



The Blade

Monthly Newsletter of the
Grey Wooded Forage Association

August, 2019



COMING UP

Multiple dates	Cows and Chaos Webinar Series	Details on Page 4
Oct. 3	BearSmart Workshop	James River Hall, north of Sundre Information on Page 15
Oct. 5	Ag Safety Breakfast Safety plans for small farms	Arbutus Hall, Clearwater County Poster on Page 15
Oct. 17-18	Alberta Sheep 2019 Symposium	Holiday Inn Petrolia Drive, Red Deer Poster on Page 11
Oct. 21	GWFA Special General Meeting	Election of officers Poster on Page 12
Oct. 22, 23 & 24	Get the Dirt on Soil Health, Workshop II With Kris Nichols and Kim Cornish	Three different days, three different locations Poster on Page 14
Nov. 4-5	Cattle-focussed Drone School	Lincoln Hall (Crestomere) Poster on Page 3
Dec. 10-12	Western Canada Conference on Soil Health and Grazing—SELLING FAST!!!	Double Tree by Hilton, West Edmonton Poster on Page 6

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added to our digital mailing list

Published by Brenda Kossowan

Cover: Crimson Clover in an annual cover
crop/Brenda Kossowan photo

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and Extension Council of Alberta

Office Report

By Brenda Kossowan

What a difference a year has made At this time in 2018, we were pondering the future with heavy hearts as snow covered the parched remains of pastures and hayfields that had burned dry in a summer-long drought while our critters gasped for air under a heavy layer of smoke.

This year, grass farmers in West Central Alberta saw those same fields flourish after a cool spring followed by a summer of seemingly endless rain, which grew a lot of hay but made it very difficult to cut and cure.

Those changes have altered short-term plans at GWFA, but our long-term strategies remain the same: To help livestock and forage producers find the best ways to nurture their soil through wise management of their resources.

While our industry comes under assault from sectors opposed to livestock production, we have found allies as well, and in some unusual places. Producers concerned about the image we present to the world could find encouraging words in some of the articles that have been published lately about the relationship between human health, climate change and grazing livestock.

Among them is the online version of a CBC Radio feature about the marketing of fake meat.

The public broadcaster's veteran announcer, Michael Enright questions the hype, building his case around an interview with Jim Thomas, co-executive director and researcher of the Quebec-based ETC Group. ETC tracks how new technologies impact food systems, biodiversity, equity and human rights. In his interview with Enright, Thomas states that the marketing and development of plant-based burgers is about creating new niches and new hype and has nothing to do with solving problems in our food system.

"The latest Canada Food Guide says very clearly, 'Keep away from highly-processed foods.' And some of these burgers have something



like 19 different ingredients and they've been massively processed," Thomas says.

You can read the short version or hear the entire interview online by searching "meatless meat" at cbc.ca/radio/thesundayedition.

Alberta-based beef specialist, Karin Lindquist, a self-described "range nerd," has created a blog with the following mission: "To teach people about the efficacies, value, and integrity of the cow, for all ruminants, for us, and for the Earth. We cannot live without her."

Karin's articles are published on her site, bovinepracticum.com. Just as this issue was going to press, I discovered an article in the *Alberta Farmer Express* by a teenager from Byemoor who won The Alberta Young Speakers For Agriculture competition at the 2019 Calgary Stampede. Ryley Mappin, 14 attempts to bust some myths in his discussion, entitled "We need to let people know that raising cattle is a good thing," published on Aug. 16 and available online at albertafarmerexpress.ca.

Finally, I would like to ask for a shout out to the Western Producer's Barb Duckworth, who has been following the livestock industry for roughly three decades from her base in Calgary. Barb has been a frequent visitor at GWFA seminars and most recently spent a day covering the West Country Ag Tour, hosted by Clearwater County Ag Services with support from our Ag Field Specialist, Greg Paranych.

You can see the results of her work online, including a photo of Greg stretching out a long stem of tillage radish that was included in the mixes for this year's cover crop trial. To find the article, go to producer.com and search "Barbara Duckworth."

I hope to find room in future editions of The Blade to reprint the best of these articles. The links are posted on our social media sites.

Riding on the success of the drone workshop held at our Annual General Meeting in June, Grey Wooded Forage Association has joined Land View Drones and Lone Star Ranch & Sales in putting on a two-day training seminar. This unique course will focus on drone applications appropriate for livestock and forage producers. Please visit our website and watch our Facebook pages and Twitter feeds for more information. Or do it the old-fashioned way and give us a call!

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LAND VIEW

Cows and Chaos

Feed, Forage and Management Strategies

Webinar Series

A team of Alberta Agriculture and Forestry and Forage and Research Association staff are hosting webinars every two weeks addressing livestock producers feed concerns.

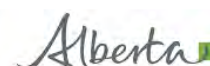
Join us at 7:30 pm, from the comfort of your home, to learn about the various topics listed to manage your cow herd.

FACT...

- ☐ Feed yard hay inventories are at an all-time low
- ☐ Moisture levels and growing conditions are varied across Alberta
- ☐ Livestock producers are looking for alternative grazing for the summer to rest low-productivity pastures or restock feed supplies for the winter
- ☐ Producers should consider all aspects of the business when making economically viable decisions

Date	Topic and Registration Link
July 18	Economics of Forage Production and Market Outlook
Aug 1	Working with cropping neighbors – salvage crops pros and cons
Aug 15	Using hay land for grazing – doing it safely for the forages, seeding winter annuals, perennial stand evaluation and water quality and supply
Aug 29	Debunking the myths of feeding alternate feeds, salvage crops and unusual feeds
Sept 12	Market outlook, effective culling (preg checking and early weaning) and the economics of depopulation
Sept 26	Feed testing – what's important and why
Oct 10	You have your feed test results – now what?
Oct 24	Fall/winter feeding strategy – what feeds to use when Body Condition Scoring

For more information call the Ag-Info Centre at 310-FARM (3276) or (403) 742-7901



Don't Guess, Test! Sampling and Testing Forage

By Greg Paranich, Ag Field Specialist

We have come to the time when a good part of our stored forage has been harvested or is on the brink of being harvested in the form of crop residues or late silage.

Arguably the most expensive part of beef cattle production is feed, and in our part of the world, winter feeding.

One of the most valuable tools in feeding livestock is forage sampling and feed testing. As feed is such a significant part of production costs, it should be apparent that the cost and effort in feed testing would be a very beneficial and critical management tool.

"The cost and effort in feed testing is a beneficial and critical management tool."

Why feed test? There are several benefits.

- Meet the nutritional needs of different classes of cattle with specific rations.
- Supplement rations where deficiencies occur in feed.
- Use alternate feed sources to capitalize on economy and feed availability.
- Flag any presence of potentially toxic contents that impact productivity including mycotoxins, nitrates, sulfates, etc.
- Determine any mineral and nutrient imbalances that could lead to problems with conception, calving, rate of gain/growth.
- Ability to have a consistent and accurate method of evaluating feed as a buyer or seller.

How to start? First of all, the feed sample collection will reflect on how useful and accurate your test analysis results will be. Using a feed probe, you should collect at least 20 separate core samples for a good cross section of your feed. Yes, that means at least 20 separate bales! Collect samples in a bucket and mix for a good representative submission. Place sample in a clearly marked plastic zip lock bag for submission to the lab or via your nutritionist.

Silage samples should be taken from four different quadrants of the pit or pile, at the upper, middle and lower parts. It is important to do this only if it is safe to do so! Be aware of any potential hazards, including sloughing or collapsing.

Many producers will claim that they can visually assess good feed from poor feed. However, visual assessments of colour, plant



species, leaf condition, and even knowledge of time of cutting can fall short on having enough information on feed quality. The true value of feed testing is knowing energy, fibre, protein and nutrient levels that you need to meet the requirements of your herd. Only a feed test will give you this information.

Feed Test Analysis

Lab results are reported in a feed analysis sheet giving you information on moisture content, protein, energy, total digestible nutrients, fibre, as well as vitamin and mineral content. Additional requests could include presence of nitrates, mycotoxins, and Relative Feed Value. Labs will report on a Dry Matter (DM per cent) and as-fed basis of nutrients based on the percentage of moisture.

Rations are always formulated on a Dry Matter basis.

Energy is reported as Mcal/kg DM. This value can be used to balance any additional energy via grain needed for maintenance or gain.

Fibre content is often the basis of feed value. Two fibre values reflect either its relative energy content or feeding value. These include acid (ADF) and neutral detergent (NDF) fibre. A high ADF value indicates hay cut at a later stage of maturity, and poorer digestibility.

It will be lower in energy content than the same hay cut at an earlier stage of maturity with a lower ADF value.

High NDF levels also indicate a more mature forage. It is also indicative to the degree which cattle will consume the feed – high NDF values limit forage intake.

Obviously, a visual appraisal will not help you accurately identify the energy content nor the feeding value of your hay. Considering the forage harvest challenges in many parts of west Central Alberta this season, we should be on the lookout for moulds and toxins.

Mouldy feed occurrences increase with cool and wet growing conditions that also favour many plant diseases that become present in forages. They not only reduce plant palatability and energy content, but also present dangers to reproductive failure, milk production, reduced gain, as well as dangerous health conditions (convulsions, gangrenous symptoms) and even death. If you have presence of moulds, get nutritional guidance from a nutritionist on safe options to blend feed to avoid problems.

Maturity in this year's forages will have a lot of variability. The "first cut" this season has varied from mid July to late August with considerable maturity spreads. The protein content of a grass hay could possibly vary from six to eight per cent, all the way up to 18 per cent, depending on the stage of maturity at which it was harvested.

With visual assessment only, it would be difficult to know if this was the proper feed for your purposes.

Likewise, mineral content will vary with time of harvest, and the environment in which the forage grows in. **Minerals** such as copper, zinc, and manganese are very important to animal health, and almost

"Silage samples should be taken from four different quadrants of the pit or pile; at the upper, middle and lower parts. It is important to do this only if it is safe to do so! Be aware of any potential hazards, including sloughing or collapsing."

Is your annual compensation review coming this year?

It is time to start planning.

I can help. Give me a call.



(continued on Page 7)



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Student One Day	\$150.00	
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		Registration does not include Banquet Tickets which MUST be purchased separately

Weeds in my Forage

By Greg Paranich, Ag Field Specialist

This past season I have received more than the usual number of phone calls about weeds in forage stands. Producers wanted to know why they had plants growing this year that were not (obviously) present before. How did get there? Where did they come from? Is it a weed?

First, what is a weed?

From Webster's dictionary:

(1) A plant that is not valued where it is growing and is usually of vigorous growth, especially one that tends to overgrow or choke out more desirable plants

(2) Marijuana

To start off, let us rule out the second weed definition listed, marijuana. We did not find any of that growing freely in any forage fields this year.

Weeds are unexpected and unwelcomed visitors to our forage fields that can cause several issues. Obviously, they can populate the stand and reduce production of favorable forage. They can become invasive to the point of taking over completely. In addition, they can be unpalatable or even toxic in their nature. In the same way, volunteer crops (plants) are regarded as weeds in a subsequent crop.

But where did they come from and why show up now after a few years of establishment? Where they come from can vary from the original seed source when purchasing seed. Even certified forage seed has a "legal allowance" of certain amounts of some nuisance and even noxious weeds. The purchaser must request a seed certificate from the vendor, indicating all the seeds that lot contains and including the amount of weed seeds. It is a situation of "buyer beware," therefore you should request the information before such an important and long-term investment. Other sources of weed seeds could include contaminated equipment bringing in seeds with soil from other fields, transported via wind, water, or even wildlife (on fur, mud, manure).

Then why did we not see some of them until this year?

One explanation is that many seeds can lie dormant in the soil for a very long time, waiting for ideal conditions to germinate and emerge. This past season has been uncommonly wet. With soils reaching water holding capacity to the point of saturation at times, the seed coats absorb the water. They germinate in favourable conditions to establish and compete with the forage stand.

Clovers do well in moist and cool conditions. In the scenario as explained, some long dormant seeds germinated this year in hayland and pastures and virtually exploded onto the scene. Producers who had never seeded alsike clover before were now faced with managing an unexpected forage for hay harvest and in grazing management. Weeds that had definite number increases and negative forage impacts included toadflax, white cockle, tall buttercup, scentless chamomile and oxeye daisy to name a few. Even our old foe, the Canada thistle got in on the act with more robust patches and spreading across pastures.

So, what to do? This time of year, we can be reactive only, and then develop a future management plan.

If they are already baled in your feed, monitor the storage yards and feeding sites for any new plants in these locations next year. In silage, there may be some weed seed deterioration, but not always. Note the areas affected this year and plan a treatment or weed pulling program to curtail their spread.

Depending on the weed and its severity, we might plan on an herbicide patch treatment to halt it in its tracks from further spread, if there are products available for its control. White cockle may be an exception here. In pastures, we have some good weed control herbicide products that cover a wide range of invasive weeds. Consult your agriculture input supplier or local Agricultural Service Board on control options, equipment resources, and the severity of your weed problem (i.e. nuisance or noxious weed status). Ensure the health and strength of your forage stands for a competitive advantage into the future with proper grazing and harvest timing, and sound fertility management.

Sampling and Testing Forage (Continued from Page 5)

always need to be recognized in a ration supplementation formula. Knowing if a forage is deficient or high in various mineral content has an impact on their interaction with each other as beneficial or antagonistic.

Producers should work with a nutritionist to ensure they are meeting their animals' needs, and to make sure the product they are using are being consumed at appropriate levels.

Annual forages also present some specific issues. For example, cattle feeding on Brassicas (canola, radish, turnip, kale) they may be consuming high levels of sulfur that will interfere with copper absorption and result in deficiencies. **Nitrates** in annual cereals (oats, barley, wheat, corn, millet) can accumulate under stress conditions caused by frost, drought, hail, etc. If nitrate levels exceed 0.5 per cent production, problems may include abortions, premature calves, new born calf mortality, poor growth and reduced milk productions. Only a feed test will evaluate the presence in your forage.

With your feed test analysis in hand, you can begin to develop the appropriate ration for your cattle. You can access the *CowBytes* software program via www.agric.gov.ab.ca.

The services of a qualified nutritionist would be very valuable in getting the best benefits of your feed testing efforts for your winter-feeding program.

Check out the Alberta Agriculture webinar series, *Cows & Chaos Feed, Forage and Management Strategies*, which continues biweekly through Oct 24th, as advertised on Page 4 of this newsletter.

Watch for a date to be announced for an upcoming *Feed Analysis and Cow Nutrition workshop* in late November 2019.

**Reference: BCRC Fact Sheet "Feed Testing & Analysis for Beef Cattle"; July 2017*



WHAT'S HOLDING BACK YOUR CROP'S **FULL POTENTIAL?**

The makings of a plant...

Latshaw, 1924 Elemental composition of the corn plant. J. Agric. Res.

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Otis the Great Horned Owl, adopted as a hatchling at Medicine River Wildlife Centre, was a hit at the West Central Agriculture Tour on Aug. 20. Next month's edition of *The Blade* will feature a talk with Otis's adopted "mate," Carol Kelly, about the benefits resident owls can bring to your farm and how you can encourage them to set up house and stick around. *Brenda Kossowan Photo*

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Persistence pays when it comes to forage breeding

By Reynold Bergen, Science Director, Beef Cattle Research Council (reprinted with permission—see note)

Forage legumes provide high yields, protein and good animal performance while improving soil fertility by fixing nitrogen from the air. Alfalfa is the highest yielding and most widely used legume but can cause bloat. Legumes like cicer milkvetch, sainfoin and birdsfoot trefoil do not cause bloat. As little as 25 per cent sainfoin in a pasture can virtually eliminate the risk of bloat even if the other 75 per cent is alfalfa.

The problem is that older sainfoin varieties don't regrow as fast as alfalfa after grazing. Alfalfa's aggressive nature allows it to out-compete sainfoin for sunlight, moisture and nutrients. Without careful grazing management, sainfoin can disappear from a pasture in a few years. This might be because plant breeders have traditionally selected new varieties for clipped forage yield under monoculture conditions. This doesn't reflect the challenges sainfoin faces when grown with alfalfa and grazed.

Surya Acharya at AAFC Lethbridge has been breeding sainfoin that regrows more rapidly after grazing and persists longer in mixtures with alfalfa. New varieties (e.g. Mountain-view and Glenview) have already been released, but there are more in the pipeline. An update on these ongoing efforts was published in 2017 ("Performance of Mixed Alfalfa-Sainfoin Pastures and Grazing Steers in Western Canada," Professional Animal Scientist 33:472).

What they did: New sainfoin populations were selected at AAFC Lethbridge for improved regrowth and persistence when grown with alfalfa and cut several times during the growing season. Three promising sainfoins (coded as A, B and C, with Nova as a control) were seeded with alfalfa in alternate rows to achieve 50:50 alfalfa/sainfoin stands and tested under grazing conditions in Swift Current and Lethbridge. In Swift Current, sainfoin was seeded with Beaver alfalfa in 2009 and rotationally grazed under dryland conditions using 80 yearling Angus steers in 2010 and 2011. In Lethbridge, sainfoin was seeded with AC Blue J alfalfa (which yields better than Beaver) in 2008, cut in 2009, and rotationally grazed under irrigation using 80 yearling Hereford steers in 2010, 2011 and 2012. Pastures were rotated when 60 per cent of the forage had been used. Alfalfa was used for bloat control in Lethbridge but not Swift Current. Forage yields, persistence, animal performance and bloat were tracked.

What they learned: All growing seasons were wetter than the 30-year average at both locations, but irrigation allowed longer rotational grazing seasons in Lethbridge (41 to 61 days) than in Swift Current (21 to 29 days).

Forage yields averaged 1.8 tons/acre and did not differ among any of the alfalfa/sainfoin mixtures in either grazing season at Swift Current. At Lethbridge, rotationally grazed pastures averaged 4.1 tons/acre. Sainfoin A out-yielded Nova in one year, C out-yielded Nova in two years and B out-yielded Nova in all three rotational grazing seasons.

Sainfoin persistence: All plots contained 50 per cent sainfoin at the start. By year two in Swift Current, sainfoin B was 39 per cent of the stand, while A, C and Nova had dropped to 25 or 26 per cent. After three years of rotational grazing in Lethbridge, B was at 40 per cent, C was intermediate (29 per cent), while A and Nova were lowest (five to 11 per cent).

Animal performance: Average daily gains and gains per acre were higher in Lethbridge (2.3 lbs./day and 397 lbs./ac.) than in Swift

Current (2.1 lbs./day and 187 lbs./ac.) but not statistically different among varieties at either location. More animal data would be needed to detect performance differences among the sainfoin. No bloat was observed.

What it means: Upcoming sainfoin varieties have improved persistence and yield when grown and grazed in mixed stands with alfalfa, but one size doesn't fit all. The varieties that perform best in slightly heavier soil and irrigation may not perform as well under drier, more challenging conditions.

This team used an unusual approach. Not all forage breeders test new strains under different soil, climatic and management conditions before releasing varieties. That's important because new forage species or varieties may not meet expectations if they were developed under conditions that don't resemble your own. Ask questions when considering new varieties — results may vary!

Long-term forage breeding work is costly, especially when multiple sites are used. Grazing trials are even costlier; more seed is needed for each of the experimental varieties in order to establish plots that are large enough to graze, plus the added land, animal, sampling and analysis costs. Producer check-off investments are important to make sure that AAFC and other public institutions maintain their forage breeding programs. This is especially critical for legumes like sainfoin; their smaller acreage relative to alfalfa may not attract investment from private breeders.

The Productivity pillar of Canada's National Beef Strategy aims to increase production efficiencies by 15 per cent, partly by increasing the yields and nutritional quality of tame and native annual and perennial forages through improved pasture, hay and grazing management, plant breeding and variety selection recommendations. The strategy explains why the Canadian Beef Cattle Check-Off increased from \$1 to \$2.50 per head in most provinces (with approximately 75 cents allocated to the Beef Cattle Research Council), and how it is being invested.

The preceding article was originally published by Canadian Cattlemen on June 3. It is reprinted with permission.

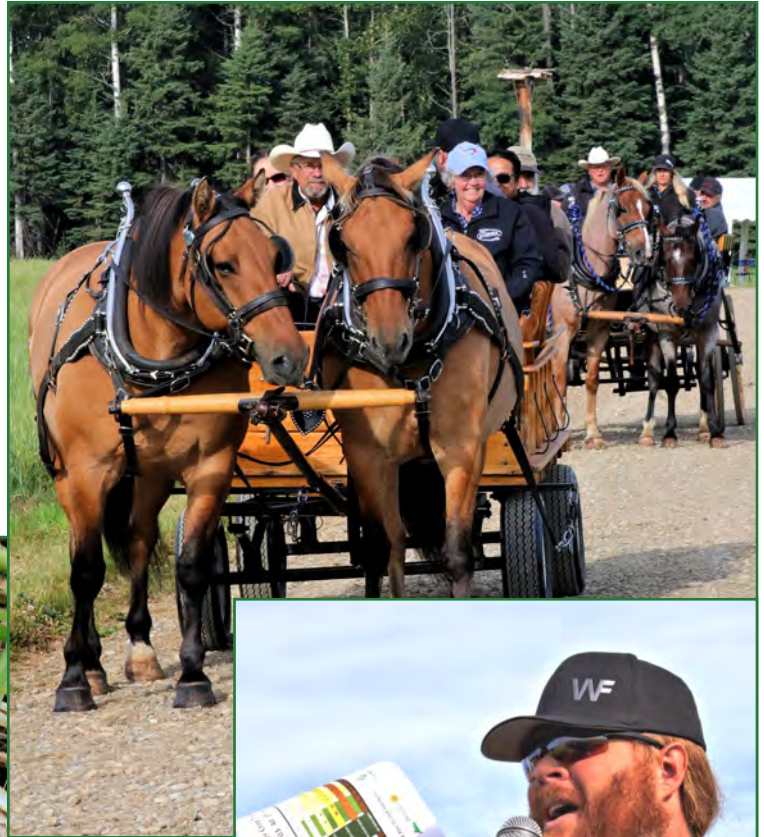
The Beef Research Cluster is funded by the Canadian Beef Cattle Check-Off and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada with additional contributions from provincial beef industry groups and governments to advance research and technology transfer supporting the Canadian beef industry's vision to be recognized as a preferred supplier of healthy, high-quality beef, cattle and genetics.



**Gallery: West Country Ag Tour, August 20, 2019
Rocky Mountain House**

All meals and presentations for the annual tour, hosted by Clearwater County Ag Services Board with support from GWFA, were set up at the county test plots and workshops north of Rocky Mountain House. Members of the West Country Harness Club provided transport between the sites.

Counterclockwise from top: Teamsters Ross and Karen McCutcheon up front followed by Garth Philips and Karen Kay; Marty Winchell from Clearwater County gives an outline of the cover crop trial; Greg Paranich from GWFA discusses various mixtures and individual components in the trial plots; tour participant Chelita Walsh gets a visit with Otis, the Owl; closeup of a field turnip included in the trial mixes.
Brenda Kossowan photos





GREY WOODED *FORAGE ASSOCIATION*

ANNOUNCING! *Special General Meeting* **Monday, Oct. 21, 2019, 5 P.M.** **To *Elect New Directors* for the** **Grey Wooded Forage Association** **Board of Directors**

- ⇒ The GWFA Board of Directors seeks nominees to fill three vacant seats
- ⇒ We have received one nomination, from member **Lee Eddy** of Innisfail
- ⇒ Further nominations will be accepted up to 12:01 p.m. on Friday, October 11, 2019 at the GWFA office
- ⇒ If three or fewer nominations are received, members will be invited to participate in a Special General Meeting via teleconference at 5 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 21
- ⇒ If more than three nominations are received, members will be invited to appear in person to cast their votes. If required, the meeting will be held at the Mountain View Financial Board Room in Eckville, prior to the Board's regular meeting.
- ⇒ Nominations and voting are open to all members in good standing of the Grey Wooded Forage Association. Voting will be limited to one person per membership. Members must have paid their 2019/2020 dues to be held in good standing with GWFA.

Please contact GWFA Business Manager Brenda Kossowan for details.

Call 403-844-2645 during office hours or email gwfa3@telus.net

**GWFA members will receive further instruction upon request
and as the date of the Special General Meeting approaches**

Find us online: greywoodedforageassociation.com

Feed Buyer, Beware

By Andrea Hanson, Beef Extension Specialist, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry

The quality and quantity of forage in Alberta, really Western Canada and below the 49th parallel, is extremely varied. Some producers have all they need, some are looking to buy and others have feed to sell. Those producers looking to buy forage feed need to be aware of the unwanted or unexpected plants they may be introducing to their farm or ranch through their purchases. It is very important to know what you're buying.

Not all plants are alike. Some plants are beneficial to the farm while others could cause big headaches. A producer may be willing to accept some plants while others are ones that are simply not acceptable. Weeds fall into three categories; common, noxious and prohibited noxious. The latter two categories could create long term problems for control.

It is important for the person growing the forage to know what is growing in the field when the forage is cut and baled. It is also important for the buyer to ask what possible weeds could be in the forage before buying it and introducing it to the land.

If the forage is being bought from the neighbor across the fence, chances are, the weed species are close to the same. Wildlife are a very effective way of spreading seeds throughout the countryside.

If the feed is coming from a significant distance, the weed issues in one area could be very different than the weeds in another and by moving the forage in, weed problems are introduced.

Where the feed is fed during the winter also affects the decision.

If the feed is going to be fed on perennial or native grasslands, the weed issue is even more important. The cost of introducing a problem weed to that area could mean the elimination of beneficial plants such as alfalfa, clovers, vetches that are killed or injured if herbicides are required to control the weed(s).

Utilizing the feed on land that will be tilled in the spring MAY reduce the concern and how the field is managed later will be very important.

A feed sample does not identify any of the plant species in the feed. There have been lots of articles about feed testing and that a visual appraisal does not tell the whole story; well this is a situation where a feed analysis won't tell the whole story either. The only way to know what might be in the forage feed is to visually look for weeds or develop a rapport with the seller and feel comfortable enough to take their word.

Don't expect rumen digestion, ensiling or composting to eliminate the weed issues. While these processes may reduce the number of viable seeds, they don't guarantee the elimination of seeds that will germinate and create future problems.

As a final note, be sure to get an accurate weight on the bales, especially if they are being priced by the bale and not weighed and sold by the tonne.



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Get the Dirt on Soil Health

Prepare to get dirty with Dr. Kris Nichols

Soil Health is Critical - Are You Doing Everything Possible to Build and Manage It?
Explore how what happens above ground affects what happens below ground



Learn how to:

**Sequester more carbon
Reduce your inputs
Make the most of your rainfall
Grow healthier food**

Tues October 22
5:00 - 8:30 pm
Winfield Hall,
County of Wetaskiwin

Weds October 23
10:00 am - 2:30 pm
Rocky Mountain House,
Clearwater County

Thurs October 24
10:00 am - 2:30 pm
Westerdale Hall,
Mountain View County

<https://soilhealthwinfield.eventbrite.ca>

<https://soilhealthclearwater.eventbrite.ca>

<https://soilhealthwesterdale.eventbrite.ca>

\$30 for GWFA members, \$40 for non-members includes lunch Call 403.829.4103

Bring a ziplock bag with a little topsoil from your farm and something heavy (like a book) to use for a weight



**GREY WOODED
FORAGE ASSOCIATION**



Funded by:

Alberta

Alberta Crop Report (abridged), Sept. 10, 2019

The following information is excerpted from the Alberta Crop Report, which is produced by AFSC and the Statistics and Data Development Section, Economics and Competitiveness Branch of Alberta Agriculture and Forestry.

For the sake of brevity, this issue of The Blade is limited to that information which is specific to Region Two.

The complete series is available online:

Go to open.alberta.ca/publications/2830245

Contact Crop Statistician Ashan Shooshtarian by email ashan.shooshtarian@gov.ab.ca or phone 780-422-2887.

Wet weather late last week has slowed down harvesting in most areas across the province and particularly in the North East and North West Regions. Precipitation has been variable, ranging from less than 5 mm in some parts of the Peace Region, to 30-40 mm in the North East and more than 40 mm in most parts of the North West Region. In the Southern Region, most areas received at least 20 mm of rain that was welcomed, although it did impact harvest progress.

Provincially, about 16 per cent of all crops have been combined, compared to 17 per cent a year ago and the 5-year (2014-2018) average of 23 per cent. When compared to the 5-year averages, harvest progress is behind in all regions, with the exception of the Southern Region that is on par (See Table 1). The delay in harvest progress is attributed to generally below normal temperatures for a large part of the province, especially, in the North East, North West and Central Regions. Most of the areas in these regions are estimated to be at least one week behind normal growth, with some parts at least two weeks behind (See the map on the next page). Warm, dry weather is needed over the next several weeks to allow for timely harvest progress.

In general, there will be limited second cut hay this year, given the dry conditions in the southern parts of the province and wet, cool conditions in the rest. Although there is the potential for second cut in some fields, inclement weather has prevented any baling.

Some producers are still finishing their first cut. Currently, for those producers with second cut hay, it is 14 per cent complete for dryland and 67 per cent on irrigation. Preliminary average yield on dryland is estimated at 1.5 ton per acre, with quality rated at 53 per cent fair and 47 per cent good. For irrigated hay, average yield is reported at 1.8 tons per acre, with quality rated as 22 per cent poor to fair, 50 per cent good and 28 per cent excellent.

Estimated provincial dryland yield indices slightly dropped from two weeks ago and are now three and five per cent, respectively, above the 5-year and 10-year averages (see Table 2). Yields for the Central, North East and Peace Regions are 17 per cent, 12 per cent and nine per cent, respectively above the 5-year averages. For the Southern and Peace Regions, it was 15 per cent and 14 per cent below. Average yield for potatoes are estimated at 10.5 and 15.7 tons per acre, respectively, on dryland and irrigated fields. For sugar beets, the average yield is reported at 27.4 tons per acre, while for dry beans it is 26 hundred weight per acre.

Region Two, Central (Rimbey, Airdrie, Coronation, Oyen):

Although rain showers halted harvest operations in most areas over the weekend, harvest is now resuming. Since last week, producers were able to combine an additional five per cent of their major crops. Haying operations and the baling of crops (particularly for damaged cereals by hail) are underway.

Overall, about 83 per cent of all crops are still standing (compared to the 5-year average of 63 per cent), with eight per cent swathed and nine per cent in the bin.

Quality for harvested crops so far in the region is above the provincial 5-year averages, with the exception for barley number one, which is below. For dry peas, about 39 per cent is graded as number one, 41 per cent as number two, 19 per cent as number three and about one per cent as feed.

Second -cut hay is 32 per cent complete for dryland, with average yield estimated at 1.8 ton per acre and quality rated as 49 per cent fair and 51 per cent good.

Pasture growth conditions are rated as 23 per cent poor, 41 per cent fair and 36 per cent good.



Ag Safety Breakfast

Why does a small farmer need a safety plan?

Presented by AgSafe Alberta & Cattlegrass Ranch

Hosted by Rocky Mountain House Agricultural Society

Saturday, October 5, 2019

8 - 11 a.m. Full breakfast - \$5 per plate

10 a.m. Ag Safety presentation

Arbutus Hall

BearSmart Workshop

Mountain View BearSmart along with Mountain View and Clearwater Counties will host a **FREE** workshop discussing "Bear Attractant Mitigation". We live in bear country and, while interaction with bears is inevitable, the experience does not have to be a hardship when we understand and implement ways to manage possible conflict. Bear Conflict Biologist Jay Honeyman with Alberta Environment and Parks will give the presentation. Jay was a park ranger in Kananaskis Country and has coached and taught in Canada and the United States. He serves as an ex-officio with the Bear Conflict Solutions Institute, a not-for-profit society focusing on training and innovative applied research. The 90-minute workshop runs on Oct. 3 at the James River Hall, starting at 7 p.m.



Grey Wooded Forage Association

Creating an Awareness of Forages

2019/20 Membership Application Form

Membership in the GWFA is open to anyone interested in forage production, grazing management and environment sustainability

The fee is \$40 per year, running from April 1 to March 31

For information, call 403-844-2645 or email gwfa3@telus.net

Benefits of joining GWFA:

- ♦ Discounts on courses, seminars, workshops and tours.
- ♦ An automatic subscription to *The Blade*, published monthly online. Hard copy is available on request.
- ♦ Assistance with your Environmental Farm Plan.
- ♦ Equipment rental (deposit required).
- ♦ Access to our reference library.
- ♦ Access to our members-only Facebook group.
- ♦ Networking with like-minded producers and advisors.
- ♦ Farm consultation services (farm calls are 55 cents per kilometre, each way).
- ♦ A copy of the GWFA Annual Report.

Please mail your completed form and cheque to:

Grey Wooded Forage Association

PO Box 1448, Rocky Mountain House, AB T4T 1B1,

Or scan and email the completed form and send an e-transfer to gwfa3@telus.net

Renewal ☐ New member ☐ How should we send your copy of *The Blade*: Email ☐ Canada Post ☐

Name: _____ Email: _____

Mailing address: _____

Landline: _____ Cell: _____

***How do you describe your operation (tick all that apply)**

- ☐ Beef producer
- ☐ Sheep/goat\ producer
- ☐ Dairy producer
- ☐ Annual crops producer
- ☐ Forage producer
- ☐ Other _____

***How many head of livestock do you manage:**

Beef cows/heifers
Dairy cows
Feeders
Ewes
Does
Other

***How many acres of land do you manage:**

Pasture
Hay
Crop
Other

**These questions are voluntary.
We do not share your information*

How can we improve our service to you? _____

Please suggest topics you would like to learn more about: _____