

forage VIEWS



December 2016



In This Issue

Livestock Wintering.....	1
Technology is Helping Producers with Better Herd Management.....	4
Mayerthorpe Rancher Awarded for Leadership in Environmental Stewardship.....	5

Reminder

2017 West Central Forage Association Memberships are Due. Please renew by February 1, 2017

Livestock Wintering:

LOCATING AND MANAGING YOUR SITE TO MAKE IT MORE SUSTAINABLE

What Is Sustainable Wintering?

A sustainable wintering system is one that provides livestock with access to the necessities (food, water and shelter) in a way that balances production efficiencies, profits, and environmental stewardship. A sustainable wintering system requires feeding, infrastructure and resource management strategies that work together. They create flexibility and maximize profits, while at the same time minimizing the environmental effects. In recent years, livestock practices have come to the forefront of public scrutiny because they affect not only farms, but also neighbouring communities and the general public. Even though it's your livestock operation, the protection of land and water resources is an issue for everyone.

Environmental and Health Concerns Associated With Livestock Production

Concentration of livestock in feeding or confinement areas for extended periods can lead to localized accumulation of manure and excessive nutrients. This can result in the potential for nutrients and micro-organisms (bacteria and parasites) to run off into nearby surface waters. Manure can contain bacteria such as E-Coli, including the O157:H7 strain that causes human diarrhea, fever, vomiting, kidney failure and sometimes death. It can also contain Cryptosporidium and Giardia parasites that can cause serious gastrointestinal sickness, diarrhea and weight loss in both humans and animals. Wildlife habitat can be harmed from

Continued...



Livestock Wintering *CONTINUED*



WCFA Board of Directors

President	Frank Maddock
Vice President	Brett Byers
Secretary	Dale Engstrom
Treasurer	Grant Taillieu

Directors

Stacey Meunier	Therese Tompkins
Larry Kidd	Ted Commaduer
Greg Malyk	Grant Chittick
Eric Vanderwell	

Staff

General Manager
Melissa Freeman

Forage & Livestock Program Manager
Fito Zamudio

Conservation Ag & Extension Program Manager, Jessica Watson

Contact

ph: 780-727-4447
5009 45 Ave
Entwistle AB
Box 360, Evansburg AB T0E 0T0



Agriculture
Opportunity Fund

This publication is made possible by funding from our major sponsor, the Agriculture Opportunities Fund (AOF), Alberta Agriculture and Forestry

high animal densities, trampling of shorelines and waterway banks, and runoff in surface waters

Choosing A Sustainable Wintering Site That Works For You

The ideal wintering site(s) should be feasible for you, healthy and comfortable for the herd, and safe for the environment. Your land contours, your water resources, your herd size and requirements, and your existing arrangements will all be important factors in determining the site or sites you choose. You'll also want to consider your existing infrastructure, in combination with some new options such as wind fences, portable fencing, and alternate water stations. Because no two situations are alike, your solution to finding a sustainable wintering site will be uniquely yours. Ultimately, there are two goals. One is to move animals away from, or restrict use of, sensitive areas such as slopes, sandy soils, non-vegetated areas, riparian zones, woodlots, and land already nutrient rich from manure additions. The other is to take advantage of a greater portion of your land base and in-field feed sources over a greater portion of the year.

Guidelines for Locating a Sustainable Wintering Site

Avoid areas that are over-utilized:

Over dependence on key areas can result in nutrient build-up,

vegetation loss, and a decline in production, as well as movement of nutrients, bacteria and sediment.

Locate watering stations away from water sources to avoid runoff contamination:

A deeply-buried water pipeline to a central location on pasture works well to bring water to the animals, and solar and wind-powered pumps can ensure there is a clean and reliable water supply even at the most remote locations.

Select a site that has good ground cover:

Ground cover or crop residue will help catch and filter nutrients, bacteria, and sediment from surface runoff

Try and choose a site with less than 2% slope to minimize runoff:

The steeper the slope, the more runoff and erosion you can expect. If a sloped area is your only option, locate bedding and feeding sites as far as possible from any waterways, in a spot where runoff is least likely to flow in the direction of the waterway

Consider soil type: Clay soils are best at reducing leaching, while sandy soil, gravel, shale or sandstone outcrops are prone to leaching and will need to be managed accordingly. Avoid areas with high water tables or spring flooding history. This will help minimize the potential of nutrients and bacteria leaching into groundwater, or washing into surface water.

Continued...

Extensive Winter Feeding Seminar

Join us for an informative seminar and learn from Forage Beef Specialist and producers about Winter Grazing Systems

**Karin Lindquist, Forage Beef Specialist
Alberta Agriculture and Forestry**

- Production advantages & disadvantages
- Winter feeding options
- Managing feed quality
- Cost savings

Producer Panel

- TBA

WCFA Winter Grazing Videos



Where: Glen Park Hall. 49004 Range Road 274
Leduc County, Alberta

When: Thursday, January 19, 2017

Time: 10:30 Coffee and Registration

Fee: \$20 Members / \$25 Non members

Lunch and refreshments included



Pre-registration is required by January 13 please call or email:

780-727-4447 or

Info@westcentralforage.com



Strategies for Maintaining a Sustainable Wintering Site

Try and utilize more of your farm:

If you increase the size of the wintering area and provide more land to utilize the manure, the likelihood of accumulation is less while the benefits to growing crops is greater. Good, healthy vegetation cover growing over the entire wintering area the following summer is a good indicator that manure distribution was adequate, otherwise animal density was too high.

Remove and spread manure build-ups:

This often includes manure from bedding, watering, feeding and other high-traffic areas.

Be aware of your farm's "nutrient budget":

That is, based on your farm and your crops, how much manure can your land use? You wouldn't likely over-apply nutrients that are commercially bought, but you may be letting your animals over-apply manure

Keep animals moving: Every few days is ideal, but once or twice a winter is much better than no movement at all. Even changing

wintering locations from year to year will help manage manure build-up and can help to prevent over utilization of any one spot.

Use wind fences and portable fencing:

This will allow you to set up temporary sites, which can be moved as often as you want. If you can't move the site, move bedding and feeding areas as often as possible, in order to spread manure as much as possible.

Consider a different approach to winter-feeding:

Utilize a program that takes the animals to the feed. This might involve stockpiled forage early in the winter, followed by swath grazing, corn grazing, and then bale feeding (on pasture).

Increase vegetative cover where at all possible:

This will provide natural filters for runoff or sediment that might otherwise lead to surface water or groundwater quality problems. Seed crops in these areas that will utilize the nutrients and provide highly nutritious feed to the herd or flock.

Create buffers around sensitive areas: Permanent vegetation around water bodies will help protect them.

Consider diverting off-site water flow:

Water coming onto the site should be diverted around bedding and feeding spots to help reduce runoff, reducing mud and providing a healthier environment for animals. It will also reduce the amount of bedding that needs to be replaced.

Remove and spread manure early:

If manure has built up, haul it away early in the spring to minimize the chances of it being washed away or seeping into the ground. When you spread it, avoid land that is prone to erosion from surface water and areas that drain directly into waterways.

Consider fencing to put you in control:

Portable or permanent fencing is essential to control and direct feeding, control animal distribution and density, encourage better field rotation, protect sensitive areas, and enhance manure distribution.

To learn more about beneficial management practices and winter feeding site selection check out the Wintering Site Assessment and Design Tool, which can be found on Alberta Agriculture and Forestry's website: www1.agric.gov.ab.ca

Article courtesy of Livestock Wintering: Locating and Managing Your Site to Make it More Sustainable Fact Sheet (2008) from the Manitoba Forage and Grassland Association. Content was edited for length.

Verbeek Herefords

Bulls for sale by private treaty



Errol & Barb Verbeek and Family

Box 649, Evansburg, AB, T0E 0T0

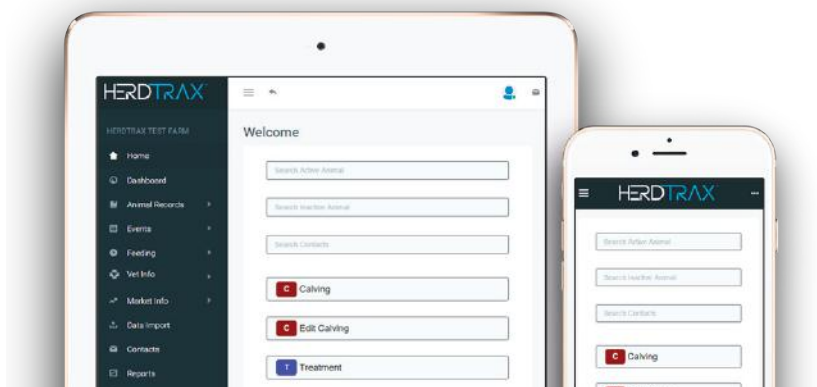
Home: 780.727.2775

Cell: 780.542.9794

Technology is Helping Producers with Better Herd Management

“You can’t manage what you don’t measure”.

There are 3 new software herd management tools that were developed to help producers better manage their operations. Calving is a great example of why producers find these mobile versions of software helpful in their everyday operations. Instead of entering births in a pocketbook and maybe looking back if a problem arises or later recording the details on a computer, the information is entered and incorporated into your account to supply the analysis and reports used in



making management decisions. Depending on how advanced your operation is they can help with animal care, calving, breeding info, marketing tools, ect.

HERDTRAX

Whether you have a herd of 30 cows or 5000 cows, Herdtrax can help improve the overall quality and value of your beef

Continued...

herd. Herdtrax is more than just software, they can provide customized solutions based on your ranching profile (purebred vs commercial vs feedlot) and your needs for day to day functionality (mobile vs desktop).

Herdtrax is built on individual animal data capture and one of the features that seamlessly enables this is the ability to quickly search and find an animal by entering its Visual ID, RFID or Name into a global search box. Herdtrax makes it easy to share information and collaborate with integrated partners: Veterinarians, Nutritionists, Feeders, Packers, and Retailers.

Each year, Herdtrax provides a detailed profile and performance analysis on every animal. Over time you will see firsthand if your management decisions are working or not. It highlights animals that need attention and provides valuable benchmarks for in herd comparisons and assessments.

Capture data at birth and every subsequent event for the rest of the animal's life: Calving records, Animal care, Reproduction, Genetics, Nutrition and Growth.

www.herdtrax.com

CALF BOOK

"Calf Book" is a web based application along with a mobile app to help livestock producers manage their cow/calf data. "Calf Book" allows you to track calving data, calf weaning and yearling performance and generate reports by Sire or entire

calf crop. "Calf Book" will allow you to enter breeding information on your cowherd and project calving dates. This application will generate individual cow productivity by keeping annual calf performance. The "Semen Tank" function allows you to manage your semen/embryo inventory.

www.calfbook.com



GO360 | BIOTRACK

The folks at BIO (Beef Improvement Opportunities) created a web-based products and services to complement its web-based bioTrack record-keeping system for beef cattle, sheep and goats.

Go360 isn't an app, so it doesn't permanently take up space on your smartphone. It is a mobile version of bioTrack that makes your browser act like an app. From a location with Internet or cell service, you would log into your secure account to download the information you want and then set the smartphone in disconnect mode. This keeps the information in the browser so you are able



to access information and record events such as calving, weaning, weights, vaccinations and other treatments as they happen without using data. The information is immediately entered into Go360 and automatically incorporated into your bioTrack account to supply the analysis and reports used in making management decisions.

It can also play a role in marketing your stock by keeping tabs on traceability and health records, feeding rations and performance statistics. Go360 also tracks sales and additions as they occur to constantly update your inventory numbers.

It includes functions for animal identification and recording each animal's breeding, genetic evaluation, health, performance, carcass data, economic breeding value and other details useful for herd management. It can also keep track of marketing, transport for traceability records, and share appropriate information within a value chain.

<http://bridgingintelligence.com/what-is-biotrack/>

*Melissa Freeman,
General Manager*



January 25,
2017

8:30am to
4:00pm

Sustainable Beef



Ft. Live demonstrations from:

- Tru-Test (cattle handling)
- Go 360/Bio Track - Herd Management Software (bring your smart phone)
- AgCon Aerial Corp, (drone flying for ranch applications)
- CCIA - Why Age Verify my cattle?

Fee: \$20 members - \$25 non-members

(Lunch provided)

To register contact: WCFA (780)727-4447. Please register by January 20th



Where: Follow the signs at corner of Highway 627, turn south on RR43, Crossview Farms #51426 RR42, Keephills, AB



Mayerthorpe Rancher Awarded for Leadership in Environmental Stewardship



Annually, a selected group of representatives, on behalf of Alberta Beef Producers (ABP), travel Alberta-wide to evaluate nominees and recognizes an operation that demonstrates leadership in environmental stewardship – one that contributes to the land while improving productivity and profitability. The ESA judging team is typically made up of three members of the ABP Environment Committee, as well as last year's award winner, and one judge from an outside organization.

West-Central Forage has over 140 members over the province of Alberta and we would not be as successful as we are today without these great stewards of the land. Since 2011 we have had 3 members win this prestigious award.

We are proud to share with everyone that Tom Thompson of Winding Creek Ranch, has been awarded the Alberta Beef Producers Environmental Stewardship Award (ESA) for 2017. Tom is more than deserving of this award, and West-Central is grateful to receive acknowledgement from Tom for a role in his achievements.

Winding Creek Ranch is a cow calf operation that rotationally grazes 500 acres, with 700 acres of hay crops.

"Growing up there was something always pulling me into this direction... being a steward of the land. What sustainability means to me is, what you're doing today, will this carry on for generations," said Thompson.

Frustrated with some outcomes, Tom attended a seminar on matching production cycles with grazing cycles that was hosted by West-Central Forage Association and he began to make significant improvements to his operation. After incorporating changes to his winter grazing, watering systems and power fencing for rotational grazing, Tom completed an Environmental Farm Plan.

"When the forage and the grass are growing, and the animals are happy... you will be profitable and sustainable. My stewardship goals are to keep the animals and the plants healthy, growing and viable," said Thompson.

When rotationally grazing his animals, Tom adheres to the adage of eat half, leave half so the grass has plenty of time for rest. Cattle bale graze through the winter months to recycle nutrients back into the soil. Riparian areas and dugouts are fenced to keep cattle out, and water is pumped to solar powered watering systems.

"I'm out in the sunshine working with plants and animals. When you have a passion for something it isn't really work. We're just caretakers here... borrowing this land from the next generation," said Thompson.

In 2013 the Environmental Stewardship Award was presented to Gerry and Grant

Continued...



Taillieu of Tomahawk Cattle Ranch. Gerry Taillieu, his wife Cheryl with their son Grant and daughter Amy began ranching at Tomahawk Cattle Ranch in 2001.

Gerry and Grant run the Tomahawk cattle herd and do custom grazing. Through careful management practices they have been able to revitalize the once overgrazed pastures. All cows/calves and yearlings are managed on an intensive grazing system in the summer and fields are never continuously grazed. Bale grazing was implemented on the ranch as a method of enhancing soil health on high ground.

Water management also played a large role on the ranch, new dugouts were developed and fenced, solar watering units are utilized to maximize grazing and work was done to improve natural water sources. They worked with Alternative Land Use Services, as well as Parkland County, to finish exclusion fencing along Shoal Lake Creek.

Grant and Gerry prefer to work with a holistic management approach that focuses primarily on the land, grass and water. When all three are looked after it's best for the cattle, the wildlife and the ecosystem as a whole.

In 2011 the ESA was presented to Bob and Larry Kidd, beef producers from the Mayerthorpe area. The Kidd brothers have worked hard to engrain themselves not only in the land they work off, but also in the surrounding community.

Bob and Larry have put a lot of effort into working with a number of environmental groups so others can benefit from their actions, protecting the river and the land and plant life around it is a very obvious priority to the brothers. They are continually increasing permanent and temporary fencing to protect the sensitive riparian areas on their land.

Bob was instrumental in the development of the Paddle River Stewardship Group in 2009,

and through that, a number of riparian assessments and a complete inventory of the waterway has been completed. Bob and Larry recognize the importance of protecting the river and the surrounding riparian areas, so they utilize winter fencing around these areas and off-site watering systems.

The brothers land management practices are what really stood out with their use of rotational grazing on pasture lands and knowledge of the plant species. They are very conscious of what works for their area and that benefits the soil and increases growth rates, whether it be perennial or swath grazed annual pastures, their cows are on grazing land the majority of the year and that really minimizes impact on the land.

Without our members demonstrating environmentally responsible practices and leading edge agricultural, West-Central Forage wouldn't be as successful as we are. We are very proud of our team of employees, board members and members for supporting and demonstrating these environmental stewardship practices.

If you are producer in our area and are interested in better stewardship practises and an Environmental Farm Plan please contact the office for more information or visit our website at www.westcentralforage.com.

*Melissa Freeman,
General Manager*

7TH ANNUAL RANCH RAISED

HWY 16 WEST

MULTI★BREED BULL SALE

MARCH 18, 2017 • 1:00 PM

MAYERTHORPE AG BARN

VIEWING: 10:00 AM • LUNCH: 12:00 PM

**50 BULLS
ON
OFFER**

**THESE ARE ALL PAPERED, 100%
GUARANTEED BREEDING BULLS.**

Internet Bidding Available

D | L | M | S
www.dlms.ca

TIMBERLIND
AUCTIONS

www.timberlindauctions.com

BLACK ANGUS

RONAN R ANGUS
Ralph & Lorree Erdell
(780)786-2961

TRI A ANGUS
Andy & Darlene Becker
(780)723-2683

GELBVIEH

HMR GELBVIEH
Henry & Michelle Roy
(780)723-2361

RED ANGUS

CARSON RANCH
Jason & Carla Rand
(780)725-3775

SIMMENTAL

HORNBANK SIMMENTALS
Dave Holroyd
(780)723-3974

NOLARA FARMS
Larry, Nola & Sara Van Sickle
(780)786-4341

WATCH FOR THE CATALOG ONLINE AT www.globalauctionguide.com

BIO LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS SEMINAR

A hands on seminar featuring software solutions to aid livestock producers with:

- Identification
- Tracking
- Record Keeping
- Management
- Marketing



- ▶ **bioTrack:** *web-based tracking & traceability data capture system providing you anytime, anywhere access to herd information.*
- ▶ **bioLinks:** *connects the farm to the processing plant & consumers.*
- ▶ **Genetic Evaluations:** *provide you with a percentile ranking for each animal based on genetic merit.*

When: January 26, 2017

Time: 9am-Noon

Where: WCFA Office (5009-45 Ave
Entwistle, AB)

No cost to attend

Coffee & Refreshments Provided

Beef, Sheep & Goat producers are welcome to
attend

*This will be a more in depth follow-up to the presentation from the Sustainable Beef Field Day on January 25

For more information please contact
WCFA at 780-727-4447 or
info@westcentralforage.com



bio

