

# Forage Facts

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## We Want YOU to Soil Your Undies!!

Yes, you read that correctly, we want you to soil your undies! (Now, before whoever does laundry in the house gets too upset, we mean soil as in under our feet soil.)

For those who have attended some of our Soil Health workshops, you may have heard some speakers talk about burying a pair of cotton underwear to help determine how biologically active your soil is. It was also a feature article in our March Forage Facts!

We here at PCBFA have decided to up the ante. So we are running our first ever Soil Your Undies Contest! And we want you to join in on the fun!

All you need to do is bury a pair of 100% cotton underwear and send us a Before picture or video! You can share on our Facebook Page, or tag us @PCBFA on Twitter or @peacecountrybeef on Instagram, or text or email your picture to Katie! After 2 months, dig up your underwear and send us an After picture! The more decomposed your underwear are, the more biologically active soil you have! There will be prizes for the Peace Country's Most Decomposed Pair of Underwear!

### What you need:

- White, 100% cotton pair of underwear
- Shovel
- Site Marker (flag, post, etc)
- a patch of soil you can leave undisturbed

### Prizes for Most Decomposed Underwear:

1st Prize: 5 Year PCBFA Membership



(\$225 Value)

2nd Prize: 1 Soil Test from CARA's Soil Health Lab (\$150 Value)

3rd Prize: PCBFA Gift Certificate (\$50 Value)

### Contest Rules:

1. Need to start with 100% cotton underwear
  2. Send PCBFA a 'Before' picture of the underwear, as well as a picture of the site you are burying them at via Social Media, email, or text no later than June 30th.
  3. Bury your underwear in a small trench in the top 6 inches of the soil
  4. After 2 months, dig up your underwear and send an 'After' picture to PCBFA via Social Media, email, or text no later than August 31st.
  5. Underwear showing the most decomposition wins!
- Participants are welcome to bury more than one pair of underwear. The underwear showing the most decomposition will be considered for the contest.
  - Only one prize will be awarded per participant.

We hope you will join in on the fun!!

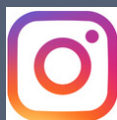
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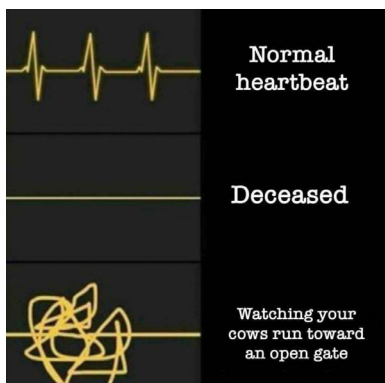


Peace Country Beef & Forage Association



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Normal heartbeat

Deceased

Watching your cows run toward an open gate

The snow is finally gone, the grass is green, calves are on the ground, and now it's time to move to summer grass! What is on your checklist before turning your cows out on pasture? Checking the fence, and assessing the grass stand are fairly common procedure, but what about testing your herd's water source?

Water is the most important need for livestock in the summertime, but the health of our cattle's water sources is often overlooked. Just like how we test our feed for its nutritional value, we should seriously consider doing the same for our water sources! Just as poor quality forage affects an animal's growth and health, same is to be said for poor quality water. Poor water quality can lead to reduced milk production in lactating cows, low rate of gain in yearlings, and even so far as to cause cattle to go blind, and in extreme cases, even die.

Last summer, near the town of Shamrock in southern Saskatchewan, over 200 cattle died on a community pasture due to poor dugout water. Testing conducted by the University of Saskatchewan showed that the water in that dugout contained excessive levels of sulfate and total dissolved solids (TDS). After this tragedy, the Province of Saskatchewan, along with the



*Just as we test our forages for feed quality, we should consider testing our water as well.*

University of Saskatchewan's Western College of Veterinary Medicine reviewed over 550 water samples taken from dugouts and wells across the province, hoping to find a benchmark figure of the province's livestock water quality. What they found, was that there was no 'average' water quality, even for dugouts within a couple miles of each other along the same drainage. In fact, water quality was extremely varied in each sample! Meaning that each and every water source is unique in the content of its water.

There are many factors that can affect the quality of our dugouts. If your dugout fills from surface run-off, then wet springs can cause nutrient loading from neighbouring fields or corrals. Contamination from nearby industrial sites or roads is also a concern. Whereas a dry spring gives a dugout little-to-no recharge, meaning there was no flush of minerals and dissolved solids from the previous year. During hot, dry summers, evaporation causes these mineral concentrations to get even higher. This was the case in Shamrock.

Ground-fed dugouts and wells on the other hand, are at the mercy of the ground water that is feeding them. These water sources tend to be higher in minerals to start with, and without a recharge from spring run-off, there may be a high concentration of min-

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### Do You Have Project or Workshop Ideas?

We are always looking for ideas! Give us a call!

### PCBFA Member Perks:

- Two Free Feed Tests per year
- Ration Balancing Assistance
- CAP Application Assistance
- Environmental Farm Plans
- Scale & Tag Reader Available for Member Use
- Soil & Livestock Water Quality Testing

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS!  
**GRAZING WEEK '18**  
JUNE 18-23RD 2018

Join PCBFA for a Series of Grazing Workshops & Field Days in June!

# = Quality Beef

By: Katie McLachlan



erals making it an unsuitable water source come fall, especially during a drought.

Without a water test, it is next to impossible to determine what is in your water. So what should we be looking for on a water test? Generally, we need to be focused on four main things: Alkalinity, pH, Total Dissolved Solids, and Sulphates. See the below chart for a breakdown of these elements.

If your water has an odd colour or smell to it, or has a lot of algae, it is recommended to test the biology of the water as well.

If your water test comes back poorly, you may need to look into changing or diluting your water source. That may mean watering cattle out of another water source entirely. Or, depending on the mineral concentration of the water, diluting it with higher quality water may bring concentrations down to a more acceptable level.

Did you know - PCBFA can help you get your livestock water analyzed? Give us a call and we can supply you with sample bottles and take care of getting the sample to the lab! A standard water test costs \$115, and a PCBFA Team Member will go over the results with you!

Item Analysed	Water Content	Usefulness for Cattle
Alkalinity	0-1,000 ppm	Acceptable
	>1,001 ppm	Poor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acceptable for mature, dry cows</li> <li>• Unsuitable for young animals or lactating cows</li> </ul>
pH	<5.5	Unsuitable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced feed intake</li> <li>• Can cause acidosis</li> </ul>
	6.5-8.0	Acceptable
	8.1-10	Poor
Total Dissolved Solids (TDS)	0-3,000 ppm	Acceptable
	3,000-5,000 ppm	Acceptable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For mature animals</li> </ul>
	5,001-7,000 ppm	Poor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can cause diarrhea in lactating cows, avoid use for pregnant cows</li> <li>• Test for sulfates</li> </ul>
	7,001-10,000 ppm	Poor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older animals may subsist on it</li> <li>• Sulphates likely high</li> </ul>
	<10,000 ppm	Unsuitable
Sulphate (SO <sub>4</sub> <sup>-</sup> )	<500 ppm	Acceptable
	501-1,000 ppm	Acceptable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diarrhea, or refusal by animals not accustomed to it</li> <li>• Slowed growth rate in younger animals</li> </ul>
	1,001 - 2,500 ppm	Poor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laxative</li> </ul>
	>2,500 ppm	Unsuitable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance of all animals significantly affected</li> <li>• Greater than 4,000 ppm, dangerous health problems expected</li> </ul>

From: Alberta Agriculture & Forestry, Agri-Facts Agdex 400/716-2, April 2007  
[https://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex718/\\$file/400\\_716-2.pdf?OpenElement](https://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex718/$file/400_716-2.pdf?OpenElement)



# Upcoming Events

Ranching for Profit: An Introduction and Grazing Workshop with Dave Pratt	June 19th	Brownvale Hall
Ranching for Profit: An Introduction with Dave Pratt	June 20th, Morning Session	Dunvegan Provincial Park Visitor's Center
Pasture Rejuvenation Field Walk	June 20th, Afternoon Session	Wanham Provincial Grazing Reserve
More Grass, More Profit & a Better Way of Life with Kelly Sidoryk	June 23rd	Hanson Ranch near Valleyview
Riparian Zones 101	June 26th	Valleyview
Morning Coffee Tour of the High Prairie Plots	Late July	High Prairie
Field Day at the Research Farm	August 2nd	Fairview Research Farm
Jim Gerrish Grazing School	August 7th	Bay Tree
Cocktail Cover Crop Farm Tour	Early August	Fairview-Hines Creek
Soil Health School	Mid August	High Prairie
Soil Health School	Mid August	Teepee Creek
<p>If you would like more information, or to register for any of these great upcoming events, please visit our website, <a href="http://peacecountrybeef.ca">peacecountrybeef.ca</a>, email <a href="mailto:info@pcbfa.ca">info@pcbfa.ca</a> or call 780-835-6799 ext. 3</p>		

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