



Grey Wooded Forage Association

"Creating an Awareness of Forages"

Newsletter
Spring
2013

Published by
the Western Star

Box 1448, 5039 - 45 Street, Rocky Mountain House, Alberta
T4T-1B1, Phone: 403 844 2645, Fax: 403 844 2642,
Email: GWFA1@telus.net or GWFA2@telus.net.
www.gwfa.areca.ab.ca

GWFA AGM & TRADESHOW!

Thursday, May 2, 2013 at the Leslieville Hall

2:30 PM: Tradeshow Opens

3:30 PM: Afternoon Program

"What's Happening in Forage & Beef Research"

by Dr. Vern Baron & Dr. John Basarab

5:00 PM: **Annual Business Meeting**

followed by a delicious roast beef dinner!

7:00 PM: **"Looking Back and Foraging Ahead"**

by Duane McCartney, Retired Ag Canada Scientist

\$20/member-\$25 after April 23
\$25 non-member-\$30 after April 23

Registration Deadline is

April 29, 2013

(Memberships are only \$20 per year and will be available at the door)

**Please phone (403)844-2645 or
email gwfa1@telus.net for more
information and to register.**

In This Issue:

- Clubroot of Canola - Frequently Asked Questions - Pg 4
- Growing Forward 2 Agricultural Programs Launched in Alberta - Pg 5
- Managing Farm Risk with Government Farm Programs - Pg 6
- So What's "AgriProfit\$ Beef Economics"? - Pg 7
- New AgriStability Changes Protect Alberta Farms from Major Losses - Pg 8
- It's a Thought by Harry Navelpicker - Pg 11
- A new tool for rejuvenating your pastures - Pg 13

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

This publication is made possible by funding from our two major sponsors, the Agriculture Opportunities Fund (AOF)



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

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

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

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



www.foragebeef.ca

2012-2013 GWFA Board of Directors

Chairman	Doug Seland	Condor	403-729-2700
Vice-Chairman	Victor Penner	Rocky Mountain House	403-729-2973
Treasurer	Cameron Jenkins	Spruce View	403-728-3300
Secretary	Bob Aasman	Rocky Mountain House	403-845-4438
Directors	Murray Abel	Lacombe	403-782-1009
	Iain Aitken	Rimbey	403-843-0094
	Sigurd DeBruijn	Clive	403-784-3432
	Kirk Seaborn	Rocky Mountain House	403-845-2267
	Doug Skeels	Rocky Mountain House	403-845-2515
ARECA Rep:	Herman Wyering	Ponoka	403-783-2681
Ex-Officio Director	Ken Ziegler	Rocky Mountain House	403-845-8204
Manager	Albert Kuipers	GWFA Office:	403-844-2645
Office Manager	Muriel Finkbeiner	GWFA Office Fax:	Fax: 844-2642

Cows, Creeks and Communities

Thursday, April 25, 2013
Kurt Browning Complex
Caroline Alberta



Trade Show in the arena
2:30 to 5:30 - NO CHARGE

Includes two sessions - safe livestock handling at 3:00 pm and stock dogs demonstration at 4:15 pm.

Evening Program in the hall
5:30 to 8:30 - only \$20 per person - limited tickets available at Caroline Supplies, Clearwater County Ag office, Caroline Ag Society office and Central Alberta Co-op (Hardware) in Spruceview.

Includes supper and two speakers:
Dr. Masaki Hayashi talking about ground water and Mr. Rick Friedl talking about surface water storage (dams).

For more information
call 403-845-4444

Brought to you by the Caroline & District Ag Society, Clearwater Landcare & Grey Wooded Forage Association

Manager's Note

by Albert
Kuipers



Spring has sprung! Winter is melting away and running into the ditches. Soon we'll be collecting forage samples from Bob Aas-man's and Iain Aitken's stockpiled pastures as part of our Stockpiled Pasture project.

We've been collecting samples for this project for several years now, so we should start getting an idea of the kind of for-age quality we can expect from stockpiled forages under these conditions.

For those of you who're wondering what stock-piled pasture is, it's simply forages from the previous growing season that are stockpiled, or stored for use in late fall, winter and early spring, but left standing. I think it's the ultimate of year-round grazing.

Stockpiled forages are often used for calving on in spring. Iain usually grazes till the end of January, feeds in February and March, and then starts calving in early April on his stockpiled forages. Since I first met Iain, I think it was in 2002, his pastures have been continually improving. Want to know more? Just call me and we'll talk.



With spring also comes the anticipation of the new growing season, with its fast growing, lush forages. Are you ready? Do you have your grazing plan built? How are you going to make a roughly four month growing season give you a whole year of grazing and feeding? How can you get this done in the most economical way?

These are the kind of management questions most graziers are asking themselves. If you haven't already done this planning this winter, then you want to get on it right away.

Decisions for extending the grazing season well into fall, winter and spring need to be made before the growing season ever starts. If you already have a long-term plan in place, then your annual grazing plan will be relatively simple and a part of your over-all plan. If you're starting from scratch it would be a good idea to develop your big picture, over-all plan first, and then build your annual plan to fit it.

If you're not sure where to start and the task looks huge to you, please don't hesitate to contact me. I'll be more than happy to help you get started down this path. I can also connect you up with a variety of resource people along the way.

If you're wanting to learn more about pasture and grazing management, we will be holding a Controlled Grazing School in June, 2013. Watch for information in upcoming issues of The Blade. We will also be holding a Land EKG Monitoring Course in July, 2013. More information on this two day course is on the back cover of this newsletter.



Like what you're reading? Want more? Membership in Grey Wooded Forage Association is still only \$20 per year, although we have begun discussing an increase. Seems to me, we've been at \$20 per year pretty

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

facebook

"The energy-free watering solution to conservation
grazing & feeding — summer or winter"

**SIMPLE
& RELIABLE**

Toll Free
1-866-843-6744

www.FrostfreeNosepumps.com



much from the beginning of our association. That's like 29 years.

Wondering what you get for your \$20 a year? Well, first of all, you would get The Blade, a twelve page newsletter that we send out to members ten months of the year, every month except April and November, when we send out the GWFA Spring and Fall Newsletters to all members and partners, plus about 16,000 rural mailboxes in Central Alberta. If you're not a member yet, that's why you got this issue. The GWFA Spring and Fall Newsletters are also posted on our website and The Blade is posted in the Members area of our website each month.

Yes, there is a members only area in our website. When you become a GWFA Member, you get a pass-code to get in there.

Probably one of the biggest benefits members get is access to consulting on a wide variety of forage related topics. Anyone, anywhere can make use of this service via telephone or email. Or, if you live reasonably close to Rocky Mountain House, drop in to our office for a chat. Anyone within roughly an hour to an hour and a half of Red Deer, Alberta can have me out for farm calls. Yes, this is a free service for GWFA Members.

Besides our informative monthly publications and the variety of consulting services we offer, we carry a number of publications in stock that we'll be happy to send out to Members. Take a look on page 14 to find out which publications we currently have available.

We often give discounts on registration fees for GWFA events as well. GWFA seminars, tours and workshops, as well as any events we partner with another organization, county, government, or any other group are always promoted in our monthly publications. You'll want to make sure you're a member so you can be well informed about any forage and livestock related learning opportunity available in Central Alberta.

We also keep track of the many government programs and funding opportunities that become available each year. You'll find some of this information right in this issue.

So, as you can see, you would get a lot of value for your \$20 a year. Some Members have expressed that receiving The Blade alone, is well worth the \$20 a year.

If you would like more information on GWFA, or membership in GWFA, please feel free to contact us at 403-844-2645.

You can also find a membership form on page 15. Please fill out the short questionnaire on the membership form. We use this to determine our priorities for gathering and publishing information. We also use information from this questionnaire to show our funders what kind of information our Members want.

**Contact us to read 'The Blade' online
on our new website:**

www.grewywoodedforageassociation.com

*Email us for a username/password & enjoy reading 'The Blade' anywhere! *Restricted to members only!

gwfa1@telus.net

Clubroot of Canola - Frequently Asked Questions



What is Clubroot? Clubroot is a serious soil-borne disease of crucifer crops in many parts of the world. The crucifer family includes vegetable crops like cabbage, broccoli, and cauliflower as well as field crops such as canola and mustard. In British Columbia, Quebec and Ontario, clubroot is a major concern for commercial vegetable producers. Clubroot is especially problematic because the pathogen persists in soil for many years, and cannot be controlled with crop protection products currently registered in Canada. Clubroot has the potential to be a significant threat to canola production in parts of Alberta.

How much yield loss will clubroot cause?

Research with canola indicates infestations approaching 100% led to 50% yield losses, while 10 to 20% infestations led to 5-10% yield losses. As a rough estimate, the % yield loss from clubroot is about half the % of infected plants.

Does Alberta currently have a clubroot problem?

In 2003, the first case of clubroot in western Canadian canola was found in a field near St Albert. Surveys of neighboring fields suggested that the problem was not isolated to one field or one producer. Surveys conducted since 2003 have confirmed clubroot throughout much of central Alberta and two counties in southern Alberta. Survey results indicate that clubroot poses a serious threat to canola production in Alberta.

Where is clubroot likely to be a problem?

Computer simulations based on disease and environmental factors suggested that the Edmonton region was the only part of Alberta likely to have significant clubroot problems. Field surveys since then, however, have found clubroot in many of the counties in the Edmonton region, but also one county in southern Alberta.

What do symptoms look like in canola?

The causal agent, *Plasmodiophora brassicae* Woronin, infects roots causing irregular club-like galls that restrict the flow of water and nutrients to leaves, stems and pods. Visible symptoms on the plant include wilting, stunted growth, yellowing, premature ripening, and shriveled seed. Plants infected early in the growing season may appear heat or drought stressed. Crops that have finished flowering may have symptoms that from a distance resemble sclerotinia stem rot or possibly fusarium wilt. In most cases however, clubroot can be diagnosed with close examination of the root system. [Clubroot Disease of Canola and Mustard](#) has good pictures of infected roots.

What is being done about the problem?

The threat of clubroot to Alberta canola growers is being addressed through regulations and research. Clubroot was added as a declared pest to the Agricultural Pests Act in April 2007. Alberta Agriculture and Food is responsible for this Act however, enforcement is the responsibility of the local municipality. Agricultural fieldmen (or appointed pest inspectors) have the power to enter land at a reasonable hour, without permission to inspect for pests and collect samples. The owner or occupant of land has the responsibility of taking measures to prevent the establishment of any pest on land, property and livestock and to control or destroy all pests in the land or property. Control measures for clubroot are specified in the Alberta Club-root Management Plan. It is important to understand that these control measures represent an acceptable minimum standard that is to be applied in all municipalities across the province. Municipalities, however, can adopt more stringent standards within their own jurisdictions.

Are there canola varieties that are resistant to Clubroot?

Check with your local canola seed supplier to find out if a club-root

resistant canola hybrid is available. Although clubroot resistance could be a great new tool available to canola growers, producers should maintain realistic long-term expectations for how this tool fits into their overall pest management program. Disease resistance tends to break down with time as pathogens adapt to modified hosts, and this is expected to happen with clubroot resistance as well. Clubroot resistant canola, planted on land that is heavily infested with clubroot, will probably lose its resistance very quickly. A one in four year rotation of clubroot resistant canola in conjunction with good equipment sanitation practices should keep the pathogen at manageable levels. This will ensure that genetic resistance is maintained as long as possible and that canola can be a viable part of the production system. It must be understood that every time a resistant variety is grown is one less time that the same genetics can be used successfully in the future.

What strategies can be used to manage clubroot?

Since there is no real cure for clubroot, prevention is the best management strategy - an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. - A long rotation between canola crops (1 in 4 years) is the single most important preventative strategy. Fields that have clubroot problems have a history of short (often 1 in 2 years) canola rotations. Lengthening out the canola rotation may reduce profitability in the short-term but the long-term gains will be substantial if the longer rotation prevents clubroot.

- Equipment sanitation. Clean dirt from equipment, including tires, when moving between fields.

- Avoid hay or straw purchases from regions where clubroot is known to occur or if infestation is suspected. Straw and hay could be carrying soil and the pathogen.

- Once land is infected with clubroot, management strategies are more difficult and/or expensive.

- Canola should not be seeded on infected land for 5-7 years. Re-search indicates that the pathogen can survive in soil for up to 17 years so a 5-7 year break from canola will not eliminate the problem, but keep the problem manageable.

- The extended rotation away from canola must also include diligent control of species susceptible to clubroot including volunteer canola, weeds in the mustard family, dock, hoary cress, orchardgrass, red clover, red-top, and perennial ryegrass.

- Minimize soil erosion with zero or minimal tillage. Since clubroot is a soil borne disease, the pathogen will move with wind or water-eroded soil.

- There is evidence that liming soils to pH 7 or higher will reduce the longevity of spores in the soil and/or disease severity.

Who to contact for additional information

Murray Hartman, Paul Laflamme, and the Alberta Ag-Info Centre (toll free 310- 3276) can provide additional information on Clubroot of canola.

[Alberta Clubroot Management Plan Best Management Practices for Disinfecting Farm Machinery Canola Council of Canada maintains clubroot information on Club-root.ca Forage produce](#)

Forage producers please note: Red Clover, Orchardgrass, Red-Top and Perennial Ryegrass are susceptible to clubroot.

Growing Forward - 2 Agricultural Programs Launched in Alberta

Leduc... Today, Federal Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz and Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development Minister Verlyn Olson announced the signing of the Canada-Alberta Growing Forward 2 agreement.

"Our Government is focused on the priorities of Canadians - jobs, growth, and long-term prosperity. This agreement is an important milestone in our continued efforts to deliver effective programs that farmers need to compete in global markets, while positioning Canada as a strong leader in agriculture," said Minister Ritz. "We will continue to work together to ensure that targeted investments in priority areas benefit the entire sector through increased productivity, jobs and economic growth."

Alberta's farmers and the agri-food sector will benefit from a \$406 million investment provided through more than 30 new or enhanced programs focused on priorities like international market development, food safety, agri-business innovation, research and environmental management.

This funding is part of the \$3 billion Growing Forward 2 initiative announced in 2012 and highlighted in Canada's Economic Action Plan 2013. The five-year agreement with provincial and territorial governments supports innovation, competitiveness and market development in agriculture. "As the province's largest renewable resource industry, agriculture holds tremendous potential," said Minister Olson. "Through Growing Forward 2, we are providing our

producers and entrepreneurs with the tools they need to build their businesses and further diversify Alberta's economy."

Growing Forward 2 focuses on the future prosperity of the sector, with a more than 50 per cent increase in cost-shared investment in strategic initiatives and programs to strengthen the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of Canadian agriculture.

For more information about Growing Forward 2, visit www.agr.gc.ca/GrowingForward2. Starting April 2, producers and others involved in Alberta's agriculture industry can explore the programs and determine their eligibility at www.growingforward.alberta.ca.



Solar Harvest Consulting

John C. Reid, PAg, CAC

- ★ Farm Enterprise Analysis & Planning
- ★ Estate and Succession Planning
- ★ Financial Restructuring
- ★ Planning Added-Value Enterprises

Phone (403) 729-2416

Email: johnreid@solarharvest.ca

YOUR COMPLETE

FORAGE SPECIALISTS



Whatever your needs, whatever your soil conditions, **HANNAS SEEDS** has the right type of forage for you!

- * Hay and Pasture Blends
- * Lawn and Acreage Mixtures
- * Horse, Sheep, and Buffalo Blends
- * And Much More!

SPRING SPECIAL

10% OFF

Early Bookings for Forage Seed

ALFALFAS - CLOVERS - GRASSES

Custom Blending at No Extra Charge

HANNAS SEEDS

1.800.661.1529

403.782.6671

5039 - 49 Street, Lacombe AB

www.hannasseeds.com

EXPERIENCE

EFFICIENCY

EXCELLENCE

Managing Farm Risk with Government Farm Programs

AgriInvest and AgriStability are two programs that the government has implemented to help producers mitigate the risks associated with Farming.

AgriInvest is the simpler of the two programs, it is a savings account type of program designed to help producers build up a "rainy day fund" to help their operation survive minor dips in profit. Using your farms income tax information, the government allows producers to deposit 1.5% of their allowable net sales into a savings account and the government will then match that amount (the deposit amount reduces to 1% in 2013). In my opinion this is a program that all producers should participate in if eligible as it guarantees producers government funds each year. Are you getting AgriInvest? Should you be?

AgriStability is more complex, but to explain it in simplified terms, it is an insurance type program. This program works by taking into account the last 5 years of margins for your farm and comparing the current year to the reference margin. A margin would be allowable income minus allowable expenses, plus/minus any deferred income, expenses and prepaid items plus change in inventory. When those are all added up you would have your margin for that given year. Looking at these last 5 years the program drops the highest and lowest margins and averages out the remaining three, this is the reference margin. If your current year margin drops below the reference margin you may see a payment. As I mentioned this is a simplified explanation and if you would like to know more you can go to AFSC's website to read up on the program.

In my opinion there is one big advantage in having the program run this way, your being compared to your own past performance not someone else's. Since I know GWFA's readership is comprised of forward thinkers when it comes to producing forages and beef, I also know that they are always trying to keep their input costs down (running the tractor less thereby lowering fuel costs by bringing the cattle to the feed rather than the other way around etc.) so it is important to note that you aren't being compared to the "average" beef operation as far as this program is concerned.

By keeping your input costs down and maximizing profits you are creating higher and higher reference margins. You can think of this as your safety net; the more profit you make the higher your safety net is for the years when you do see a drastic dip in profits. I say drastic, as compared to the AgriInvest program is designed to

cover the minor dips in profit.

Having said that, AgriStability should then be thought of as insurance or a business risk management product rather than a subsidy as it is sometimes thought of. This is important as there isn't much on the market today in terms of insurance for cattle producers. Even better is that AgriStability takes into account a number of variables affecting the profitability on your farm, in-pit quantities and prices, production losses, market instability and weather events.

The bottom line, this is a product designed to help you recover from a financial wreck. Can your farm survive a significant drop in profit without this kind of coverage? It is your decision to make, but if you would like help making this decision I would be happy to help you.

If you've made the decision to participate in either of these programs another thing to consider is the accounting professionals you work with. Since the AgriInvest and AgriStability are directly affected by your tax it is important to make sure you are dealing with an accountant who understands your operation as well as the rules surrounding this program. Only certain incomes and expenses come into play when dealing with AgriInvest and AgriStability. If your tax is filed incorrectly this could impact the amount of AgriInvest and AgriStability dollars you get each year.

**Drew Pasay, Farm income programs,
MNP LLP - Red Deer 403-356-1282**



The Omni Series




To View catalogue click on

www.montgomeryauctions.com

**Full line of Ritchie waterers and parts available at
MONTGOMERY AUCTION SERVICES LTD.**

BLACKFALDS, AB

403-885-5149 800-371-6963



BLUE ROCK MINERALS

Manufacturer of Custom Mineral Premix and Nutrition Consulting
~ Cow -Calf ~ Feedlot ~ Sheep and Goats ~ Buffalo ~

Your Success is Our Success.

Lee Eddy BSc.Ag (403) 804 4350
Kristen Ritson-Bennett BSc.Ag (403) 358-1674
bluerockmineral@xplornet.com

So What's "AgriProfit\$ Beef Economics"?

The "Ropin' the Web" site is the general store for much of the materials and tools developed by Alberta Agriculture for producers, agribusinesses, and service providers. Organizing and presenting such a large volume of materials in a manner that is intuitive to all has been a major challenge.

Many **AgriProfit\$** clients have indicated that they simply can't find what they're looking for ... or that there's so much material that they "can't see the forest for the trees" ... materials get lost in plain sight.

Welcome to "AgriProfit\$ Beef Economics"

Armed with years of feedback from producers, we've designed a site within Ropin' the Web to house a host of production, economic, financial and business management materials. For now, to find the site, go to "Ropin' the Web" and search for "**AgriProfit\$ Beef Economics**". Click on the link and you'll be taken to the new home of **AgriProfit\$ Beef**.

The focus of this site is "to provide clients with information, analysis & tools relating to the economics and management of primary beef businesses". While the site holds a lot of the direct **AgriProfit\$** work we do, staff have cast their net further afield, posting and linking materials, notices, tools that we hope will be of value to producers ranging from day to day activities to long term strategic planning.

How is the site organized?

AgriProfit\$ Beef Economics is organized into the following categories:

- Information on the **AgriProfit\$ Business Analysis and Research** program. We handle dozens of enquiries per year on **AgriProfit\$**, what's involved and what's in it for producers. Now we have a quick reference location.
- A section is dedicated to **AgriProfit\$ benchmark reports**. We've organized, as simply as possible, the array of beef, crop, forage and grazing benchmarks that are developed through the **AgriProfit\$** program.
- Budgeting information and tools is a section unto itself as well. Over the past number of years, we've put together a number of budget templates, software tools and so on. These vary from simple projections, to the how-to's of assessing choices (eg. varieties, practices), to more complex analyses.
- A business management and economic analysis information "reference library" for producers and agribusiness pro-

Your farm information is the **key** to making better business choices and your farm more **profitable**

Sign up for an **AgriProfit\$ Business Analysis** today!

Call: 310-0000 then 780-422-3771

Email: dale.kaliel@gov.ab.ca

jesse.cole@gov.ab.ca

pauline.vanbiert@gov.ab.ca

Government of Alberta

AgriProfit\$

professionals ... this section stores newsletters, bulletins and analysis reports ranging from the economics of business level choices, to industry level reviews, to strategic management and business planning topics, and on to tips on managing business stress.

- The final section offers links to other sites. We've posted links to sites that add to the focus of the **AgriProfit\$ Beef Economics** site, and complement **AgriProfit\$** benchmarks, bulletins, reports and tools.

All-in-all a well-rounded package of materials!

What's in here?

Many web sites simply post up titles of documents or tools, in hopes that they are intuitive enough to give the user an idea of the content. Unfortunately, there's often a gap between the author's notion of intuitive and the users' specific query or need.

"**AgriProfit\$ Beef Economics**" provides brief descriptions for each section, bulletin, article, report, tool, or link. The user can scan to get a better idea of the content and whether or not it might fit the bill for them before they launch a link. The extra description should also assist in making queries and searches more effective.

Home Stretch

A key element in any business manager's tool kit is a solid set of reference materials and assessment tools. While we don't expect the new **AgriProfit\$ Beef Economics** site will answer every question, we do hope that it makes the process of finding what you need a little more effective. Have a look ... let me know what you think! ... don't hesitate to contact me by phone (toll-free using 310-0000), or by e-mail. **Dale A. Kaliel**, Sr. Economist: Production Economics Phone: (780) 427-5390, Fax: (780) 427-5220 dale.kaliel@gov.ab.ca

Red Deer County




Ken Lewis
Conservation Coordinator
Phone: 403-342-8653
Cell: 403-505-9038
Email: klewis@rdcounty.ca

Off The Creek Program






Check out the Off the Creek Blog:
www.offthecreek.blogspot.ca



JJB Ranch

Jim & Barb Bauer
Ph. 403.546.2427 email: jim.bauer50@gmail.com

Offering Electric Fencing Solutions by:

New AgriStability Changes Protect Alberta Farms from Major Losses

Farmers Asking How Program Changes Impact their Operation

With just weeks remaining for Alberta farmers to enroll in AgriStability for 2013, many producers are asking how upcoming changes to the program will impact their farms. "Some farmers are asking if it's still worthwhile to participate in the program because they say 'Commodity prices are high and times have been good on my farm, so I haven't collected a payout for a few years. Why do I need AgriStability?'" says Vicki Chapman, with Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC). AFSC administers AgriStability on behalf of the federal and provincial governments. "We remind farmers that all it takes is one catastrophic event – such as a livestock disease like BSE or a sudden economic downturn – and the profitability many are now enjoying can turn on a dime," says Chapman. "The producers our field analysts have been talking to haven't forgotten those big events, so they get the importance of having a backstop like AgriStability to compensate them for major losses on their farm. That's where the program continues to offer the most value."

April 30 Enrollment Deadline

AFSC AgriStability field analysts have been meeting one-on-one with farmers and holding AgriStability information sessions across the province. "It's their job to ensure farmers understand the new program changes and the risk level it still covers on their farms – so they can make informed decisions before the April 30 enrollment deadline passes. The worst scenario would be if someone opts out of the program without having a clear understanding of what they're saying 'no' to, and then experiences a disaster that threatens the financial future of their farm," explains Chapman.

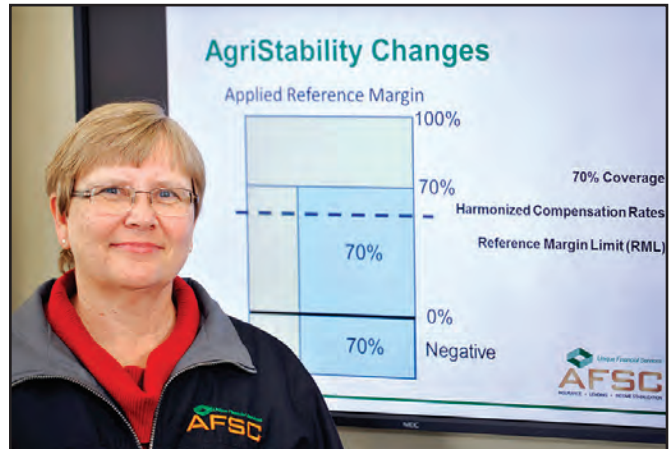
The federal-provincial AgriStability program will continue providing whole farm protection against severe drops in farm income caused by factors such as production losses, falling commodity prices, rising input costs and market interruptions, says Chapman. However, coverage is now being reduced in some areas and expanded in others.

Coverage Reduced in Some Areas; Expanded in Others

"Beginning in 2013, producers must experience a larger drop in farm income before triggering payments under AgriStability," she explains, noting the changes will not affect 2012 AgriStability claims. "Payouts under the new rules will now trigger when a producer's margin – their allowable income minus allowable expenses – drops below 70 per cent of either their 'Olympic' margin over the last five years or their average allowable expenses during that time frame, whichever is lower," says Chapman. She explains Olympic margins are calculated by dropping the highest and lowest margins over the last five years, and averaging the remaining three.

"The trigger point for payments was previously at 85 per cent," says Chapman. "Limiting coverage to a producer's average allowable expenses when it's lower than their Olympic margin is also new."

Once payments trigger, producers will be paid 70 cents for every dollar of loss. They were previously paid up to 80 cents



Vicki Chapman, with AFSC, says area farmers who have questions about upcoming changes to AgriStability should contact a field analyst at their nearest AFSC District Office before the April 30 enrolment deadline.

on losses above a zero margin, and only 60 cents on losses below a zero margin – known as a negative margin, says Chapman. "Now if farmers suffer a big hit and drop into a negative margin – where they typically can no longer cover their input costs – they'll receive a bigger payment at that 70 cent level. The changes provide more money where losses are deepest and transfer some of what's considered 'normal' business risk back to producers."

The changes to AgriStability are driven by higher crop and livestock prices over the last few years, which have made producers more profitable, says Chapman. "Greater profitability means many have built significant margins under the program that have increased the liability to government at a time of budget restraint."

Greater Profitability Drives Changes

"If the payment trigger had remained at 85 per cent, those higher margins could easily trigger claims to producers who are still profitable – just a little less profitable," adds Chapman. "AgriStability is meant to help farmers when they're hurting, not when they're making money."

The upcoming changes realign AgriStability coverage to provide disaster assistance when producers need it most, rather than compensating reduced profits, says Chapman. AgriStability fees are also being lowered to \$315 per \$100,000 of coverage to reflect program changes, adds Chapman. "It's relatively cheap protection for the coverage it offers."

Forrest Wright, an accountant with Luchak, Wright, Whuk in Leduc, encourages his farm clients to sign up for AgriStability. "It's basically disaster insurance, and we've had both BSE and drought in the last 12 years," says Wright. "Farming is risky business. My clients are making money right now but that can change."

Continued on Page 9

Rob Boras, who farms 1,000 irrigated acres of mixed grains and sugar beets near Picture Butte, says he understands the rationale behind the AgriStability changes, and plans to sign up again this year. "It's protection that would be foolish for us not to take part in. It's a backstop that gives us some peace of mind in case there's a substantial shortfall from one year to the next."

Field Staff and myAFSC Make Paperwork Easier

Farmers who view paperwork as an obstacle to participating in AgriStability can contact their local field analyst who will sit down and guide them through the process, says Chapman. Producers can also fill out AgriStability forms electronically with myAFSC, a simple online tool that speeds up turnaround times on claims, she says. "It loads directly into our system, prevents keying errors, and inputs information from last year's forms for you."

AgriStability is part of the Growing Forward 2 suite of risk management programs that includes AgriInsurance – known as crop insurance, AgriInvest – a producer-managed savings account where government matches eligible producer contributions of up to \$15,000 annually, and AgriRecovery – assistance that covers extraordinary expenses following a disaster.

Producers with questions about AgriStability should contact a field analyst at their AFSC District Office, visit www.afsc.ca, or phone the AFSC Call Centre at 1-877-899-AFSC (2372) before the April 30 deadline.



For All Your Livestock Needs

- Bulk and Bagged Feed
- Animal Health
- Livestock Equipment
- Twine
- Fencing Supplies



Rocky Mountain House Co-op Home Centre
 4323 45th Street, Rocky Mountain House, AB.
 Phone: 403-845-2844 Fax: 403-845-6570

With genetics that are coveted worldwide, Circle Cee Charolais Farms have become leaders in the purebred cattle industry. Their frozen embryos, semen and live cattle are exported across the globe. After forty years in business, this father and son partnership based in Lamont provides superior performance and carcass traits to help their customers gain an edge. And as our client, AFSC supports the continual growth of the Cholak's operation.

How are you *growing?*

Frank and Stephen Cholak
 Circle Cee Charolais Farms, Lamont AB

AFSC is Alberta's Farm and Business Lender.

We have the financial solutions to help you reach your goals.

AFSC Farm Loans Offer:

- Loans up to 5 million dollars
- Competitive, long term interest rates
- Beginning Farmer Incentive - Reduced rates
- No early payment penalty

1-877-899-AFSC (2372) www.AFSC.ca



Unique Financial Services

AFSC

INSURANCE • LENDING • INCOME STABILIZATION

Rocky Mountain House Satellite Office
 4934 50th Street

Account Managers: Dan O'Connell 403-340-4930 Brad Johnson 403-340-4392 Kelly Thompson 403-340-7098 Alan Shideler 403-843-4516

Got Forage?

Alberta Forage Incentive Program

As a forage manager, you can recognize the value forage crops have in preserving natural features on the land and creating habitat for wildlife. The bonus for you is these same sites can still provide a sustainable source of feed or pasture for your livestock. Viterra and Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) are teaming up to offer a Forage Incentive Program to growers in DUC target areas in Alberta.

Producers in these locations are eligible for \$100 per 55-lb bag to establish forages on their land.

Producers interested in this program must:

- * Be located within critical DUC program areas of Alberta
- * Sign a 10-year conservation agreement with DUC
- * Purchase forage seed through Viterra

Well managed forages not only provide a sustainable source of feed for livestock. They also protect soil from wind and water erosion, offer diversity in crop rotations, improve water filtration into soil and enhance soil fertility through the legumes' ability to fix nitrogen and release it back into the soil.

Research conducted by DUC has shown that perennial forages provide safe, attractive habitat for upland nesting waterfowl and other birds. Agricultural production areas that include forages also helps protect the wetlands found on the landscape.



Through a unique partnership with Viterra, Ducks Unlimited Canada is pleased to offer conservation-minded producers an incentive to plant forages in areas of upland habitat restoration. The program includes Viterra's extensive lineup of forage varieties and proprietary alfalfas.

The Forage Incentive Program is one more way for Viterra and DUC to assist producers who wish to maintain and enhance healthy forage lands and protect the soil and water resources under their care.

For more information, contact Craig Bishop:

- * Phone 1-866-301-3825
- * Email c_bishop@ducks.ca




Ducks Unlimited Canada
Conserving Canada's Wetlands


VITERRATM

It's a Thought

by Harry Navelpicker



In early February, my wife Louise and I went to a farmer seminar. It was one of those days where we could hear of the latest going on in the world of research. On the way home I was joking with Louise that these researcher types are from a different world. They seem to think and stink, think and stink, and every once in awhile something comes out!

Anyways, we were very impressed with some of the work that these people put out. One fellow by the name of Bohn Von Jasarba has done some work that measures the differences in digestive efficiency of cattle. His thinking is that cattle vary in their ability to digest feed. Some can gain real well on a little feed and others may gain the same but need much more feed. Naturally as grass and cattle people, we want our cattle to gain lots on small amounts. Although this isn't really new, Bohn came up with a different twist to the puzzle (with enough thinking and stinking).

All animals need energy from feed to do their daily living, to do things like breathing, beating of the heart and such. Naturally, bigger animals need more energy for these kinds of things than smaller animals. Scientists call this "energy for maintenance". Also, animals need energy in order to grow, which they call "energy for growth". Both of these requirements are well documented and can be used to predict how much an animal should eat to meet these requirements.

The excitement comes in the fact that some animals need to eat more than this documented amount and others need to eat less. Naturally those that can meet the expected maintenance and growth by eating less can be considered as more efficient. With this in mind, Bohn is able to measure differences within a herd. Ultimately those animals that can gain well with less feed are a superior animal.

Sound complicated? It took me some time to think (no stink) this

through. Actually it was Jimmy Weekster my neighbor who helped me through this understanding. It turns out that Jimmy was at the meeting with his fine wife Barb and we got to talking over a coffee and a jelly filled donut. Because coffee break went by quite fast, Jimmy suggested that we meet after the meeting and he would show us something.

Turns out that Jimmy was quite up on this whole thing. We hopped into his vehicle and we went for a drive to the other end of the research station. We arrived at a feed alley where we saw a bunch of yearling bulls in two feedlot pens. Upon getting out, Louise and I noticed the feedbunk had a strange rubber mat on the inside of it and that the feedbunk was in sections and under each section was a weigh scale. What Jimmy then explained was that each of the bulls has an electronic ear tag in an ear and that the ear tag told the mat which was connected to a computer, which bull was in feeding at what times of the day. At the same time, the weigh scale would weigh the feed changes in the bunk and the computer would fit it to the bull telling how much he would eat each day!

The bottom line to this project is that after doing the calculations, they could tell which bull was more efficient for his gain and which one wasn't. Jimmy also told us this characteristic of efficiency is quite heritable and the efficient bulls would then sire more efficient calves.

Well that got my wheels going. If I could buy a bull that is known to be more efficient with the amount of feed he eats I could expect that trait in his calves. Within his calves, not only would they gain more with each belly full and I would have more weight to sell in the fall, but I would also have a set of daughters that would soon become cows.

I looked at Louise and we both knew what we were thinking. Good grass taking our cows even further!!



AFIN

ALBERTA FORAGE INDUSTRY NETWORK



The Value of Alberta's Forage Industry
A Multi-Level Analysis

Government of Alberta | AFIN



The Forage Voice
"Building a Voice for Alberta's largest industry"

The Value of Alberta's Forage Industry Report

The value of Alberta's forage industry report which was released in March using 2006 Census data and some more current as available, valued Alberta forage in the province at a total of \$2.3-3.3 billion.

The report generated by Stephanie Kozmicki is a tool that Alberta's forage industry has needed for many years. After examining the report most producers and industry representatives will have a clearer picture of exactly how large our industry really is. *The Value of the Forage Industry in Alberta Report*, has been a successful project and we would like to thank Stephanie Kozmicki, Forage Specialist, Alberta Agriculture for a job well done.

The report has brought forage into the forefront, and has made a lot of people re-examine exactly what value forage has in our overall economic picture, and how undervalued they have been. We hope that this report will give the right people the tools they need to evaluate the emphasis that has been placed on the forage industry over the years. The purpose of this report is to highlight not only the valuable contribution Alberta's forage resources provide to the agricultural industry, but to also acknowledge the other contributions forage makes to ecological goods and services provided within the agricultural landscape of the province. We hope to stimulate dialogue with the endorsement of this report and we did so here.

The publication of this report is the culmination of cooperative effort by the government of Alberta and the industry to address an identified need. In this case the partners were AFIN and Alberta Agriculture and rural development with support from various farms of the Alberta forage industry.

For a copy of the report contact visit the AFIN website at www.albertaforages.ca or visit a Alberta Agriculture office, 310-Farm, or your local Forage or Applied Research Association.

Discussion Topic:

The Alberta Forage Industry based on 2011 Census numbers, generated in direct economic value of an estimated \$2.3 billion. Indirect economic value through ecological goods and services was valued at \$300 million to \$1.1 billion. Crop insurance and income stabilization savings from not using animal crops was valued at \$420 million. Cattle owners at about \$14 million. When taken all together **Alberta forages are valued at \$2.3-3.3 billion.**

The fact that we have not dropped much in value from 2006 census number may surprise most of us as we know there has been a movement to more cereal and oilseed crops and lower cattle numbers. What are your thoughts? Email us at info@albertaforages.ca



www.albertaforages.ca



The miracles of science™

RESEARCH PRODUCT

NEW DUPONT™ REJUVRA™ XL HERBICIDE. COME SEE IT IN ACTION THIS SUMMER.

DuPont™ Rejuvra™ XL herbicide is being developed to help restore natural grasses and control encroaching weed, shrub and brush species to help cow-calf producers extend the life of their pastures.

We will be showcasing new Rejuvra™ XL at several locations this summer. To receive advance notice of our tour dates, please contact the DuPont™ FarmCare® Support Centre at 1-800-667-3925.

See you this summer!

**DuPont™
Rejuvra™ XL**
herbicide

This product is not registered for use. It is a violation of the Pest Control Products Act to use a product in a non-registered application.

The DuPont Oval Logo, DuPont™, The miracles of science™ and Rejuvra™ are registered trademarks or trademarks of E. I. du Pont de Nemours and Company.

E. I. du Pont Canada Company is a licensee. Member of CropLife Canada.

©Copyright 2013 E. I. du Pont Canada Company. All rights reserved.

A New Tool for Rejuvenating Your Pastures

DuPont to host summer field tours of DuPont™ Rejuvra™ XL herbicide research sites

Alberta cow-calf producers have the opportunity to see for themselves the research results for DuPont™ Rejuvra™ XL herbicide, which is being developed to help producers extend the life of their pastures. In summer 2013, DuPont will host two exclusive tours of key research sites in Wetaskiwin and Beaver counties to showcase research findings for Rejuvra™ XL.

Rejuvra™ XL contains a brand new active – called aminocyclopyrachlor – and combines Group 2 and Group 4 chemistry to provide two modes of action for effective resistance management. Research has shown Rejuvra® XL to be effective at controlling a wide range of problem weeds including tough weeds such as leafy spurge, knapweeds and Canada thistle, while restoring natural grasses.

“We’ve had very encouraging research results in our test plots in Alberta, and we’re looking forward to the opportunity to share some of that research with producers,” says Margaret McIntosh, Market Development Manager with DuPont Crop Protection. “We now have several years of research data, as well as larger scale research permits, which demonstrate that Rejuvra™ XL effectively controls a broad range of weeds, shrubs and brush, including many species which are currently difficult to control.”

“Another aspect of Rejuvra™ XL that we think producers will be interested in is the low application rates required to achieve



the research results we have seen,” says McIntosh. “We think producers will be impressed when they see the product in action at our research tours this summer.”

The DuPont™ tours will include research plots sprayed with Rejuvra™ XL in 2010 through 2012, to control problem weeds including western snowberry, silverberry, white cockle and common tansy.

For more information about DuPont™ Rejuvra™ XL herbicide or to request an invitation to the DuPont field tours in the Wetaskiwin or Kinsella areas this summer, please call the DuPont™ FarmCare® Support Centre at 1-800-667-3925.

This product is not registered for use. It is a violation of the Pest Control Products Act to use a product in a non-registered application.



JOB ONE

CARING FOR YOUR LAND and LIVESTOCK

Grazing control, species flexibility,
lower maintenance, longer life. . .

ALL good reasons to use

Greenedge Precision Fences

PHONE 403-556-0994



greenedges.com@gmail.com



**YEAR ROUND GRAZING
365 DAYS**



AGRI-FACTS
September 2012
**Agronomic Management of
Swath Grazed Pastures**



**Pasture
Planner**



AGRI-FACTS
October 2012
**Agronomic Management of
Stockpiled Pastures**



**Grazing
Notebook**



**Management of
Canadian Prairie Rangeland**



**Wealthy Ranches
Calculator**

These publications
are available to you by calling
or emailing the
GWFA office!



PS Enterprises

Tree Farm • Tree Sales
Tree Moving 54" Spade

Peter Strasser
Box 1060, RR 1
Sylvan Lake, AB T4S 1X6

Phone or Fax
403.886.2173

CELEBRATING

100 YEARS!

Rocky Mountain House
Agricultural Society is hosting a
Banquet & Dance featuring
"THE EMERALDS"

**Saturday,
April 20, 2013**

at Leslieville Community Center

~~~~~  
Advance tickets only.  
Only \$35 per person.  
~~~~~

*Tickets available from Society Directors and
the Ag. Service Board office
or phone 845-6894 for more information.*

ONE STOP CATTLE FINANCING

BC, ALBERTA, SASK

Farmers Helping Farmers
**FOOTHILLS
LIVESTOCK CO-OP**

16 Years Old & Still Going Strong!
Bred Cow Program! • Feeder Program!

1-403-845-6669

Toll Free

1-866-848-6669

No Restrictions
Purchase and Marketing
Your choice

www.foothillslivestock.ca



Rocky Mountain House, Alberta

!!!Don't miss any issues of The Blade!!!
Join Grey Wooded Forage Association
Or renew your membership!

2013–2014 Memberships are available now for \$20.00
and run from April 1,2013 to March 31,2014
For more information phone 403-844-2645

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

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

Members benefit by:

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

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

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

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY:

Renewal_____ or New Member_____
Canada Post_____ or Email_____

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

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

Controlled Grazing & Pasture Management:_____

Growing Annual Forages for Extended Grazing or Swath Grazing:_____

Growing Annual Forages for Silage or Greenfeed:_____

Growing Hay:_____ Ration Balancing:_____

Soil Biology:_____ Pasture Rejuvenation or Renovation:_____

Low Cost Cow/calf Production:_____

Environmental Sustainability:_____ Economical Sustainability:_____

COMMENTS:_____



LAND EKG-CANADA

2 DAY PASTURE MONITORING WORKSHOP

EKG Blink Monitoring Basics Course

JULY 8 & 9, 2013

Description:

Number of Days: 2

Number of Participants: 12-20

Investment: \$400/person

Location: Rolyn Hills B & B - approx 10 mi (16 km)

East of Hwy 2 - (corner of Hwy 595 & 808 + .5 km)

NW 36-37-26 W4 - home quarter

GPS 50.51.532, -113.35.984 - for field work

Prerequisite: None, bring a camera if you have one

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 manager 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.

For more information and to register please contact the GWFA office

403-844-2645



Grey Wooded Forage Association

"Creating an Awareness of Forages"

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

Ted Sutton, Land EKG-Canada, can be reached at

Tel: 403.764.7402, Cell: 403.909.1772, Ted@ekgcan.com