



SUMMER 2020

FORAGE VIEWS

IN THIS ISSUE

WCFA Has A New Home
Page 1

WCFA Welcomes New Staff Member
Page 2

2020 AGM Update
Page 3

Meet Our Summer Staff
Page 4

Managing Soil Health
Page 5

Project Highlight: Soil Health Benchmarking
Page 6

Bees and Blooms
Page 7

Summer Projects Update
Page 8

Farming the Web Launched
Page 10

2020 Gall-Fly & Weevil Update
Page 11

Extension Program Update
Page 11

Feed Testing FAQs
Page 12

WCFA HAS A NEW HOME!

WCFA STAFF

Have you heard? We've moved! As of May 1, we are no longer located in Entwistle and have moved up the road to Sangudo.

Lac Ste. Anne County graciously offered us office space within their Administration building, along with our own shop space on Range Road 70 (near Sangudo).

The transition to our new spaces was interrupted somewhat by COVID-19 as the county office was closed to the public during our move-in and all efforts were being made to limit the number of staff present in the building. As a result, our staff spent most of this spring working remotely, or out of the new shop facility (a challenge in itself as there is not yet power to the building. We are hoping to have some soon).

The Administration building re-opened to the public on June 22, allowing to begin settling in to our new offices. Many things are still in transition at this time, so please continue to be patient with us. We are still in the process of getting office phones figured out and our mailing address has not yet changed over.

We are looking forward to continuing to work with everyone from our new location and appreciate all the patience and understanding you have given us over the last few months as we navigated the move and the ever-changing COVID-19 situation.



WCFA WELCOMES NEW STAFF MEMBER

On June 15th we welcomed Melissa Howard to the WCFA team! Melissa will be filling the role of Forage Research Coordinator, making her responsible for our research trials.

Melissa grew up in the Edmonton area but moved to New Brunswick to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Environment and Natural Resources at the University of New Brunswick, graduating with a specialization in Water Resources Management in 2013. She went on to complete a Master of Science in Renewable Resources at the University of Alberta. Her research focused on the accuracy of erosion prediction and modelling -using rainfall simulation and large plot natural rainfall observations, from recreational trails in the Southern Rockies of Alberta.

After a brief stint with Alberta Agriculture and Forestry's Bee Team Melissa moved on to controlling and eradicating invasive and problem vegetation in Alberta's industrial sector.

Melissa has a never-ending love of research, environmental sustainability, and environmental education. She is an in-training member of the Alberta Institute of Agrologists (AIT).

Melissa spends her free time gardening, hiking, exploring the native flora and fauna of Alberta, winemaking, preserving foraged foods, enjoying the creative arts, and translating science and environmental subjects in numerous mediums.

Melissa Howard, BSc., MSc., AIT
Forage Research Coordinator
agronomy@westcentralforage.com
780-542-1797

Board of Directors

President
Grant Chittick

Vice President
Brian Dickson

Treasurer
Greg Malyk

Secretary
Therese Tompkins

Directors
Larry Kidd
Duane Movald
Frank Maddock
Rod Nikkel
Brett Byers
Shayne Horn
Aren Skogstad

Board Contact
board@westcentralforage.com

Staff

General Manager
Rachael Nay
780-542-0963
manager@westcentralforage.com

Forage Research Coordinator
Melissa Howard
780-542-1797
agronomy@westcentralforage.com

Conservation/Extension
Jessica Watson
780-621-8670
conservationag@westcentralforage.com

Contact Us

Phone

Coming Soon

Email

info@westcentralforage.com

Office Location

56521 Range Road 65
Sangudo, AB

Mailing Address

Box 360
Evansburg, AB
T0E 0T0

www.westcentralforage.com



West-Central Forage
Association



@westcentralforage



@WestCentralFor

Municipal Partners

Yellowhead County
Woodlands County
Lac Ste. Anne County
Parkland County
Brazeau County
Leduc County

*This Publication is made possible
by our major funder, Alberta
Agriculture and Forestry.*



2020 WCFA Annual General Meeting Update

WCFA BOARD OF DIRECTORS & STAFF

As most of you are aware, we had scheduled a lovely "Business over Breakfast" event for March 28 to serve as our 2020 AGM. This was to be one of the final events we would host at our Entwistle location, but the world had other plans. COVID-19 forced us to cancel this event, as it did so many others throughout the province.

Since then we have been following the situation closely and trying to figure out if or exactly how we would be able to host our 2020 AGM. As the situation is still changing, it has been the decision of our Board of Directors and staff that for the year 2020 we are hitting 'pause' on an AGM. We want to ensure we are keeping everyone, from our members to our staff, safe during this time.

We will be providing updates and financials in print form to anyone that wishes to view them for 2019. As usual, we will also be publishing a 2019 Annual Report detailing project results and activities. These documents are still being finalized due to the hectic nature of the last few months but as soon as they are ready we will be sure to let you know so you may request your copy.

Here's to seeing you all again at our 2021 AGM!

MEET OUR SUMMER STAFF

Jayden and Alex joined us in May as our Field Technicians for the 2020 season. These ladies were wonderful additions and great assets to our team. We will miss them as they begin to leave us to continue pursuing their educations and future careers. We want to wish them all the best in their future endeavours and thank them for all their hard work in the plots this summer.



Alex Hodgson

Alex was raised on her family farm near Alberta Beach. She has a passion for the outdoors and is thrilled to be joining the WCFA team for another season! She enjoys living out in the country, experiencing all nature has to offer. Summer is her favourite season as she likes to go swimming, paddle boarding and kayaking in the lake. Alex just finished her first year studying Elementary Education in Quebec. She loves travelling and involving herself in new opportunities to grow and learn.



Jayden Calvert

Jayden is beyond excited to be a part of the team at West-Central Forage Association for summer 2020! She is a first-generation beef producer and all-round horsewoman from Drayton Valley, AB. Jayden strongly respects our western heritage and has a passion for Agriculture! She recently completed her third year of a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture at the University of Alberta, majoring in Animal Science. At University she is an active member of the U of A Agriculture Club, the Livestock Judging Club, and the Ceres Alberta Women's Fraternity. Jayden was

a 4-H member in the Drayton Valley district for 11 years in both the horse and beef projects and completed a term as a 4-H Alberta Ambassador for the Northwest Region. She loves horses and has had the opportunity to train and compete in a variety of disciplines. Jayden proudly represented the sport of rodeo and one of her favourite Alberta towns as Miss Rodeo Sundre 2018. She hopes to run for the prestigious title of Miss Rodeo Canada someday soon. Jayden also enjoys exhibiting the purebred and Speckle Park influenced cattle that are raised on the MT Bar Ranch at shows around western Canada. She is looking forward to the opportunity to learn and grow with WCFA this summer!

Stewardship Alliance for Conservation Agriculture



MANAGING SOIL HEALTH

ALEX HODGSON, SUMMER FIELD TECHNICIAN

*Adapted from "Managing Soil Health: Concepts and practices"
PennState Extension, July 2017.*

<https://extension.psu.edu/managing-soil-health-concepts-and-practices>

Healthy soil is the foundation for profitable, productive and environmentally sound agricultural systems.

Throughout decades, farmers have suffered with the trial and error of maintaining healthy soil. To understand the importance of managing soil health, here are some concepts and practices to absorb:

- 1 Reduce Tillage and Soil Traffic**
Excessive tillage is harmful to soil health in many ways. Tillage can disrupt soil, exposing vital properties that are needed for the health and growth of the soil. This also reduces the soil coverage provided by crop residues, leaving soil more exposed to erosion.
- 2 Increase Organic Matter Inputs**
To maintain or increase soil organic matter levels, inputs of organic matter must meet or exceed the losses of organic matter from decomposition. Soil organic matter can be monitored over time if you request an organic matter analysis when submitting soil fertility samples to a soil testing lab. Make sure that your organic matter comparisons over time are based on data from the same lab or labs that use the same procedure, as results can differ between analysis methods.
- 3 Use Cover Crops**
Cover crops contribute many benefits to soil health. They keep the soil covered during the winter and other periods of time when crops aren't growing, reducing the risk of erosion. Cover crops with taproots can create macropores and alleviate compaction. Fibrous-rooted cover crops can promote aggregation and stabilize the soil. Legume cover crops can add nitrogen to the soil through nitrogen fixation.
- 4 Reduce Pesticide Use**
Beneficial insects that contribute to biological control can be harmed by insecticides. Farmscaping is a great alternative to this method. This concept includes the use of insectary plants, hedgerows, cover crops, and water reservoirs to attract and support populations of beneficial organisms like bats, spiders, and birds that feed on these pests. Farmscaping can be used as a filter strip to prevent water runoff and soil erosion.
- 5 Rotate Crops**
Crop rotating will break up pest and disease life cycles, improving crop health. Rotations can also help control the spread of weeds. Growing diverse crops in return will make pests not have a chance to build their population over time.
- 6 Manage Nutrients**
Using diverse nutrient sources can help maintain soil health. Manure and compost add organic matter as well as plentiful nutrients. But, using only compost or manure can result in a high level of phosphorus in the soil. Alternatively, you should use modest manure or compost additions to meet phosphorus needs with some nitrogen from legume cover or forage crops in a crop rotation to help balance both chemical levels.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

ALBERTA SOIL HEALTH BENCHMARK MONITORING

JESSICA WATSON, CONSERVATION AG PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Understanding soil health can give producers access to a valuable tool for strategic decision making on farm. A benchmark database is important in order to better understand soil health limitations and apply appropriate management strategies. Chemical characteristics are well documented for soils in Alberta, but physical and biological components are not.

Several applied research associations across the province are working with Chinook Applied Research Association (CARA) and their Soil Health Lab to document soil health indicators at over 200 locations per year throughout the province. These results will be included in a benchmark inventory, allowing for a base of information from all points across the province. Sites will be sampled again three years following the initial sampling.

Participating producers will be coached in understanding soil health and interpreting the results for their location. The benchmarks will allow producers to evaluate their management practices in respect to soil health.

Parameters being analyzed include:

- Wet Aggregation Stability
- Compaction
- Water Infiltration
- Bulk Density
- Texture
- Active Carbon
- Organic Matter
- C:N Ratio
- Microbial Respiration
- Bacteria
- Fungi
- Protozoa
- Nematode
- pH
- EC
- N,P,K
- Micro Nutrients

Soil Health Analysis: Biophysical & Others				
		Results	Score	
Indicator		809	809	Constraint(s)
Physical	Wet Aggregate Stability (%)	23	32	Soil pore space, aeration, water infiltration, rooting, soil crusting and sealing, wind and water erosion, runoff
	Water Infiltration (min)	6	99	
	Bulk Density (g/cm3)	0.98	100	
	Compaction Depth/cm (200psi)	17	100	
	Compaction Depth/cm (300psi)	22	8	Deep rooting, drought resistance, water availability, nutrient uptake, plant growth and yield, subsurface pan/deep compaction/restrictive layer
	Mean Physical Health:		68	68
Biological	Organic Matter (%)	3.9	77	
	Active Carbon (ppm)	238	8	Water infiltration, microbial biomass growth and activity, nutrient cycling, carbon storage, aggregate stability, bulk density, nutrient availability, supply of labile carbon
	C:N Ratio	12	98	
	Microbial Respiration (mg CO ₂ /g)	0.69	62	
	Mean Biological Health:		61	61
	Chemical	pH	5.6	33
Soluble Salts (EC)		0.21	94	
Extractable P (ppm)		16	0	P Deficiency
Extractable K (ppm)		50	75	
Magnesium (ppm)		138	1	
Iron (ppm)		86	0	Excessive Fe
Manganese (ppm)		32	1	
Zinc (ppm)		5.4	1	
Other nutrient Rating (0-4)		3	3	
Mean Chemical Health:		52	52	
Overall Soil Health Score:		60	Medium	

Examples of information from a Soil Health Report

Sample #	Unique ID	Depth Inches	Active Bacterial Biomass (µg/g)	Total Bacterial Biomass (µg/g)	Active Fungal Biomass (µg/g)	Total Fungal Biomass (µg/g)	Average Hyphal Diameter (µm)	Protozoa Numbers/g	Total Nematode (Dry Weight) #/g
809	site 4	0-6	15	3,093	69	617	4.2	17,303	7,182
810	site 5	0-6	14	7,465	20	918	3.3	18,033	10,820
Desired Range			1 - 5	175 - 300	1 - 5	175 - 300	(A)	5000 +	5000 +
								50 - 100	10 - 20

Stewardship Alliance for Conservation Agriculture



BEES AND BLOOMS

JAYDEN CALVERT, SUMMER FIELD TECHNICIAN

The farmland of Southern Alberta is home to some peculiar sights that could serve as a mystery to those of us that are used to the rolling hills and dense woodlands of the West-Central region of the province. Numerous acres of vigorous cropping systems paint the prairies only to be interrupted by roads, farmhouses, irrigation pivots and bee huts. Bee huts are spaced around a field to provide shelter for essential pollinators. The huts may be plastic, wooden or tin and are coloured attractively. Screens with tube-like punctures occupy the space within the huts.



A leaf cutter bee hut

Alfalfa leafcutter bees or *Megachile rotundata* are the only bees capable of pollinating alfalfa flowers without tripping the keel which usually results in other species of bees becoming trapped inside the flower. Alfalfa leafcutter bees are much more efficient and manageable than domesticated honeybees. 150 alfalfa leafcutters bees can pollinate the same number of acres as about 3000 honeybees. As a bonus, leafcutter bees are not as irritable and will only sting when they are squeezed. Its easy to understand what all the buzz is about!

Alfalfa leafcutter bees are solitary, and each female builds her own nest from tiny pieces of plant leaves. The females collect alfalfa pollen and nectar to use as provision for the larvae that hatch from eggs in their nests in late summer. The larvae develop fully by late summer and then stay dormant until the spring. Male bees live short lives, during which they are responsible for fertilizing eggs and they pollinate plants as they feed themselves. Leafcutter bees usually reproduce 1.5 to two times the number of bees released into a field over the season. A producer can sell the additional bees that they will not be keeping for the following year off the farm.

Alfalfa leafcutter bees are of significant value to alfalfa seed producers in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. There is a \$20 million market for alfalfa seed and bees in Saskatchewan alone. Leafcutter bees are beneficial for also pollinating other crops like hybrid canola. Be kind to bees and they will do wonders for your canola and legumes!



Summer 2020 Projects Update

WCFA STAFF

SMALL PLOT RESEARCH TRIALS

National Industrial Hemp Variety Evaluation Trial

This is WCFA's third year as a co-operator in this trial lead by the Canadian Hemp Trade Alliance. We are evaluating seven grain varieties and six dual-purpose type varieties for vigour, lodging, grain and fibre yield, grain and fibre quality, and non-narcotic cannabinoids.

Seeding was conducted on June 5 at the Brazeau County Research Site, near Drayton Valley. Following seeding the area received significant amounts of moisture and there was standing water in the field. The excessive moisture has also led to significant weed pressure, and despite the Field Technician's best hand-weeding efforts, it doesn't yet appear they have won the battle. At this point the plants seem stressed, but we're hopeful the heat we have had lately will help them along.

Regional Silage Variety Trial

Once again WCFA is co-operating with a number of organizations across the province on the Regional Silage Variety Trials.

The 2020 RST was to include two sites of triticale, barley and oats. Alternative crops, winter/spring cereal mixtures and pulse mixtures were to round out the trial. Unfortunately, due to the wet weather not all of the treatments were seeded.

10 varieties of triticale, 14 barley varieties and 10 oat varieties, along with 12 winter/spring cereal mixes were seeded at the Brazeau County Research site on June 11.

As with the hemp trial these have experienced difficulties with the excessive moisture received at the site, but the recent heat does seem to be helping them recover.

10 alternative crops including chicory, plaitain, millets, kale, radish, brassica, sorghum sudan grass, phacelia and turnip were seeded at the Yellowhead County Research Site, near Wildwood, on July 29.

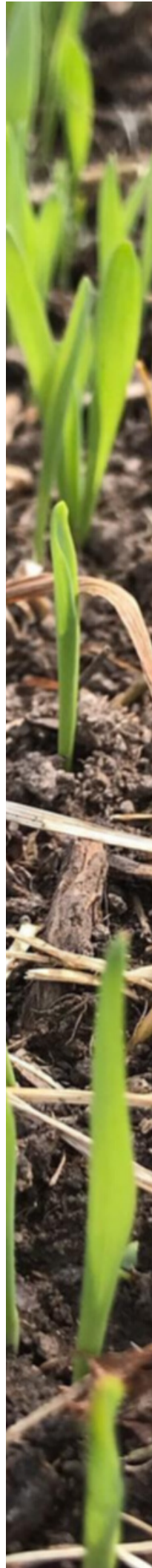
The second site of triticale, barley and oats, as well as the pulse mixtures were not seeded due to the very wet conditions at the Yellowhead County Research Site.

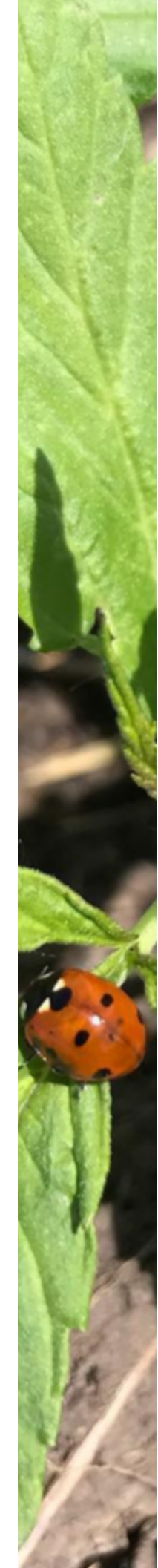
All varieties that were seeded will be evaluated for quality and yield once they reach appropriate maturity. We anticipate that we will begin data collection on this trial shortly, and we will be sure to share the result once they are available.

Perennial Forage Trial

In co-operation with a number of our sister organizations across the province, WCFA is participating in the Perennial Forage Evaluation Trials. This project aims to provide farmers and ranchers with performance information on mixes of a number of perennial grass and legume varieties. Regional establishment, persistence, dry matter yield and nutritional quality information will be assessed.

14 varieties of perennial grasses (in pure stands), 16 varieties of alfalfa (in pure stands), 2 varieties of sainfoin, 2 varieties of cicer milkvetch, along with 14 different grass/legume mixes will be evaluated over the next few years.





2020 will serve as the establishment year for the trial. Seeding was conducted at the end of July (21, 28 and 29) at the Yellowhead County Research Site. Targeted seeding date was much earlier in the year, but due to weather conditions we were unable to access the site with our equipment any earlier.

Emergence counts were conducted at 7, 14 and 21 days post seeding. Plant counts will be conducted at 70 days post seeding and spring re-growth will be assessed in the following years. Dry matter yield, nutrient analysis and composition of the stand will be assessed in the following years as well.

SOIL HEALTH PROJECTS

Soil Health Benchmarking

16 sites were sampled in 2019, leaving over 40 sites to be sampled in 2020. Sampling started in August, once it finally dried up enough to sample. We are planning to continue sampling throughout September until we reach our required number of sites, or until the weather decides we are done for the year.

For a more detailed explanation of this project please see page 6.

Soil Revitalization

This was to be the inaugural year of a new project for us in 2020 at the Yellowhead County Research Site. The plan was to seed a few different things in some larger blocks, with the aim of improving the soil at the site. Unfortunately, due to wet weather conditions we were unable to seed any of the treatments this year, but as they say "there is always next year."

OTHER PROJECTS

Sire Progeny Project

Year two of data collection is just beginning to ramp up for this project. We will be busy this fall collecting DNA samples from the 2020 calf crop for the co-operators that have not already submitted samples. We will also be weighing cows and calves at weaning.

Work is just beginning on data analysis from 2019 and we are in the early phases of planning some exciting extension activities related to this project.

Rancher Researcher

In participation with a number of organizations across the province, WCFA is beginning a new project working with local producers on the process of implementing a new technology or practice on farm and evaluating the process and potential success of the new innovation.

We are still in the early stages of the project, and will be conducting informational interviews with participating producers shortly.

Soil Moisture in Forage Systems

This project is looking at the use of available probe technology to monitor soil moisture conditions, with a focus on forage systems. A number of soil moisture probes will be installed at various locations throughout our area this fall and we will begin looking at how access to this data can be used in management decisions over the next few years.



AFIN Launches Online Marketplace for "All Things Agriculture"



At their March Annual General Meeting the Alberta Forage Industry Network (AFIN) announced that they were in the process of creating an online marketplace for Ag producers to replace Alberta Agriculture's 'Ropin' the Web' Classifieds after they had been discontinued.

Funding provided through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) Program allowed for AFIN to create, design and curate the 'Farming the Web' site for farmers to buy and sell agricultural related products and services.

AFIN launched 'Farming the Web' on July 31, 2020 and the website is now accepting listings. The site is a free marketplace for 'all things agriculture' and includes six different listing categories:

- Hay, Straw and Other Feeds
 - Salt and Minerals
- Livestock and Working Animals
- Land for Rent or Lease
- Farm Equipment
- Services and Contracting
- Other

'Farming the Web' allows you to search by category, keyword, specific details (depending on category) and location. A rating system is in place that you can use to connect with the most highly respected sellers. In the works is a chat function that will work to improve the overall buy and sell experience.

For more information please contact: albertaforages@gmail.com or call 403-819-1746.

Check out 'Farming the Web' at www.farmingtheweb.ca

The screenshot shows the 'Farming the Web' website interface. At the top is the logo 'Farming the Web Powered by AFIN'. Below it is a 'Search' section with a text input field 'What are you looking for?', a location selector 'Select a Location', and a radius selector 'Select KMs Radius'. Underneath is a 'Category' section with buttons for 'Hay, Straw & Other Feeds', 'Livestock & Working Animals', 'Pasture & Land for Lease or Sale' (which is highlighted with a green border), 'Farm Equipment', 'Services & Contracting', 'Other', and 'All Categories'. At the bottom is a 'Details' section with checkboxes for 'Crop', 'Pasture', and 'Hay'.

2020 Canada Thistle BioControl Agent Program

As we are all aware, 2020 has been full of unique challenges. Unfortunately, our biological control agent program for Canada thistle was no exception.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and border closures, we were unable to deliver stem-gall flies to our customers this year. We will not be placing an order with our suppliers for stem-mining weevils this year either.

We do plan to bring in both stem-gall flies and stem-mining weevils in 2021, as long as conditions allow us to do so. If you would like to be notified when/if we begin accepting orders for next year please contact Jessica at conservationag@westcentralforage.com to be added to the order notification list.

2020/2021 Extension Program Update

JESSICA WATSON, EXTENSION PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Many of you have reached out to us wondering where we've been and why we've been a little quieter over the last few months. Much of this had to do with moving our facilities and the fact that we were a crew of only two for a few months. Some of it, as will be no surprise, had to do with the COVID-19 situation.

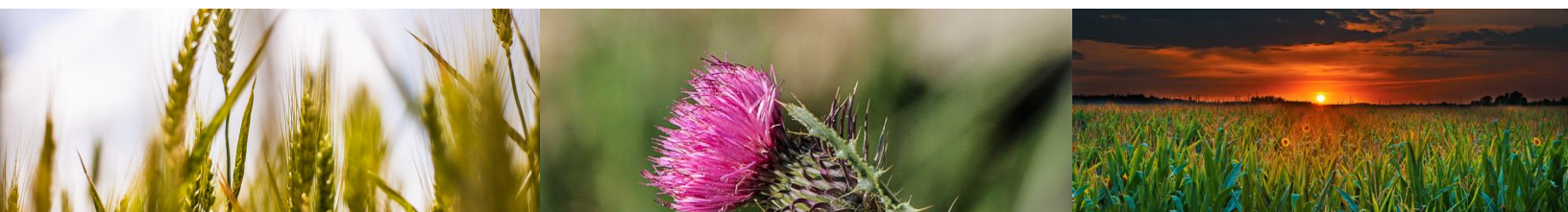
In a matter of a few days, all of our planned in-person events were cancelled. This has left us, as it has so many others, the challenge of adapting our extension programming to fit the new reality. As many of you may have noticed, we do not have any in-person workshops, seminars or the like scheduled at the moment. This is not likely to change anytime soon.

We know typically many of you are looking forward to attending our annual plot tour right about now. This too will look different for 2020. Like so many other events, this will be going online. We are still working on some of the finer details, but we should have something to share with everyone in the very near future.

We remain committed to providing the great learning opportunities you have come to expect from us, but we will certainly have to adjust how we deliver them. At the moment, this means we will be moving most things to a virtual or online format. We understand that this is not ideal for everyone, but we are doing our best to work within our new reality.

As always, we welcome feedback from you on topics you would like to see covered, speakers you want to hear from, the best method for delivering information to you and anything else you want to share with us so we can ensure we are best serving your needs.

If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact Jessica at 780-621-8670 or conservationag@westcentralforage.com.



FEED TESTING: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

JESSICA WATSON, EXTENSION PROGRAM COORDINATOR

It may seem early for some, as many are still putting up feed across the area, but our phones have already started ringing with calls regarding feed testing. We thought this might be a good opportunity to answer some of the more common questions we receive about feed testing.

Do you have 'feed testers' available?

Yes. We have probes for sampling bales (hay, straw, wrapped) as well as a longer probe for silage pits. Members are able to rent these probes free of charge. If you are not a member, we ask that you purchase a membership before renting a probe. Note: we do not have moisture testers available.

Are you still renting probes during COVID?

Yes. We are still allowing members to rent equipment during COVID. We will be taking extra precautions to limit the potential spread of the virus.

Do I need to book a probe or can I just stop by on my way to town?

We ask that you please call ahead before coming to get a probe. They are in fairly high demand, so calling ahead ensures we have one available for you. If there isn't one available we can put you on a wait list for a probe. We also ask that you call ahead so we can make arrangements with you to safely pick up the probe.

How do I take samples for the lab?

We recommend that you rent a probe from us to make taking samples easier. It is also important to take samples that are representative of the feed you are testing and hand-grab samples often tend not to be as representative.

Round bales should be sampled from the side (round end) and for each sample you wish to submit it is recommended to obtain 15-20 cores. Mix these cores together and take a sub-sample to submit to the lab. Samples can be placed in a plastic zip-lock bag (the large freezer ones about half full is typically enough for lab analysis). Remove as much air as possible before closing the bag. Label the sample with your name, date, feed type and an identifier so you can match your results to the sample when you receive them

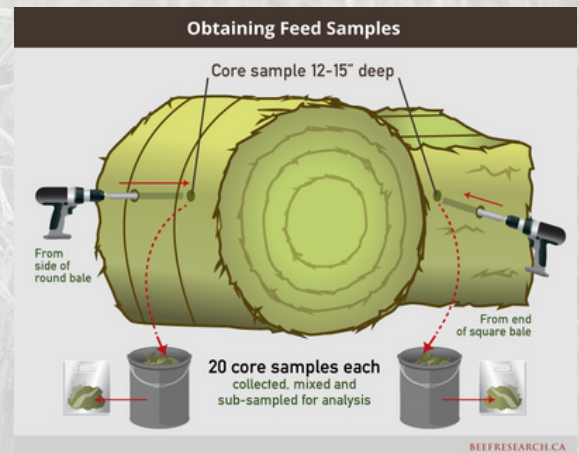


Photo courtesy of beefresearch.ca

For silage you can collect hand samples or use a longer probe (we have one available). Ideally you want to collect from the upper, middle and lower parts from four quadrants (as long as it is safe to do so). Mix these samples together and obtain a sub-sample to submit to lab. If silage samples will not be shipped to the lab right away please freeze them to prevent spoilage before arrival at the lab.

For swath grazing or standing crops, obtain representative samples of the swaths or the whole plant. Please contact us for more information on these types of samples.

FEED TESTING: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

CONTINUED

JESSICA WATSON, EXTENSION PROGRAM COORDINATOR

How much does it cost to have my feed tested?

This will depend on the type of analysis you have done, and what information you wish to have. A typical feed test will run you about \$20 plus the cost of shipping. WCFA members do receive discounted rates at the lab. For more information on pricing please contact us.

Where do I send my samples?

There are a few different labs that you can send samples to. At WCFA we use A&L Labs in Ontario. If you bring your samples to us we will look after shipping them for you. We make an effort to ship as many samples as we can at once, so we can divide shipping costs between multiple producers (in an effort to keep things affordable).

Does it matter when I bring my samples to you?

New for this year, due to some shipping delays we have been experiencing related to COVID, we will be shipping samples to the lab **every Tuesday**. Samples in before **4:00 pm on Monday** will go out Tuesday morning. Samples received after this will go out the following week. However, you may drop off your samples whenever works for you and we will make sure they are in with the next shipment.

How long until I receive my results?

Depending on the lab and how busy they are you can typically expect your results in about a week. Turn-around times do vary throughout the year so this is not a guarantee. We send your results to you as soon as we receive them.

I have my feed test results: now what?

There are a number of tools you can use to evaluate your feed once you have your results. The Beef Cattle Research Council website has a tool for evaluating feed results which will evaluate the ability of a single feed to meet basic nutritional requirements. You may also use a ration balancing software, such as CowBytes. It is recommended that for more complex ration questions you get assistance from a professional. We can recommend someone for you or guide you on how to access the CowBytes software.

When should I feed test?

Ideally, feed should be tested as close to time of feeding (or selling) as possible. Feed quality will change over time based on storage, etc. Knowing what you have on hand, however, may aid in decision making for winter feeding (i.e. do you need to purchase some feed to supplement what you have on hand?)

For more information about feed testing or to book a forage probe please contact:

Jessica

780-621-8670

conservationag@westcentralforage.com

Rachael

780-524-0963

manager@westcentralforage.com

