

forage VIEWS



November 2017



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IMPORTANT DATES

- December 5-7:** Western Canada Conference on Soil Health & Grazing
- December 15:** Antimicrobial Lunch & Learn
- Feb 2:** Ladies Ranching Retreat
- Feb 10:** Curt Pate

Update from the Office

It's hard to believe that summer has come and gone, and that we are well in to fall already! Summer kept us busy with all our research sites, but we were able to squeeze in a few extension events too!

Industrial Hemp Field Day August 30, 2017

If you were unable to attend this event, you missed a good one! WCFA partnered with Brazeau County to host a full day of tours focusing on industrial hemp. The chilly morning started out WCFA's Brazeau County Research site where we heard from Bart Guyon (Reeve of Brazeau County), Stephan Lindop

(Chairman of the Alberta Hemp Alliance), and Fito Zamudio Baca (WCFA Forage Program Manager). Everyone was given some time to look over all the plots, including the 2017 Industrial Hemp Variety Trial. Fito shared with attendees a number of challenges we faced with the trial and some of the things we learned to improve in the future.

The next stop of the day was the BioComposites Group Facility in Drayton Valley, where attendees learned about a number of interesting products that are being made with hemp fibre. They were also toured through the plant itself and



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Update from the Office

walked through the process of turning hemp fibre into fibre mats. We then visited a hemp field that had been put in by a producer in the area, and finished the day out at the University of Alberta Breton Plots with their Hemp Variety Trial.

Producer Appreciation Day September 21, 2017

Despite a rocky start to the day (no power!) and less than perfect weather, we still had a great turnout for this event. We stayed warm and dry for the first part of the day inside the Yellowhead County office listening to a number of guest speakers. We had Clair Langlois discuss winter wheat, Neil Blue give an update on the crop markets, Grant Lastiwka discuss cover crops, and a Pickseed representative talk corn varieties. We then bundled up, grabbed some umbrellas

and rubber boots and went out to tour the plots. We would like to extend a huge thank-you to all of you that braved the weather and came out for the day.

WCFA staff also had the opportunity to attend a couple of conferences throughout the summer and early fall. The middle of August saw Melissa join with other Forage Associations at a booth at the Canadian Beef Industry Conference in Calgary. Jessica just recently returned from the Alberta Sheep Breeders' Association Sheep Symposium in Red Deer, where WCFA also had a booth. We appreciate these opportunities to get out and interact with our members and other producers throughout the region. Keep your eyes open for us at other upcoming community events!

NOW ACCEPTING ORDERS !

Order your Canada Thistle Stem Gall Flies Today for Spring 2018!

These biological control agents are an effective alternative to chemical use in controlling Canada thistle populations.

Orders must be placed no later than November 28, 2017

Cost: \$130/release (GST Additional)

Each release contains 105 individual flies



For more information or to place an order please contact:

Jessica Watson

Conservation Ag & Extension Program Manager

780-727-4424

conservationag@westcentralforage.com



kāla ranch

Registered Purebred
Black Angus Yearling Bulls
On Offer

at VJV Auction Westlock

December 9, 2017
11:00 AM

Ranch Raised, Vet Checked, Semen tested
Preview anytime at the farm
Call Gora at 780-515-0616
Visit [kala ranch](#) on Facebook

Yellowhead County

Woodlands County

West-Central Forage
Association



Shiningbank Community Stewardship Initiative

SACA has been moving along quite nicely on this initiative. Throughout the summer Jessica and one of our lovely Summer Field Technicians were able to complete Riparian Health Assessments (RHAs) on some of the Yellowhead County parcels of land directly along Shiningbank Lake. We are still compiling the reports for these RHAs, but have identified some areas that could use some improvement. With the generous help of one of our board members, Brian Dickson, who supplied and piloted the boat for us, we

were able to complete two water sampling trips late in the summer/early fall. We are still analyzing the results, but will be sure to share information as we get it.

Yellowhead County assisted with the development of a stakeholder survey that was sent out to residents. We are hoping to compile the results from the surveys and use the information to direct extension activities moving forward. Keep your eyes and ears open for an upcoming open house session very soon! Input from the community is a large

part of making this project a success, so we appreciate any and all feedback. We will continue to provide updates on the status of the project as we get them. We have some exciting partnerships in the works for 2018, so stay tuned to find out more.

Any questions or concerns regarding this project may be directed to Jessica Watson, Conservation Agriculture and Extension Program Manager at 780.727.4424 or conservationag@westcentralforage.com

Weevil Delivery 2017

2017 turned out to be another challenging year in regards to weevil delivery. We were unable to fully fill all orders we had received, however, we did fill well over half of the orders we received. Mother nature continues to be the greatest factor we face when it comes time to collect and deliver the weevils, and once again she had other ideas for us this year. We had a strategy to mitigate the risk of non-

delivery of the weevils for this year, but even the best laid plans sometimes go awry. The 219 releases we were able to provide were delivered in late September, and the majority of individuals who had ordered received at least some of their orders. We will continue to work on strategies to mitigate the risk of not receiving weevils in the large numbers we require, but we will always be contending with many

factors that remain out of our control. We will continue to offer the weevils moving forward, so make sure you are watching for information as it becomes available. We would also like to remind everyone that we do offer the stem-gall fly as a control agent for Canada thistle as well, and we are currently accepting orders for these until November 28, 2017 for Spring 2018 delivery.

LADIES Ranching Retreat

Feb 2, 2018 9AM-8PM

Keynote Address:

Léona Dargis - "Life is What You Make It"

CALVING & HERD HEALTH

MAYERTHORPE VET CLINIC, DR. CLAIR AINSWORTH

HEALTH & WELLNESS FOR US

W4 WILDFLOWERS, ALY PRICE & MONTANA LAYE

MINERAL & VITAMIN SUPPLEMENTATION

BLUE ROCK ANIMAL NUTRITION LTD., COURTNEY O'KEITH

COST OF PRODUCTION & COST OF REPLACEMENTS

KATHY LARSON, WBDC

WINE TASTING

BIRDS & BEES WINERY



TRADESHOW

*VENDORS WELCOME, PLEASE CALL
WCFA FOR DETAILS

**Register Through Eventbrite "Ladies
Ranching Retreat" or by calling WCFA
at 780.727.4447**

RSVP by January 26, 2018

Cost includes 3 meals & Wine Tasting

\$85



Parkland Village Community Centre, Spruce Grove

Pollinator Conservation Initiative and Environmental Stewardship

S. K. Basu



Bee populations are showing alarming decline across Canada due to a number of natural and anthropogenic factors. Bees (including native bees and honey bees) along with other insects like moths and butterflies and some species of beetles and flies constitute an important army of natural (biological) pollinators that help in cross pollination of several important crop species like seed alfalfa, seed canola, forages, vegetables and native wildflowers. Loss of insect pollinators, like bees, means serious threats to our agricultural productivity and stability of natural ecosystems and environment. Therefore, it is time for providing a comprehensive conservation package for protecting our valuable insect

friends to secure the future of Canadian agriculture and apiculture industries.

One of the sustainable approaches in conserving our native pollinators is active research for the purpose of developing suitable Pollinator Mixes for specific agro-climatic zones in the country; that can help in establishing Pollinator Gardens or Pollinator Habitats or Pollinator Sanctuaries at suitable sites. Such sites could be farm perimeters, hard to access farm areas, agronomically non-productive or unsuitable wasteland areas, wetlands, city, municipal and rural parks, gardens and lawns, kitchen gardens, avenues, boulevards, golf courses, suitable parts of highways etc. Pollinator

Mixes could include mixtures of specific wildflowers, native grasses as well as different annual/perennial forage crops that can actively attract insect pollinators in large numbers.

Such natural/artificial eco-habitats or Pollinator sanctuaries planted with diverse plant mixes once established could easily attract wide diversity of local insect pollinators including bees. Furthermore, being purely organic they can slowly develop into unique habitats for small local birds and mammals. If wetland habitats are incorporated under such programs unique ecosystems catering to multiple species including bees, birds and fishes could be easily integrated. Therefore, Pollinator Mixes could have multiple benefits for ecosystem regeneration and need to be actively investigated for their potential in habitat development, soil enrichment and conservation of local biodiversity. Performance Seed, Lethbridge has developed Performa Pollinator Mix and is working towards developing new and better mixes as part of their Environmental Stewardship Program for developing dynamic and biodiverse pollinator habitats/sanctuaries.

Curt Pate Stockmanship

Thorsby Haymaker Center

February 10, 2018

10 am – Verified Beef Production Plus, Melissa Downing

10:30 am – Classroom Instruction , Curt Pate

12 – Lunch

1-3:30 pm live demo, Curt Pate

\$20

Sponsored By



www.curtpatestockmanship.com

Tickets can be purchased
through Eventbrite (search
Curt Pate Stockmanship) or
by calling the WCFA office
780-727-4447

by January 30, 2017



Have You Had Your Feeds Tested?

John McKinnon, Ph.D. at the University of Saskatchewan.

This article was originally posted on the Beef Cattle Research Council blog on October 17, 2017. The original post can be found on www.BeefResearch.ca.



As a nutritionist, feed testing is a fundamental tool that I rely on to assist beef producers with their feeding programs. This is true whether I am dealing with feedlots or cow-calf operations. Accurate knowledge of feed quality, particularly the operation's forage base allows one to develop feeding strategies for specific production scenarios and minimize the over- or under-feeding of nutrients. By so doing, one is able to achieve desired

production targets and save on supplemental feed costs

While feed testing seems like a “no brainer”, it is surprising how many cattlemen skip this critical management tool. It seems many would rather rely on visual appraisal (i.e. colour, plant species, and leaf content) or knowledge of cutting time to judge quality. While these are all indicators of forage quality, they do not substitute for a feed test particularly when it comes to the energy and protein

content of that forage. For example, the protein content of brome hay can range from as low as 5 to 6% up to 18% depending on stage of maturity at cutting. While visual appraisal may help separate the good from the poor quality hay, it is not going to help you decide how much protein supplement, if any, you need to background calves when feeding this hay. Only a feed test can accurately help you make this decision.

With respect to energy

content, a feed test will give you values as total digestible nutrients (% dry matter) or as digestible energy (Mcal/kg dry matter) and depending on the laboratory used for testing, you may also get net energy values for maintenance and gain (Mcal/kg dry matter). These energy values can be used to determine the amount of forage allotted in bale or swath grazing situations or can help you determine how much grain you need to supplement when backgrounding calves.

The feeding value of a given forage is often based on its fibre content. A feed test can generate two fibre values that reflect either its relative energy content or feeding value. These include acid (ADF) and neutral detergent (NDF) fibre. High ADF values indicate that the hay was cut at a late stage of maturity and as a result it will be poorly digested by the cow. This late cut hay 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 at harvest and more importantly is indicative of the degree to which cattle will consume the feed – high NDF values limit forage intake! Again, visual appraisal will not help you accurately identify the energy content nor the feeding value of your hay.

As indicated above, accurate knowledge of the energy and protein content of your feed can allow you to target economic feeding strategies for various classes of cattle. For example, when feeding the pregnant beef cow, a basic principle is to adjust your feeding program to match her requirements as she moves through the second and third trimesters of pregnancy with the appropriate quality and quantity of feed and to do so in a cost effective manner.

Pregnancy requirements, particularly for nutrients such as energy and protein, increase dramatically in the last 6 to 8 weeks prior to calving. This concept is illustrated in Table 1 below for both a mature cow as well as for a bred heifer. Note that for the mature cow, energy requirements at the end of the third trimester are 20% higher than 2nd trimester requirements. This is true whether you use total digestible nutrients (TDN) or net energy for maintenance as an energy reference. The increase is even higher for the bred heifer, as she not only needs to meet requirements for pregnancy but also has to continue to grow to mature weight. With respect to nutrients such as protein, calcium and phosphorus, similar increases are evident for both animals as pregnancy advances.

Meeting these increased nutritional needs by feeding a balanced ration is critical to maintaining a normal pregnancy and to prevent weight loss. It will also influence the success of your subsequent breeding program. Inadequate nutrition will cause cows to lose weight and body condition. This is true regardless if the issue is feed quality or quantity. Cows that lose weight during the last trimester or from the period from calving through breeding are subject to calving difficulties, extended periods of anestrus and/or poor first service conception rates. The result will be an extended breeding season and/or an increase in the number of open cows. As well, next year's calf crop can be affected not only due to lower numbers but also as a result of reduced weaning weights due to the fact that more calves are likely to be born late in the calving season.

Having your forage tested is the first step to ensuring that you are meeting the requirements of your cows for maintenance and pregnancy. Today's feed test laboratories use both wet chemistry and near infrared spectrometry to offer accurate results and rapid turn-around times. A basic forage analysis will provide you with moisture , energy (i.e. total digestible nutrients, digestible energy

and/or net energy content) and crude protein values as well as a mineral package (calcium and phosphorus). More advanced packages can provide you with details on all macro and trace minerals, acid and neutral detergent fibre content, nature of protein (soluble, degradable, bypass, heat damaged), fat content, nitrate and other potential toxins. This information can be used by you and your nutritionist to develop feeding programs that meet the requirements of pregnant, wintering beef cows and replacement heifers, as well as for targeting gains of growing cattle! At \$25 to \$30 a sample for a basic feed test, it truly is a no brainer! So again I ask the question – Have you tested your feed this winter?



	TDN (lbs/day)	Net Energy Maintenance (mcal/day)	Net Energy Gain(Mcal/ day)	Crude Protein(lbs/ day)	Calcium (Grams/day) Phosphorus (Grams/day)
1300 lb Mature (Condition Score 3.0)					
1st trimester	11.0	10.7	–	1.5	17
2nd trimester	12.8	12.4	–	1.6	17
3rd trimester	15.3	15.2	–	2.1	30
900 lb Bred Heifer (Condition Score 3.0 gaining 1.25 lbs/day)					
1st trimester	12.7	8.1	2.3	1.7	24
2nd trimester	14.9	10.4	2.5	1.9	25
3rd trimester	18.0	13.6	2.7	2.4	36

Table 1. Nutrient requirements for pregnancy for a mature 1300 pound cow and 900 bred heifer. Values were generated using Alberta Agriculture's Cow-Bytes Program. (Assumptions include breeding in late August for June 1 calving, typical Canadian winters, access to shelter from wind and a daily gain of 1.25 pounds for the bred heifer in addition to weight gain from pregnancy.)



YELLOWHEAD COUNTY (WILDWOOD SITE)

2017 SMALL PLOTS UPDATE



COVER CROP LABEL (BRAZEAU SITE)

Forage Research Sites

by Fito Zamudio Baca PAg.

West-Central Forage Association (WCFA) over the years has been managing a few forage research sites in different counties, Yellowhead, Woodlands, Parkland and this year we are proud to inform you that we added another site to our portfolio, this last one in Brazeau County.

We all are aware of the challenges the West -Central region encountered this year (extremely wet spring) that drug into part of the summer then dry, and then wet and cold, finishing with more of the same in the fall. We dealt with some very difficult challenges; complications working at the sites, seeding delays, high weed pressure, difficulty doing site maintenance, data collection and once in a while we got stuck too!

Our commitment to our members is to deliver unbiased reliable information that could be utilized as a part of your "toolbox" to ease the decision-making process and also makes sense in your operation.

With that in mind we put our best foot forward despite the challenges we face as an Industry and as your Forage Association, and this year we managed to execute 10 Small Plot Variety Trails

Small Plots Variety Trials

- 1) Corn Variety Trial (Wildwood Site)
- 2) Perennial Forages Variety Trial (Wildwood Site)
- 3) Cereal Silage Variety Trial (Wildwood Site)
- 4) Cover Crops Variety Trial (Wildwood Site)
- 5) Pollinator Mix Variety Trial (Wildwood Site)
- 6) Industrial Hemp Variety Trail (Brazeau Site)
- 7) Cereal Silage Variety Trial (Brazeau Site)
- 8) Cover Crops Variety Trial (Brazeau Site)
- 9) Pollinator Mix Variety Trial (Brazeau Site)
- 10) Forages with different treatments for fertilizer/soil health (Woodlands Site)

One thing that it is worth mentioning is that some of the plots were trialed so that one replicate was seeded with the Small Plot Disc Drill and the other replicate was broadcasted. The intention of the different seeding methods was to determine if the seeding method has an effect on Biomass production and/or Quality.

Stay tuned for more updates and final reports. Please visit our website to view the full report s (www.wescentralforage.com)

Industrial Hemp Variety Trial



HAVE AN IDEA FOR A PROJECT?

If you have an idea that we should know about it, don't hesitates to contact me. Always happy to chat with you!

780-727-4447
Forage@westcentralforage.com

West-Central Forage Association 2017/2018 Member Needs Assessment

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We want to hear from you! Over the next few months we will be working to gather feedback from our members, producers, stakeholders, partners, and industry on our programming. We're looking to gather as much information as we can from everyone on what you would like to see from WCFA in the future. We have developed a short questionnaire to help gather feedback, and will also be looking to have a number of "coffee table" meetings with you all as well. It is important to us to know what it is that

you, our members, need from us, as we are committed to serving your needs. The information gathered will be used to direct our future programming and ensure we are continuing to provide opportunities and information that are of relevance to you.

To participate in our Member Needs Assessment please visit: www.westcentralforage.com to download the questionnaire. Completed forms can be mailed back to our office, dropped off at the office, or emailed to info@westcentralforage.com.

westcentralforage.com.

We greatly appreciate all the feedback we receive, as we are always striving to provide the best possible service to our members. The questionnaire should only take a few minutes to complete, and will be a very valuable tool for us to use for future planning. Findings from our Member Needs Assessment will be shared at our Annual General Meeting in March 2018.

Lunch & Learn: Changes to Antimicrobial Regulations for Livestock Producers



PRESENTATIONS:

DR. KEITH LEHMAN, CHIEF PROVINCIAL VETERINARIAN:

**UPCOMING CHANGES TO LEGISLATION REGARDING ANTIMICROBIAL
ADMINISTRATION IN LIVESTOCK**

BOEHRINGER INGELHEIM: PARASITE MANAGEMENT



December 15, 2017

WCFA Office (5009-45 Avenue Entwistle, AB)

11:00 AM– 2:00 PM (Lunch provided)

Free to attend