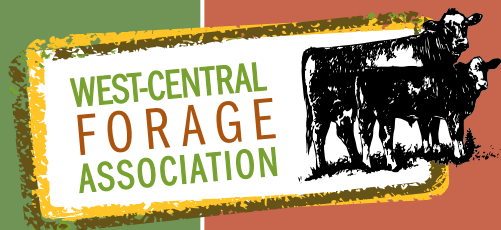


forage VIEWS



September 2016



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Have You Considered Riparian Areas in Your Grazing

Riparian areas are the lands adjacent to water bodies, where vegetation and soils are influenced by the presence of the water. Healthy riparian areas are important in reducing flooding, preventing erosion & conserving soil along stream banks, protecting water quality and providing wildlife habitat (supporting biodiversity). Riparian areas also play a key role in providing a sustainable source of forage when managed efficiently.

Some practices that might be considered to aid in maintaining/improving these highly valuable areas include: avoiding cropping the edge of the water body and allowing natural vegetation or planted forage to regenerate, use of remote watering systems to keep cattle from grazing and trampling the bank, constructing cattle crossings to reduce disturbance, reducing the intensity of the grazing within the riparian area & limiting spring/early summer grazing, use of alternative grazing systems to limit browsing,

"Riparian areas are too important, too productive and too valuable to go unrecognized and unmanaged"

—Riparian Areas And Grazing Management 3rd Edition.

rubbing and trampling of small trees and shrubs, and use of exclusion or corridor fencing in severely disturbed areas to allow vegetation to regenerate.

Each riparian area is unique in its characteristic, and thus no one management plan will fit every area. It is important to consider the specific characteristics of the area and your operation when determining a plan for managing individual riparian areas. There are a variety of resources available for producers looking to improve their riparian area use. For more information contact Jessica at the WCFA office.



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Agriculture
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 by funding from our major sponsor,
 the Agriculture Opportunities Fund
 (AOF), Alberta Agriculture and
 Forestry

New Staff – Jessica Watson



Jessica was born and raised on her family's cow/calf operation in Bezanson, AB (a tiny hamlet east of Grande Prairie), and misses having cows around since the last of the cow herd left the farm in the fall of 2015. In 2015 she received her Bachelor of Science in Agriculture, with a major in Animal Science, from the University of Alberta. In her spare time Jessica enjoys all things horse related, whether it be rodeo or draft horse activities (many a winter was spent feeding

cows with a team), camping, running, and has a newly discovered passion for gardening. Jessica is very excited to be a part of the West-Central team and is looking forward to meeting and working with everyone in the future.

Jessica Watson, BSc. Ag
Conservation Ag & Extension Program Manager
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Cattle illness warning issued

The Western Producer
 Posted Aug. 25th, 2016 by Barb Glen

Several cattle in Alberta and Saskatchewan have died recently from fog fever, otherwise known as bovine atypical interstitial pneumonia.

The illness occurs when cattle are put into lush pasture after coming off dry pasture. The tryptophan in rapidly growing pasture grasses converts in the animals' rumen, leading to sudden onset, minimal coughing and either death or dramatic improvement within a few days.

Barry Yaremicio, beef and forage specialist with Alberta Agriculture, said fog fever is uncommon, and treatment options are limited other than to avoid putting adult cattle into lush pasture. Calves are not affected.

Fog fever can occur five to 10 days after the pasture change. Mild cases can go unnoticed.

Severely affected cattle breathe through their mouths, extend their tongues and drool.

Yaremicio said feeding monensin or lasalocid to cows before turning them into lush pasture may prevent fog fever, but those treatments have no effect after onset of symptoms.



Message from Chairman of the Board

September is upon us. Three quarters of the year gone and only half the work done. And such is farming in West Central Alberta.

As president of West Central Forage Association for 2016, I have had the opportunity to become much more acquainted with the inner workings of this outstanding farmer focused organization. West Central Forage Association has been a part of the agricultural community of this part of Alberta for four decades, yet when it comes up in conversation, I am still asked "What is it?"

Some know it as that pasture group. And yes that's WCFA. "Oh, they do cow stuff." Right, and sheep, goats, horses, bison, and disc mowers and balers. If it eats grass, cuts grass, bales, chops or feeds grass, that's WCFA. "Oh, they do government work, avoid them!" And a bit of that, too. It would be hard to find an aspect of production agriculture in this area of the province that this organization could not offer assistance to in some way.

Perhaps the most exciting and long lasting benefit, for myself anyway, is the sense of comradery and community one gets from participating with such a broad based group. And, in the end, that is what started West Central and has carried it forward to today. Just a bunch of farmers, getting together to support, challenge and inform one another to be a little bit better than yesterday.

Cheers, and remember, at some point....

MUD DOES FREEZE!

Frank D. Maddock

President, WCFA 2016

West Central Forage Association is now offering medical coverage to our members



MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS ENROLLMENT PROCESS

ELIGIBILITY

- All current active members of the association are eligible to commence coverage as of November 1, 2016.
- Coverage commences 60 days from the date the member joins (eligibility date).
- Coverage must be applied for within 31 days of membership start date – no medical required.
- All eligible dependents must be included on the initial application – dependents can be exempted from the health and dental benefits as long as alternate coverage information is provided on the application.
- Members will have the option to modify their coverage up or down by one level (bronze / silver / gold) every 24 months of active coverage, or at the time of a life event.
- A life event would result in a change to your dependent status (single / couple / family) such as marriage, divorce or having your first child.

MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS

- If an application is received after 31 days from the date coverage was to commence, medical will be required before the member or dependent can join the plan.
- An eligible dependent who was not added at the time of the member would be required to provide medical evidence if they wish to join at a later date.
- If coverage is cancelled, it cannot be applied for until after 12 months from the date of termination, and medical underwriting will be required.
- Upon medical approval, there is a dental restriction of \$250 per insured for the first 12 months of coverage.

MEMBER ENROLLMENT PROCESS

- You will receive an email from Effortless Admin to log in and complete your enrollment.
- The unique link in the email is tied to your personal information. You will be required to verify your identity using your name and date of birth.
- You will be able to review and select the plan option that best meets your needs.
- The enrollment wizard will walk you through a series of steps to add your contact, dependent, beneficiary, and alternate coverage information.
- Once completed you will be instructed to print the form, sign where indicated and return the original copy to Effortless Admin.
- You are required to send in the original enrollment form, along with a copy of a void cheque for pre-authorized withdrawal of the monthly premiums.
- If the original form is not received within 2 weeks, a reminder notice will be sent. Failure to return the original form with banking details within 6 weeks will result in termination of coverage retroactive to the initial effective date.
- Once payment and the original forms have been received, a benefit package will be sent to your home with your benefits at a glance booklet, benefit statement, pay direct drug cards, and brochures on how to submit claims using the online system, or mobile app.

West Central Forage Association is now offering medical coverage to our members



MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS ENROLLMENT PROCESS

INITIAL ENROLLMENT PROCESS – TO BE COMPLETED BY ASSIGNED ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ASSOCIATION

- Complete the Excel enrollment template (provided by Effortless Admin) with data for all employees/ members who are eligible to participate in the program. The spreadsheet requires:
 - Employee's First and Last Name
 - Employee's Date of Birth
 - Employee's email address
 - All other information is optional
- Email the completed spreadsheet to Effortless Admin, who will create enrollment work items to be sent to employees.
- Email or fax the signed web access form for all authorized administrative users to use the Effortless Admin online administration system to manage the employee enrollments and verifications.
- Effortless Admin will advise when the employee data has been loaded into the system.
- You can then log into www.effortlessadmin.com and go to the Employees page.
- Click on the Manage Updates bar, which will be highlighted if there are any items requiring attention such as new employees that are ready to be enrolled.
- Select 'Delegate All' to have an automatic request emailed to all eligible employees inviting them to join the plan. They will be asked to log in and complete all the required information in order to enroll on the plan.

- You are able to track the status of each employee's enrollment and filter by various options such as email not delivered, editing and submitted so you are kept up to date with completed items.
- You can send reminders to employees who have not completed the process, or revoke their access to complete the enrollment if they are no longer eligible.
- When an employee completes their enrollment, they will submit it for verification.
- These submitted items will show in the Manage Updates as items requiring review.
- Click on "review and submit" to verify that they are still eligible and click submit to enroll.
- All benefit materials will be sent directly to the employee at their home address so there is no further action required of the administrator.

ONGOING ENROLLMENT PROCESS

- From the Employee management application, click on the "Add" button.
- Enter in the minimum required information of their:
 - Employee's First and Last Name
 - Employee's Date of Birth
 - Employee's email address
 - All other information is optional
- From the list of enrollments pending, select 'Delegate to employee xyz' to send the request to a single employee or 'Delegate All' if you have added more than one.
- All other aspects of the delegation remain the same as the initial enrollment process.



EXTENDED HEALTH & DENTAL PLAN FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

A: Association members and their dependents who reside in Canada and have basic provincial plan coverage and are enrolled in a provincial drug program. All eligible dependents need to be added at the time of enrollment. If they already have coverage, dependents can be exempt from the health and dental plan by providing their alternate coverage information. If they lose their coverage, you have 31 days to notify your administrator to activate their coverage without providing medical evidence.

Q: IS THERE A MEDICAL EXAM OR MEDICAL REQUIREMENT?

A: There are no medical requirements if you enrol within 31 days of becoming eligible. After such time, you and your dependents will be required to supply medical evidence and receive carrier approval before you can join the plan.

Q: WHEN CAN I APPLY?

A: You can join the plan, without providing any medical evidence, on the earlier of the following:

- a) Initial plan start-up of November 1, 2016.
Application must be signed within 31 days.
- b) When you become a new member of the association. Coverage will commence on the 60th day following the date you became a member.

When applying outside the above periods, medical evidence is required for carrier approval prior to coverage commencing.

Q: WHO PAYS FOR THE PLAN?

A: Each member pays their own monthly premiums through a Pre-Authorized Debit (PAD) with our administrator, Effortless Admin. Based on your family status, you pay a single, couple, or family rate.

Q: HOW DO I APPLY?

A: Simply complete the online application upon receipt of the registration email and mail the signed application to Effortless Admin with a copy of your void cheque. Make sure to complete the application within 31 days to avoid medical requirements.

Q: CAN I CHANGE THE PROGRAM I ORIGINALLY SELECTED?

A: You are given the opportunity to change your election every 24 months, or at the same time as a life event that changes your family status (single / couple / family) such as marriage, divorce or having your first child. You are able to move up or down by one level at each opportunity.

Q: WHAT IF I STOP WORKING WITH THAT EMPLOYER?

A: You can continue to remain on the plan as long as you continue to be a resident of Canada and you continue paying your monthly premiums.

Q: IF I CANCEL MY COVERAGE, CAN I RE-ENROL AGAIN?

A: Your benefits terminate at midnight of the last day of the month in which you request to terminate your coverage. You may request to join again no earlier than 12 months from the date your coverage terminated. Applicants will be subject to medical underwriting and coverage will be at the discretion of the insurer.

Q: WHO ARE THE ADMINISTRATOR AND INSURER(S)?

A: The plan is administered through Effortless Admin and underwritten by their insurance partners.



Managing Risk in Winter Grazing Systems

West-Central Forage Association is proud to have partnered with a number of organizations in the production of the Alberta Ranchers Winter Grazing Cattle video series. This series of 47 videos shares the personal perspectives and practices of ranchers across Alberta and how they have implemented management practices to reduce risk in winter grazing systems. The videos can be accessed through WCFA's website: www.westcentralforage.com. Under the Projects heading select videos and scroll down to Managing Risk in Winter Grazing Systems to view the series.

For more information please contact the WCFA office at (780) 727-4447.

PROMO VIDEO – ALBERTA RANCHERS WINTER GRAZING CATTLE

Shelter & Bedding	Fencing Options
Extreme Cold and Snow	Electric Fencing
Warm Weather Challenges	Power Fencing Systems
Feed Waste & Clean Up	Grounding Fencing Systems
Feed Allocations in Bale Grazing	Winter Watering
Corn Grazing and Supplementation	Bartering
Managing for Acidosis	Managing Costs
Timing Access to Feed	Improving Soil Health
Seeding & Cutting Swath Grazing	Back Up Plans
Feed Quality in Bale Grazing	Flexibility with Multiple Feed Systems
Feed Quality in Bunch Grazing	Minimize Equipment
Feed Quality in Corn Grazing	Know Your Costs
Feed Quality in Stockpiled Grazing	Net Wrap & Twine
Feed Quality in Swath Grazing	Bale Placement
Variations in Feed Quality	Ranching Smarter
Improving Quality in Swath Grazing	Agronomics of Crop Production
Maximizing Corn Quality	Managing Sensitive Land
Rough vs. Smooth Awns	Managing Cattle by Type & Body Condition
Crop Options for Corn Grazing	Cattle that Suit Your System
Crop Options for Swath Grazing	Grazing & Weaning Calves
Stockpiled and Banked Grass	Handling Cattle
Early Spring Perennial Forage Grazing	Calving Time
Monitoring Feed & Cow Condition	Coexisting with Wildlife

2016 Annual Plot Tour

On August 11, 2016, West Central Forage Association (WCFA) hosted a successful annual plot tour featuring “High Legume Pastures” This project came in 2006 from a team of year-round grazing producers and various forage and applied research associations featuring leading-edge producers, and information provided by Alberta Agriculture. The goal was to have a project on higher productive pastures while eliminating bloat.

John Mochniuk 2008 WCFA Chair started out our day at the Wildwood WCFA Forage Research Site and shared his experience grazing high legume pastures. He emphasised the importance of monitoring your pastures and ensuring they are ready for grazing. When turning cattle out in high legume pastures ensure the necessary steps are in place such as Bovadex salt, dry hay and a good water source. Timing of turnout is very important as well, cattle should be turned out when they are already full and in the afternoon when grasses don't have heavy dew on.

The second speaker was Leon Specht. Leon and his family operate the Jackson Land and Cattle Co. out of Millet AB. They run 800 to 1200 head of yearling strs/heifers on an intensively managed, rotational grazing system that includes some high percentage legume pastures. They have been doing this for 18 years with good success in managing the risks associated with high legume pastures. They have kept records that compare their grass pasture to the higher legume pastures, these prove the economic benefits of the additional gains on less acres that the legume pastures have over the grass pastures. Specht is always trying to improve his existing pastures to be more productive and drought tolerant. Developing the carrying capacity of abused pastures by direct seeding of legumes. having varying success with different varieties and by introducing different species of forages that produce under different conditions. by resting the pastures and developing a good thatch layer. Having a flexible grazing plan



and planning for the future is what has made this operation a success.

Graeme Finn the owner of Southern Cross Livestock from Madden, AB, was next to speak to the producers. He rents over 2800 acres of pasture for his yearling grass operation and beef cow herd. He is a big fan of grazing high legume pastures simply for the profit in weight gain and soil health. By grazing legumes he sees a weight gain of 60% for yearlings which is 2.2lbs a day with no hormones. He has figured out that it roughly costs 90 cents a day per heifer, so anything above that is profit. Finn has been rotational grazing high legume pastures for 12-15 years with 50 acre cells which are grazed 27 days a summer. He tries to let all his fields rest and go to seed for better soil and plant health.

Next we visited Gene and Jeanette Browns pasture close to Sangudo, AB, where they shared their experience with seeding Kura clover and grass mixtures established in 2014. They have been very skeptical about the Kura Clover due to the slow establishment and the other factors affecting the field like the lack of moisture in 2015 and the presence of Grasshoppers in the entire province. “The first year sleep, in the second year, it creeps and the third year, it leaps, “We hope this is our year”, Brown Said.



We finished the tour with a visit to the Stein's Farm near Tiger Lily, AB. Sainfoin and Alfalfa, grass mixture fields is where Darlene shared their experiences and challenges encountered this year, such as excessive amounts of weed pressure on the Sainfoin and Alfalfa plants. They were forced to light graze it twice in the season, and showed great results. We concluded the visit with a delicious Ukrainian lunch on their beautiful veranda.

On the way back to the office Grant Lastiwka Forage/Livestock Business Specialist, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry shared the history of the project as well his knowledge and personal experiences. So... What does that "best pasture" look like? During Grants presentation, he stated , "Put as much legumes as you've got the guts to put in, have enough grass to make you and the pasture look good (note: rain can make anyone look like they know what they're doing!); and creeping rooted grasses are important for litter and covering soil.

We learned how to make pasture as productive as possible and to have as low of bloat risk as possible:

- Cicer and trefoil are great forages, but are often hard to establish because of their hard, thick seed coating that needs lots of scarification to germinate and you need patience to grow the stuff; can take years for cicer to finally come in!
- Alfalfa known for great gains in livestock, but as mentioned bloat is a big problem!
- Sainfoin: Highest in condensed tannins of all legumes. Can be mixed with alfalfa at 15 to 20% plant cover (not seed mix) as bloat control; to reduce or eliminate bloat risk altogether. Sainfoin is a non-bloating legume

Bloat is created by proteins released from quick-digested forages combined with gas entrapped by rumen fluid (rapid fermentation begets high amounts of gas released), creating stable bubbles that refuse to burst to release gas; gas keeps building, as do bubbles, rumen gets bigger, puts pressure on lungs, causes pain to animal, etc. Tannins bind with proteins in rumen and prevent these proteins from creating stable bubbles; gas can be released via burping. Happy cows!

Productive pastures should not only aim for higher live weight gains and lower production costs, but also for soil health; healthy soil gives healthy plants which gives healthy animals.

To find pictures of the event go on Twitter using the hashtag #WCFALP16



Upcoming Knowledge Opportunities:



Registration is now open for 2016/2017 BCRC webinars! BCRC webinars are available and free of charge thanks to guest speakers who volunteer their time and expertise to support advancements in the Canadian beef industry, and through the Knowledge Dissemination and Technology Transfer project funded by the National Check-off and Canada's Beef Science Cluster.

Note: you will require a high speed internet connection to view the webinars, if you don't have one and would like to attend an upcoming webinar, contact WCFA and we may be able to arrange to attend the webinar with you at the office.

A list of upcoming webinars can be found below:

- The economics of pregnancy testing
September 15, 2016
- Managing pregnant cows for improved cow & calf performance
October 18, 2016
- What is the environmental footprint of beef production?
November 17, 2016
- Swath & bale grazing strategies
November 23, 2016 (7pm EST)
- Managing young calves to prevent disease
December 8, 2016
- Economical vaccine protocols
January 19, 2017
- Making forage mixtures work for you
February 15, 2017
- Managing native seeded forages
February 15, 2017

(Unless otherwise stated, all BCRC webinars begin at 7:00pm MT.)

For more information, and to register for webinars, please visit <http://www.beefresearch.ca/resources/webinars.cfm>. Schedule is subject to change so check back often.

Wanted – Farm Manager

Wanted young man or couple that is passionate about cattle and farming as a lifelong career. I am looking to retire in the next couple years. Live in accommodation. Please email me at rjfarms1@telus.net

Sustainability, is this just a trend?

What is sustainable? Or sustainable beef for that matter? Seems to me that we are talking about it without deep understanding. A simple search of Sustainable on the web will find definitions like:

- able to be used without being completely used up or destroyed.
- involving methods that do not completely use up or destroy natural resources.
- able to last or continue for a long time.

Now if you search the Canadian Roundtable Sustainable Beef website home page CRSB it reads like this: The CRSB is a multi-stakeholder initiative developed to advance sustainability efforts within the Canadian beef industry. Through leadership, science, multi-stakeholder engagement and collaboration, continuous improvement of sustainability of the Canadian beef value chain will be achieved and recognized. The CRSB is developing the framework to verify the sustainability of individual beef operations and processing plants. This framework consists of two key components:

1) indicators, 2) verification

The indicators reflect how sustainability will be measured. The CRSB will also develop verification protocols, which will outline the necessary components for verifying the indicators (e.g. chain of custody, audit cycle).

In the August issue of the Canadian Cattlemen magazine the interviewed Bob Lowe Alberta Beef producer, he expressed the importance of working together as one industry. “Now the challenge is to get the Canadian Beef Industry working toward that goal. It is a shift for the entire beef industry and we need producers to embrace it. The value of doing it may not be reflected in the price per pound of beef, but just in being able to stay in business. Its about adopting these practices on our own as beef producers, rather than being legislated”, says Lowe.

I have talked to producers like Bruce Churchill that has been enrolled in the McDonald's Pilot Program (workshops hosted for WCFA last year). “This is not a big difference of what we been doing, record keeping, aware of withdrawal times on medications, gather the documents, schedule a verification and touring the operation with the verifier after a cup of coffee on our kitchen table” adds Churchill. Bruce and Ivone Churchill operate Churchill Land and Cattle near Rich Valle, Alberta.

The CRSB indicators and verification will have some similarity the McDonald's Pilot Project. If you want to learn more, visit the CRSB's website about the CRSB's Indicator Development Process. www.crsb.ca

If you want to be proactive and ready for when the time comes, WCFA's staff will assist you with key fundamental programs that allowed you to facilitate the verification like; Verified Beef Production program (VBP+), Environmental Farm Plan provincial program (EFP), Beef Information Exchange System (BIXS) and Age Verifications.

It's unknown yet the roll that WCFA will play in this national initiative but our members have the tools to start producing sustainable beef and the assurance that WCFA have been supporting producers in the completion of Provincial and National programs in the past and is ready for present and future needs. After all I think sustainability isn't just a trend but a way to do business and stay in the global market.

CRSB mention that consumers are increasingly asking questions about their food, and this is a great way to help answer some of this questions.

Fito Zamudio Baca,
Forage and Livestock
Program Manger
WCFA



Beef Industry in the News

Livestock and Forage Centre of Excellence

The Livestock and Forage Centre of Excellence (LFCE) is a unique complex of both science and field laboratories that will model all aspects of raising livestock on the Canadian Prairies. This centre will boost our ability to connect discovery with translational and applied research. The LFCE will encompass everything from forage development, grazing management and environmental sustainability to the science of reproduction and nutrition, cowcalf management and feedlot cattle health, growth and productivity.

The LFCE will be a leader in developing research, teaching and technology transfer programs that provide the livestock and forage industries of Saskatchewan and Canada with new tools and techniques for healthy, sustainable and competitive growth. The LFCE will include livestock facilities, forage production and grazing land all near Saskatoon, Sask. The centre's work will focus on three key areas:

- Cow-calf production
 - Intensive livestock production
 - Forage, pasture and grazing management
- The LFCE will provide researchers, faculty, students, producers and the agriculture industry with an innovative, broad-based platform for research, teaching and extension activities.

-Adapted from LFCE Fact Sheet. For more information please visit <http://www.usask.ca/wcvm/lfce>

Methane Emissions and Beef Production:

A recent CBC News article highlighted the work the Lacombe Research Station has been working on in regards to feed efficiency and methane emissions. The article, titled "Research into cow burps could cut methane emissions, and budgets" touches on the fact that feed efficiency is related to methane gas emissions in beef production. Dr. Basarb commented that less efficient cows produce up to 30 percent more methane than their more efficient counterparts. Feed efficiency has been a hot topic in the industry for a number of years, as efficiency is tied to bottom line for producers, and now there is an environmental benefit tied to the financial one. As such, research dollars will continue to be invested in working on ways to pick out more efficient cows more readily.

-Adapted from "Research into cow burps could cut methane emissions, and budgets" by Andrea Brown, CBC News, Aug 29, 2016. To read the full article please go to <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/cow-burp-methane-research-1.3738402>

