



Grey
Wooded
Forage
Association

The Blade

"Creating an Awareness of Forages"

SEPTEMBER 2014

Box 1448, 5039 - 45 Street, Rocky Mountain House, Alberta T4T 1B1,
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GWFA Staff photo, Sept 11, '14

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

facebook

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.

Director's Corner

Hi, Vance Graham here.

I'm one of the new directors on the GWFA board, and it is my first time on the board. I'm married to Mindy, we have four children, who are at the high school to university level of their lives. In fact there is only one at home full time now. We farm and ranch at the Strachan area South West of Rocky Mountain House. We of course includes my mother Margie, the hardest working cattle woman I know.

We are also involved in the timber industry through the family owned sawmill Strachan Forest Products. Our ranch has one of the grazing allotments along the foothills (Fall Creek Allotment), which means we get to keep abreast of all the new developments in recreation (side by sides), and industry (coal exploration). Because of the allotment and mill and a weak moment, I'm currently in-



involved with SPIRT. The Sundre Forest Products Public Round Table, a public advisory group for West Fraser's operations in this area. I'm one of several people who represent the public's interest in West Fraser's harvest area, as well as the "small timber operator & grazing allotment holder" representative. Two birds one stone, for them.

Then once in a while I get to go to Ranch Lands municipality for director meetings with the Rocky Mountain Forest Reserve Grazing Association. There our group deals with the government, on behalf of members, on allotment inventories and management plans, and any worthy projects we can find funds for. I'm the northern area director, one of those positions that you have to find your own replacement if you want out.

I know the Grey Wooded has lots to teach me and I hope to help the association with the "gathering and dispersing of forage and livestock information"

Vance

We need to hear from you!

Winter is fast approaching, and in the past there have been so many events / seminars/ conferences and activities throughout the season that it is hard to decide which one to attend, if any. "We need to hear from you". The best way to do a successful outreach and provide value is to ask you what **you** would be interested in, when, and how we can best provide it. This way we are sure to be successful in helping you reach your goals regarding forage and livestock production.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Feel free to drop in, email, or give us a call. We want to hear from you.

GWFA's New Corporate Sponsorship Program

Recently we have developed a new Corporate Sponsor program. This program was designed to assist the Grey Wooded Forage Association in continuing to provide an excellent program and extension services to all producers in Central Alberta. Our funders require us to match 30% of funding we receive from them therefore a large amount of time is dedicated to fulfill this mandate. Through our Corporate Sponsor program we form partnerships that enable us to fulfil these objectives.

Our main goal is to protect our environment and enhance the communities we work in and assist farmers in

sustainability for future years to come. The Corporate Sponsor program is for companies, partnerships or corporations who wish to support the GWFA and its programs.

We would be pleased to forward this program to you if you should be interested in supporting our organization. Please contact Ginette at gwfa3@telus.net or direct at 403-507-5078. The Corporate Sponsorship program is available on our website at www.greywoodedforageassociation.com.



Manager's Notes:

By Albert Kuipers

Greetings, GWFA members and friends. Wow! Summer sure flew by. We're now well into the harvest season and pretty much all the second cut haying is done.

We've already had a little reminder that winter is not far away.

This month I'd like to address something that could, or should be important to anyone who's planning on selling, or buying hay. Every year we see hay offered for sale by the bale and every year we see sellers guessing at the bale weight. We also see that bale weights can vary by several hundred pounds between bales that look pretty much the same. You know, it would make so much more sense to sell hay by the pound, ton, or tonne and agree on a weighing protocol with your buyers.



Both the seller and buyer would know just how much hay they're dealing with.

Another way to add value to hay you're offering for sale is to get it feed tested and make the feed test report available to potential buyers. If the hay analysis shows that the hay you're selling is excellent feed with better than average protein levels, advertise and price it that way.

If you change the way you sell hay to selling by weight instead of by the bale, and providing feed test reports with the hay, you will significantly improve buyer confidence in you and the hay you're selling. I'd say that's money in the bank.



On another note, if you don't already, consider getting soil analysis done for each of your fields, or pastures. With the information you receive on a soil test report, you can get a handle on any soil fertility issues your soils might have and deal with them.

While you can leave your soil testing till spring, fall is actually a good time to get it done. September is a good time to collect soil samples from perennial forage stands. For cultivated fields you should wait till October to do your soil sampling.

While it is advantageous to collect your samples while the soil is cool, I'd say the biggest reason to soil test in the fall is so you can plan and budget for your soil fertility program the following year.

If you'll be looking at buying fertilizer, getting it purchased in fall or winter, just might save you more than a few bucks. In recent years we've often seen fertilizer prices go up as spring approaches, so I'd say good timing of fertilizer purchases is simply good management.

We have a bale sampling probe and a small soil sampling probe available for members to borrow at our office. Please call to make sure the sampling probes are available when you want them. You might find them already in use by someone else if you just stop by the office to get either of them.



Photographer unknown

Silvopasture Workshop

October 1, 2014

Bergen Community Hall

Registration Deadline: September 26, 2014

Topics of discussion will include:

- **Management of cattle grazing in woodlots**
- **Value and management of forage in forested stands compared to pasture**
- **Benefits of grazing cattle in a partially forested pasture**
- **Protection of forested riparian areas**

Schedule:

- **5:00pm – Registration**
- **5:05pm – Brief talk on silvopasture and the tour area**
- **5:15pm – Depart to Jackson Lake property**
- **5:30pm – Arrive at property, tour grazed mixedwood stands and riparian areas, compare stands with different grazing pressures**
- **6:30pm – Return to hall**
- **6:45pm – Dinner - Chili on a Bun!**
- **7:00pm – Discussion of timber and forage value and management in silvopasture**
- **8:00pm – Conclude**

For more information or to register:

- **Fiona McCarthy: 403-335-3311 ext. 143 or email: fmccarthy@mvcountry.com**

Brought to you by:



Introducing Our New Question & Answer Column!

Q:

What can I do with my second cut alfalfa hay crop when we get an early frost? It's maybe at about 10% bloom. Should I cut it, or graze it? Would nitrate poisoning be something to be concerned about?

Jim S.

A:

Alfalfa will experience a killing frost when the temperature goes below -5 degrees, so the first thing to determine is whether the frost was severe enough to be a killing frost. If it wasn't a killing frost it would be a good idea to wait with cutting, or grazing till you've had a killing frost.

If you had a killing frost, then you could decide to hay, or graze the crop. Consider whether or not you really need the feed. Consider the maturity of the crop. If you have over 10% bloom, your risk of winter kill is considerably less than at lower levels of bloom, or pre-bloom.

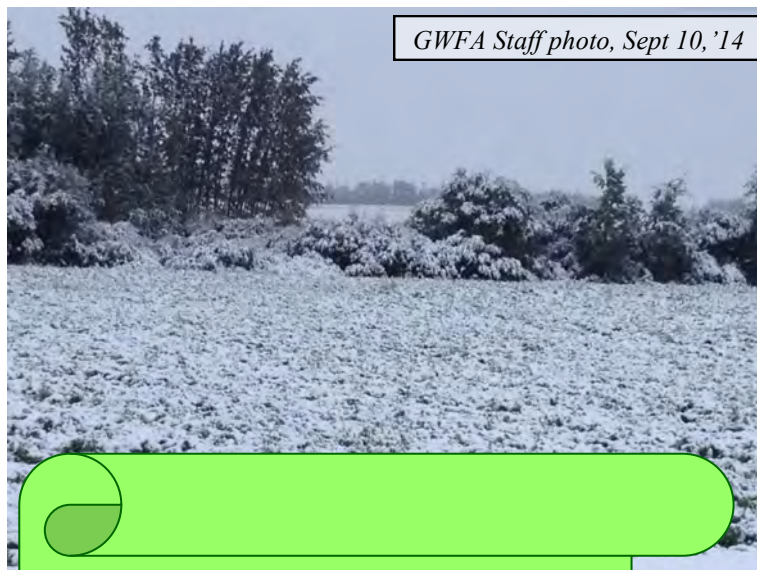
Also consider the winter hardiness of the type, or variety you have. Winter hardiness is a key factor influencing stand longevity. Creeping rooted Siberian types can handle more fall cutting or grazing than highly productive, tap rooted types.

Deep crowned varieties, those with crowns below the soil surface, are also more resistant to winterkill than high crowned varieties. They, along with the creeping rooted varieties, are also resistant to damage from livestock traffic, so could be grazed after a killing frost without too much risk of damage.

Regarding risk of nitrate poisoning, legumes do not store excess nitrates in the plant material, so nothing to worry about. The nitrates are stored in the root zone of the plant and are trans-located into the plant as required. Alfalfas, vetches, trefoils, peas and clovers generally do not accumulate nitrates.



GWFA Staff photo, Sept 10, '14



This is your opportunity to submit your questions to have them answered in The Blade. You can email questions to Albert at gwfa2@telus.net, or to Ginette at gwfa3@telus.net. If emailing doesn't cut it for you, you can phone us with your questions, or drop in at the office if you're in the neighborhood. We welcome all kinds of forage and livestock related questions, so please don't hesitate to send them to us.

Thanks,
Albert.

LJB Ranch

Jim & Barb Bauer

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Fall Harvesting Alfalfa - Frequently Asked Questions

Frosty alfalfa in Clearwater County on September 11, 2014



Is there a critical fall period when alfalfa should not be harvested?

Alfalfa should not be cut 4-6 weeks before the first killing frost (about -5°C). Shorter days, cooler temperatures, and drier soils trigger the plant to slow growth and begin storing root reserves for the winter and growth the following spring. If alfalfa is cut during this period and begins to re-grow it will need to use root reserves. If a killing frost occurs before root reserves are restored (10" or bud stage), then the plant may not have enough reserves for the winter and spring re-growth.

Will I injure my newly established stand if I cut it now? Wouldn't it be better to cut the older ones?

Actually a newly established stand of alfalfa is less likely to be injured than an older stand (3 years and older). Younger stands are healthier and are free of the crown and root diseases. The available nutrients are also higher in younger stands and improve winter survival. However, if you do harvest a stand during the critical fall period, do not repeat this practice the following year.

Can fertility improve winter survival?

Fertility is a very important part of winter survival. Alfalfa can fix nitrogen, but it will still require large amounts of the other nutrients. Potassium (K) helps protect the plant tissues from freezing, plays a role in storing winter reserves, and improves resistance to diseases. Phosphorus (P) will help establish

strong root systems and promote vigorous spring growth. The most efficient way to provide these nutrients is at the time of establishment.

What other factors affect winter survival?

- **Variety**, fall **moisture** conditions, and **soil pH** will all have a role in winter survival.
- Not all alfalfa varieties are the same with regard to winter hardiness. Remember that rapid growth and yield will usually come at the cost of winter hardiness.
- Soil pH is also important. Alfalfa is best adapted to a soil pH of 6.5. Stands grown in slightly acidic soils (less than 6.0) will be at a greater risk for winter injury and should not be harvested during the critical period.
- Wet field conditions in the fall will reduce the amount of dormancy and increase injury from ice sheeting and frost heaving. Dry soils are actually better insulated and hasten the onset of dormancy which will improve winter survival.

Which is the safest way to harvest alfalfa in the fall with out injuring the plant?

The best solution would be to wait until just before or after the killing frost. Alfalfa will be difficult to dry under these conditions so it is advised to ensile it. If you can, leave a 6 in. stubble and some uncut strips to help trap snow. Alternatively, you could try and move up your first cutting date (again you may have to silage it to beat the weather) so that your second cut will fall just before the critical period.

*Prepared by Mark Johns,
Ag-Info Centre, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development*



Foragebeef.ca

Technical Information
for the Canadian
Forage Beef Industry

Alberta Ag-Info Centre

310-farm

Phone 310-FARM (3276) toll-free to contact Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, or visit one of our field offices across the province for your agricultural information needs.

Canada

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A federal-provincial-territorial initiative



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Is Fall the Time to Consider Weed Control?

Fall is a great time to inventory pastures (tame and native) for weedy trouble spots. Are there new patches of weeds showing up? Determine if these weedy areas are due to over-grazing and consider making adjustments to your grazing strategy next year.

When should I spray?

Annual weeds are usually best controlled in the spring when they are small. However, perennial weeds are busy moving sugars into the root system to be stored over the winter for next spring's re-growth. So when we apply systemic herbicides at this time of the year we get excellent translocation of the herbicide throughout the plant which results in excellent control of the weeds. Spraying in mid-September to early October is a great strategy to control weeds like Canada thistle, leafy spurge, dandelions and such.



Photographer unknown



Photographer unknown

When does mowing work best?

If you should happen to experience a dry year, mowing can be better than spraying. Why? Weeds have to be actively growing to translocate the herbicide within the plant. In drought conditions they are not growing actively. In that case mowing can be more effective in suppressing weeds than spraying.

What about herbicide injury to beneficial broadleaved forages?

Herbicides intended for controlling broadleaf weeds will also control desirable broadleaf plants like alfalfa, clovers and legumes. This is where spot spraying can help maintain legumes in the pasture if weeds are only in localized areas, or the landowner owner may need to re-establish the legumes after satisfactory weed control has been obtained.

By Jack Payne, Olds College



3rd Sheep and Goat Grazing

Symposium 2014



By Eugene Joseph Verboeckhoven 19th Century

October 15 and 16, 2014
Thorsby Community Hall
4813 - 49 Street, Thorsby, AB

DAY 1:

Grazing Principles - Woody Lane
Brush and Weed Management - An Peischel

Filling Feed Holes - Woody Lane

LUNCH

Bonding Flocks and Herds - Dean Anderson

Predator Control with Guardian Animals - An Peischel

DAY 2:

Virtual Fencing - Dean Anderson

Tangle Ridge Ranch Tour

(www.tangleriverranch.ca)

LUNCH

Marketing/Social Media - Vicky Horn

Discussion Panel

Cost: \$75 per person for members,
\$85 for non-members

To Pre-register contact Tina:

7 8 0 - 7 2 7 - 4 4 4 7

www.westcentralforage.com



Agricultural Research and
Extension Council of Alberta
www.areca.ab.ca

How to Increase Organic Matter on Your Pastures

What You Can Do This Winter

When I'm out walking pastures around the area, evidence of poor fertility is something I see quite often. I'm often told that poorly producing pastures don't respond well to fertilizer applications, or that there's no way they're buying fertilizer.

I'd say that, whether you use fertilizer or not, one of the biggest factors that affect fertility and production is the amount of organic matter present in the soil. Organic matter is made up of broken down organic materials to the point where its composition is stabilized. It's well known that the rich, black soils along the QE 2 corridor are some of the most productive in our area. That's because of their organic matter content.

Now, most of you would tell me that your pastures are not on this rich, black soil. Many of you don't have the benefit of having high organic matter in your soils.

So, what can you do about that? Many of you have heard me talk about good grazing management being an excellent way of building organic matter in the soil, and it is a very important way of doing so.

As our growing season, and for many the grazing season is pretty much out the window, let's take a look at some of the ways you can increase the amount of organic materials feeding the pool of organic matter in the soil. Those billions of soil microbes need to have a constant supply of organic materials to feed on to maintain and increase the organic matter in the soil.

We can help with these supplies of organic materials, not only in the growing, or grazing season, but also through our long winter months. If this winter is like last winter, and I hope it isn't, we'll have pretty much six months of winter with all the other seasons fitting into the remaining six months. That's a lot of months you could be improving your pastures. By loading them up with organic materials that break down easily, those little critters of the soil will have lots to chew on once the warm weather of spring returns.

Over quite a few years now, we've been talking about a number of ways to feed your livestock out in the field or pasture, instead of in feedlot pens. We've seen that practices like swath grazing, bale grazing, grazing stockpiled forages and feeding on the land in winter often does boost production in subsequent years. You may not have realised it, but what you're really doing with these different winter feeding systems is building a good supply of organic materials on those pastures.

So let's have a look at some of these winter feeding systems. Each of them, to some extent or another, adds or recycles organic materials and nutrients to the soil.

Take bale grazing, for example. Bale grazing can concentrate large amounts of organic materials and nutrients in small, somewhat circular spaces. Outside of these circular spaces there is little impact of organic materials and nutrients, resulting in production that is not uniform. Also, if the bales are brought in from elsewhere, you are importing the organic material and the nutrients each bale brings along with it. However, if the bales used are from the same field, you would not be increasing the organic materials and nutrients in the field, but recycling them instead. That's still a whole lot better than remov-



ing organic material and nutrients.

Swath grazing and grazing of stockpiled forages tend to recycle organic materials and nutrients through the livestock. Stockpiled forages are quite simply forages left standing in fields or pastures chosen for winter use. Very little is taken away by the animals, but the only organic materials and nutrients added would be those added through fertilizer and/or manure applications.

Different systems of feeding on the land vary from rolling bales out to mechanically shredding bales to feeding silage in rows or piles. If care is taken to do so, residual materials from these feeding systems can be spread quite uniformly across fields or pastures. If the feed is imported from other fields, or purchased from elsewhere, you could add to the pool of organic materials and nutrients each year. If you are feeding forages harvested from the same field, you would be recycling most of the organic materials and nutrients.



So, if you want to make some significant gains in soil organic matter over time, you need to be adding organic matter and nutrients. You definitely need to import feed to increase the pool of organic materials feeding the pool of organic matter.

So, how does this improve your pasture? The increase in organic matter increases the nutrient and water holding capacity of the soil. The organic matter also makes an excellent habitat for all those little critters that break down organic materials into organic matter. While they're at it, these little critters also break down nutrients into plant available forms. Basically, organic matter content of soils drive the whole soil fertility process, or mineral cycle.

The use of these various winter feeding systems on the land tend to result in quite inexpensive improvements in production on those fields or pastures, but there still could be imbalances, or deficiencies of nutrients.

Another way of adding organic materials is by spreading wood chips, possibly from brush control in other areas of the farm, or pasture. Depending on your situation, this could be a great, or small contributor to your organic matter pool.

If the parent organic materials, or parent soils are deficient in any macro, or micronutrients, those nutrients will continue to be deficient unless supplemented. If those nutrients are present, but unavailable, soil microbial activity brought on by increasing organic matter in the soil could make them plant available.

What this is saying is that soil testing should be done

at least annually to determine what deficiencies there might be and to what level. It is often said that production will not improve above it's most limiting factor, so it really pays to identify what those factors might be. All of your other work to increase production would be fruitless if even one most limiting factor is not addressed.

So, I wish for all of you to have an excellent winter of building organic matter on your pastures. Remember, any residual feed or organic materials left from feeding livestock is not wasted.



GWFA Staff photo



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The Blade

Creating an Awareness of Forages

You can advertise in The Blade!

If you have a product or service to sell, and would like to advertise in the Blade, and if you would like a larger, colour ad, please call or email us. We have ad spaces available from business card sized to full page ad spaces and would be glad to discuss how we can help you with your advertising needs.

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



Alberta Agriculture Opportunity Fund

Getting into Farming Information Session

For the Aspiring Farmer

Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development

Session topics include:

- Overview of Agriculture
- Business Planning
- Personal Assessment
- Financial
- Land
- Resources/Education

October 30, 2014
Airdrie – Agriculture Centre
97 East Lake Ramp NE Airdrie, AB

9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
(registration starts at 8:30 a.m.)

Cost: \$25/person
(includes lunch)

To Register call the Ag-Info Centre at 1-800-387-6030



Growing Forward 2 

 **Canada**

Introducing GWFA's New Free Buy & Sell Section!

WANTED: Two year old hay for roughage in the Caroline area. Also looking for a Jersey milk cow. Contact Doug or Merv Cooper at **403-722-2605**

WANTED: Brillion Seeder, 12 to 16 feet. Must have Hydraulic transportability. Please call **403-895-1722**.

WANTED: Hay for range cow feed & a 5 yard tractor pulled scraper. Near Bearberry / Mountain View County, call **403-638-2718**

FOR SALE: 2 tonne capacity feed mixer with weigh scale cells. 3 phase motor, but can be converted if necessary. In good shape. Motivated to sell - Must go. Contact Kristen **403-358-1674** for more information. Located in Innisfail.

WANTED: Looking for an '04 to '09 Chevy 1 ton dually diesel truck. **403-728-3992**

FOR SALE: Hand-spinners! **RARE WOOL AVAILABLE!** We have some beautiful Black Welsh Mountain Sheep wool for sale. \$40/Fleece. Contact Kristen **403 358 1674** or email ritson.bennett@gmail.com

FOR SALE: 1964 IHC 1600 grain truck needs tune up to run. Box unusable. Good 14' hoist & tires. Cab is straight. V8 motor 4 speed transmission, 2 speed axle. Reasonable offers. **403-556-2282**

WANTED: 100 round bales of 1st cut hay in the Ponoka area. **403-783-2681** or **403-704-0305**

You can now submit ads to our **FREE Buy & Sell** section of The Blade. You may use this section to advertise any forages, seed, livestock, or equipment you have to sell, or you would like to buy. Ads for this section must be limited to 150 characters in length.

ON OFFER

150 Bred Heifers

Angus cross heifers selected at weaning from some of the top herds in western Canada. Sorted in spring for quality and consistency before being pelvic measured and palpated for reproductive maturity.

Vaccinated on Boehringer's Express products ensuring fetal protection of BVD.

Bred to calving ease black angus bulls.

Calving will start by April 1, 2015

90 % of the heifers are solid black and 10 % have white on their face.

Priced at \$2100 CDN per head, discount available on purchases over 40 head.

Video available upon request.

Please contact Matt Tees
(403)358-1035



Heifers will be available for loading starting Oct. 20, accepting deposits now.

Red heifers will be available later in 2014. email mattronda@hotmail.com

!!GWFA Argentina Agricultural Tour!!



Leader Tours Inc.

Agricultural Tour: Feb 20th to March 3rd, 2015

**Agricultural Tour & optional Iguazú Falls Tour:
Feb 20th to March 6th, 2015**



You will visit:

- the Argentine Cooperatives Association (ACA) Headquarters for a description and discussion about the Agricultural Industry in Argentina followed by a visit to the Canadian Embassy – overview of doing business in Argentina.
- LA PASTORIZA - A large 4000 cow ranching operation and several other cattle ranches.
- the Farmers and cattlemen Association of Las Flores.
- the Town of Tandil, known for their cheese and cured meats and an agricultural cooperative.
- the Martinez & Staneck Agricultural Machinery factory.
- Cabaña Santa Ana, a ranch where they raise the Argentinian "Criollos Horse".
- the Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria (INTA) to learn about the beef cattle situation in Argentina and visit the INTA experimental farm.
- the School of Agriculture of the University of Mar del Plata.
- a traditional Gaucho Party.
- Liniers Livestock Market, the largest cattle market in the world.

The optional Iguazú Falls Tour includes:

- Boating tour across the Paraná and Iguazú rivers with live music on board.
- a full day visit to the Iguazú Water Falls (Argentinean Side)
- a full day visiting the Ruins of Saint Ignacio and the Wanda Mines

Visit www.greywoodedforageassociation.com for more information!



GWFA Member Benefits

- Farm calls and consulting on grazing management, pasture rejuvenation, feed production (annual forages) and more...
- Receive discounts on Controlled Grazing courses, seminars, tours,
- Receive the GWFA newsletter in spring and fall and the Blade monthly

Memberships are available for \$20.00 and run from April 1st, 2014 to March 31, 2015.

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

Don't delay-renew today; Membership renewals are due!

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 _____

Company Name _____ Mobile Phone _____

Address _____ Fax _____

Town _____ Prov _____ Email _____

Postal Code _____ Confirm Email _____

Please give us an idea of what area of forage production you are interested in:

Controlled Grazing & Pasture Management: _____

Growing Annual Forages for Extended Grazing or Swath Grazing: _____

Growing Annual Forages for Silage or Greenfeed: _____

Growing Hay: _____ Ration Balancing: _____

Soil Biology: _____ Pasture Rejuvenation or Renovation: _____

Low Cost Cow/calf Production: _____

Environmental Sustainability: _____ Economical Sustainability: _____

COMENTS: _____



Western Canadian Grazing Conference



"Going Beyond Sustainability"

December 9, 10 & 11, 2014

**Radisson Hotel
Edmonton South**



Keynote Speakers:

Judith Schwartz - Cows Save the Planet

Dr. Diane Knight - How Legumes Feed the Soil

Josh Dukart - Thinking Regeneratively...Beyond Our Own Borders

Producer Panel - Transitioning to Pasture

Banquet: *Greg Johnson - I'm Just a Tornado Hunter*

For more information contact:
www.wcgconference.ca • ARECA • 780.416.6046