering sites for this summer, is that the government of Alberta is currently running a Water Pumping Program. As producers we are able to rent equipment to fill our dugouts from a larger water source nearby. This can be incredibly handy if you are fortunate enough to be farming an area that has this as an option. You can find out more information about this at your county office, or on the Alberta Agriculture and Forestry website.



These are some of the options that we are currently looking at. It is incredibly important to have a drought plan in place every year, but especially on a year such as this one after the last couple of summers of drought. With any luck a big rainstorm or two are just around the corner, until then though I will be asking my husband to continue doing his rain dance.


Greener Pastures Ranching Ltd.


Presents:
The Greener Pastures Walk (aka Hay Ride)

Our annual Pasture Walk will be held on July 11, 2015 on our ranch near Busby, Alberta. Don't miss out as we spend a day looking at everything grazing! We will look at the grazing concepts & principles, natural weed and gopher control, high legume grazing, fencing, cell design, water systems, bale grazing and so much more. A BBQ lunch will be provided. The cost will be \$75/person or \$50 with a group of 5 or more. Kids under 16 are welcome and have free admission.

To register please contact Steve Kenyon
(780)307-6500
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www.greenerpasturesranching.com



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JUNE 16 & 17, 8:30am - 5:30pm,
WEEDON PIONEER COMMUNITY HALL

42299 Weedon Trail, Cochrane, AB
RSVP June 9th





Soil Health: The Bottom Lines

Nicole Masters

June 24, 2016

Carstairs Community Hall
and Outdoor Field Site

9:15am-3:30pm

\$25/member, \$40/non-member



♦ *Am I getting max
yield from my land?*

♦ *How can I reduce costs while
increasing production?*

♦ *Is my soil healthy?*

♦ *How can I reduce pests, weeds, and
disease?*

Visit:

**To
Register:**

[http://soilhealth-
bottomlines.eventbrite.ca](http://soilhealth-bottomlines.eventbrite.ca)



"My expectations were high and she exceeded them. Her knowledge, personality, humor, and enthusiasm were compelling. She kept the audience thoroughly engaged in the classroom and in the field and changed the way we look at soil."



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- One bundle of 3.5" fence posts — 6' or 7'
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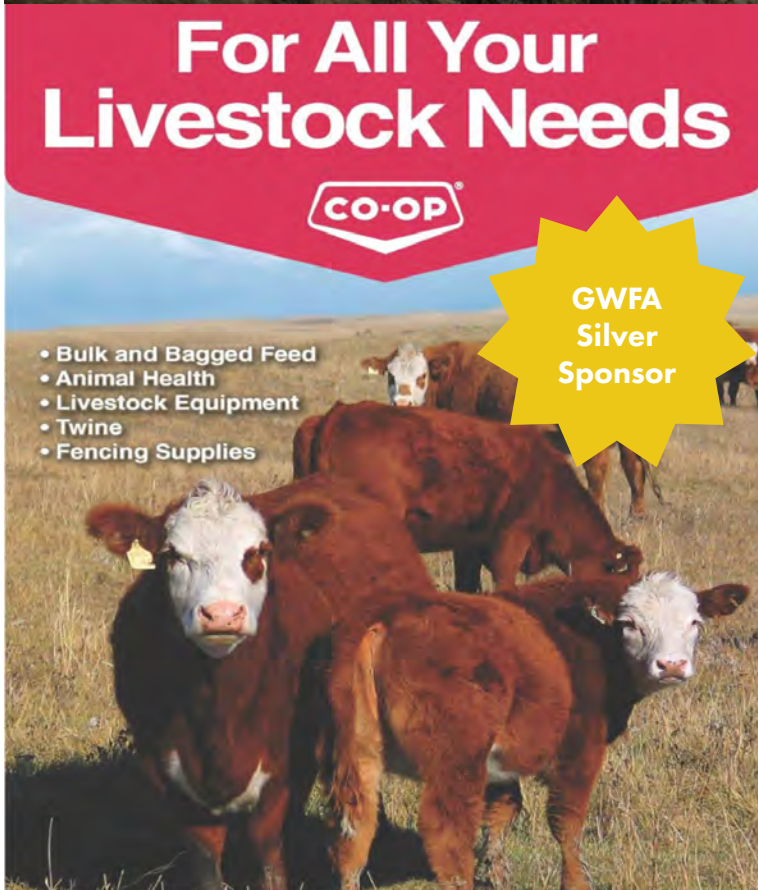
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Technical Information for the Canadian Forage Beef Industry

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